

**Degrees of Glory / Levels of Heaven / Heavenly Rewards in Jewish, Christian, Latter-day Saint Tradition**  
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**List of Sources**

<b>Date or Period</b>	<b>Author or Translator</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Source</b>
Old Testament / First and Second Temple Period	Rachel Elijor, Jewish Scholar	The Merkavah and the Sevenfold Pattern	The Three Temples (2009 Publication)
Old Testament / First and Second Temple Periods	Dr. Joseph P. Schultz, Jewish Scholar	Angelic Opposition to the Ascension of Moses and the Revelation of the Law (1971)	The Jewish Quarterly Review
Old Testament / Second Temple Period	Paul M. Joyce, Old Testament Scholar	Ezekiel 40-42- The Earliest 'Heavenly Ascent' Narrative? (2007)	The Book Of Ezekiel And Its Influence, Chapter 2
Old Testament / Second Temple Period	Dr. James D. Tabor, Scholar of Early Judaism	Ascent As Foretaste Of Heavenly World; Journey Or "Visit" To Heaven Which Functions As Foretaste Or Anticipation Of Final Or Permanent Ascent To Heavenly Life	Anchor Bible Dictionary (published 1992)
Old Testament / Second Temple Period	Christopher A. Morray-Jones, Scholar of Early Judaism	In Later Apocalypses, Three-Tier Cosmology Largely Displaced By More Complex Model Of Seven Heavens; Idea That Universe Is Temple, Corresponding In Structure To Temple In Jerusalem Or At Least To Ideal Form, Continues To Pervade Literature	"Paradise Now:" Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism
200 BC – 100 AD? 1985 Translation by M. A. Knibb	Pseudepigraphical work in name of Isaiah	The Vision Which Isaiah the Son of Amoz Saw	The Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah
200 BC - 100 AD?	Pseudepigraphical Work in Name of Levi	I Entered First Heaven & Saw There Great Sea Hanging; I Saw Second Heaven Far Brighter & More Brilliant, For There Was Boundless Light Therein; Marvel Not At This, For Thou Shalt See Another Heaven More Brilliant & Incomparable	Testament of Levi

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New Testament Period	Emma Disley, Religious Studies Scholar	Scriptural Basis of Degrees of Glory	Degrees of Glory: Protestant Doctrine and the Concept of Rewards Hereafter
90 AD	Pseudepigraphical Work in name of Ezra	The Third Vision – Resurrection, Judgement, Rewards & Punishments	Fourth Book of Ezra / 2 Esdras (RSV)
70 – 155 AD	Papias of Hierapolis, Church Father	Many Mansions; A share is given to all by Father, according as each one is or shall be worthy	Fragments of Papias
120 AD; Translation by R.H. Charles, 1896	Pseudepigraphical work in name of Baruch	Nature Of Resurrection Body; Final Destinies Of Righteous And Wicked	2nd (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch
125 – 200 AD	St. Irenaeus (125 – 200 AD), Church Father	There Shall Be Various Mansions For Saints, According To Rank Allotted To Each Individual	Against Heresies 5:36
150 – 216 AD	Clement of Alexandria (150 – 216 AD), Church Father	Degrees Of Glory In Heaven Corresponding With Dignities Of Church Below	The Miscellanies Chapters 13 & 14
150 – 216 AD	Clement of Alexandria (150 – 216 AD), Church Father	Degrees of Glory in Heaven	Stromata Book 6 chapter 14, in ANF 2:506
160 – 230 AD	Tertullian (150 – 216 AD), Church Father	How Many Mansions In Father's House, If Not Diversity Of Deserts? How Will One Star Differ From Another Unless By Effort, Suffering, Torture, Death?	Scorpiace
200 AD	Rabbinic Author	Seven and Thirty and Sixty Degrees in Paradise, Faces like Sun, Moon, Stars, Planets, Lightning	Sifre on Deuteronomy
160-200 AD (Greek Original); English translation by M.R. James in 1924	Pseudepigraphical work in name of Peter	Punishment of Hell, Glories of Paradise	Apocalypse of Peter
100 BC— 250 AD (Dates of Texts); English translation by Moses Gaster in 1893	Rabbinic Authors	Hebrew Visions of Hell and Paradise (1893)	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society

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185 – 254 AD	Origen (185 – 254 AD), Church Father	1	De Principiis Book 2
185 – 254 AD	Origen (185 – 254 AD), Church Father	Many Mansions	Commentary on John
270 – 345 AD	Aphrahat of Persia (270 – 345 AD), Syriac Church Father	From All That I Have Explained To You, Receive & Believe That In Day Of Resurrection Your Body Shall Arise In Its Entirety, You Shall Receive From Our Lord Reward Of Your Faith, & In All That You Have Believed, You Shall Rejoice & Be Made Glad	Demonstration 8 (Of the Resurrection of the Dead)
270 – 345 AD	Aphrahat of Persia (270 – 345 AD), Syriac Church Father	Even When Men Shall Enter Into Life, Yet Reward Shall Excel Reward, Glory Shall Excel Glory, Recompense Shall Excel Recompense. Degree Is Higher Than Degree, Light Is More Goodly Than Light In Aspect; Sun Excels Moon, Moon Is Greater Than Stars That Are With Her	Demonstration 22 (Of Death And The Latter Times)
346 AD	St. Pachomius (290 – 346 AD), Abbot of Tabennisi	The Bohairic Life on Paradise, Hell, and Heavenly Ascents	The Life of Saint Pachomius, Abbot of Tabennisi
306 – 373 AD	St. Ephrem the Syrian (306 – 373 AD), Syriac Church Father	Paradise Has Four Levels: Summit, Heights, Slopes, & Lower Parts; Inhabitants Of These Regions Are Correspondingly: God, Victorious, Righteous, & Repentant	Hymns on Paradise (Excerpts)
306 – 373 AD	St. Ephrem the Syrian (306 – 373 AD), Syriac Church Father		Hymn on the Resurrection
330 – 379 AD	St. Basil the Great (306 – 373 AD), Church Father	Among Glories Of Saints Are "Many Mansions" In Father's House; That Is Differences Of Dignities	On the Holy Spirit
330 – 389 AD	Gregory Nazianzen (306 – 373 AD), Eastern Church Father	Are There Many Mansions In God's House, Or Only One? Of Course You Will Admit That There Are Many, And Not Only One	Theological Orations
349 – 407 AD	St. John Chrysostom (306 – 373 AD), Eastern Church Father	In Hell & In Kingdom One Will Find Many Differences; In My Fathers House Are Many Mansions; One Glory Of Sun, Another Glory Of Moon, Difference In That World Between One Star & Another	Two Exhortations to Theodore After His Fall
349 – 407 AD	St. John Chrysostom (349 – 407 AD), Eastern Church Father	Having Made Two Ranks Of Righteous & Of Sinners, These He Subdivides Into Many Parts, Signifying That Neither Righteous Nor Sinners Shall Obtain Same; Neither Righteous Alike With Other Righteous, Nor Sinners With Other Sinners	Homilies on 1st Corinthians
350 AD?	Pseudo-Macarius (Mid-	Passages on Ascents Prefiguring	The Fifty Spiritual

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	Fourth Century), Syriac Church Father	Resurrection	Homilies
200 – 460 AD; English translation by M.R. James in 1924	Pseudepigraphical work in name of Paul	Paul's Ascent to Paradise & Descent to Hell, With Numerous Different Rewards & Punishments	Apocalypse of Paul
380 AD – 450 AD (Time of Jovinianist controversy)	1998 by Christopher John Gousmett, Scholar of early Christianity	Shall the Body Strive and Not be Crowned?	Unitary and instrumentalist anthropological models as keys to interpreting the structure of Patristic eschatology
389AD	St. Ambrose (340-397 AD), Church Father, & The Council of Milan	They Place Every Thing Level, Abolish Different Degrees Of Merit & Have Meagreness In Heavenly Rewards, As If Christ Had Only One Palm To Bestow & No Copious Diversity In His Rewards	Letter XLII to Pope Siricius regarding Jovinian
393 AD	St. Jerome (345-420 AD), Church Father	Defense Of All Scriptures As Basis For Degrees Of Merit, & Refutation Of All Scriptural Arguments In Opposition	Against Jovinius
427 AD	St. Jerome (345-420 AD), Church Father	In Father's House Many Mansions & Different Degrees Of Merit; Sun Has Its Own Splendour, Moon Tempers Darkness Of Night; Five Heavenly Bodies Called Planets Traverse Sky In Different Tracks & With Different Degrees Of Luminousness; Countless Other Stars Whose Movements We Trace In Firmament & Each Has Its Own Brightness	Against the Palegians
420 AD	St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD), Church Father	Who Can Conceive, Not To Say Describe, What Degrees Of Honour & Glory Shall Be Awarded To Various Degrees Of Merit? Yet It Cannot Be Doubted That There Shall Be Degrees & That There Shall Be This Great Blessing, That No Inferior Shall Envy Any Superior	City of God
354-430 AD	St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD), Church Father	Albeit One Be Stronger Than Another, One Wiser Than Another, One More Righteous Than Another, One Holier Than Another; In Father's House Are Many Mansions; None Shall Be Estranged From That House; A Mansion For Each According To His Deserving	Homilies on the Gospel according to St. John
354-430	St. Augustine of Hippo	After The Resurrection There Shall Be	On The Holy

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AD	(354-430 AD), Church Father	Two Distinct Kingdoms, One Of Eternal Happiness, The Other Of Eternal Misery; Among Both There Will Be Degrees Of Happiness And Misery	Trinity; Doctrinal Treatises; Moral Treatises
354-430 AD	St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD), Church Father	Yet Star Differeth From Star In Glory; So Also Resurrection Of Dead. These Are Different Merits Of Saints; If By That Penny Heaven Were Signified, Have Not All Stars In Common To Be In Heaven?	Miscellaneous Treatise On Holy Virginity
344 – 407 AD	St. John Chrystostom (344 – 407 AD), Eastern Church Father	There Being Not Only Difference Between Sun, Moon, Stars, But Also Between Stars; Some Have Larger, Others Less Glory. What Do We Learn From Hence? That Although They Be All In God's Kingdom, All Shall Not Enjoy Same Reward	Homilies on First Corinthians, Homily 41
430 AD	St. John Cassian (360 – 435 AD), Scythian Monk, Founder of Religious Order in Gaul, Transmitter of Egyptian Spirituality	Different Grades Of Perfection; No Uniform Crown Of Perfection Can Be Offered To All Men, Because All Have Not Same Virtue, Or Purpose, Or Fervour, & So Divine Word Has In Some Way Appointed Different Ranks & Different Measures Of Perfection Itself	Conferences
400 – 500 AD?	Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Church Father	Celestial Hierarchy Of Three Heavens, Each Separated Into Three Additional Groups; From This Order, In Due Degree, Second, & From Second, Third, And From Third Our Hierarchy Religiously Conducted To Beginning Above Beginning, & End Of All Good Order	The Celestial Hierarchy
300 AD—600 AD (1983 Translation by Mueller and Robins in OTP, vol. 1)	Pseudepigraphical work in name of Ezra	Elect Are Those Who Go Into Eternal Rest On Account Of Confession, Penitence, Largesse In Almsgiving; What Do Just Do In Order That They May Not Enter In Judgment? Just As Servant Who Performed Well For His Master Will Receive Liberty, So Too Will Just In Kingdom Of Heaven	Vision of Ezra (Christian Apocalypse)
521 AD: Translated By Thomas Kollamparampil 2008	Jacob of Sarug (451 -521 AD), Syriac Church Father	Jacob of Sarug's Homilies on the Resurrection	The Metrical Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug
521 AD	Jacob of Serug (451 AD-521 AD)	Homily "On That Chariot That Ezekiel The Prophet Saw"	2002 article by Alexander Golitzin,

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			Marquette University
600 AD	Rabbinic Author	Heavenly Rewards and Heavenly Canopies with Different Numbers of Pearls	Ruth Rabbah 3
600 AD; Wolf Leslau, Translator (1951)	Pseudepigraphical work in name of Baruch	Michael Will Blow Trumpet For Third Time, & All Dead Will Be Resurrected In Twinkling Of An Eye; Glory Of Some Will Be Greater Than Sun, Others Will Stand Up In Honor, Still Others In Misery; King Of Heaven & Earth Will Come & Reward All Men According To Their Deeds	Fifth Baruch (Ethiopic Apocalypse of Baruch)
650 AD	John Climacus (595-650), Monastic Leader, Mt. Sinai Desert	May This Ladder Teach You Spiritual Disposition Of Virtues; I Am At Summit Of Ladder, & As My Great Initiate (St Paul) Said: So Faith, Hope, Love Abide, These Three; But The Greatest Of These Is Love	The Ladder of Divine Ascent
700 AD	Isaac of Nineveh (Isaac the Syrian) Syriac Christian Monk	Alexander Golitzen, modern scholar of Early Judaism and Christianity	What is Heaven? - St Isaac of Syria
400 - 1000 AD	Rabbinic Authors; translated by Louis Ginzberg	Jewish Rabbis On Sun, Moon, Stars and Degrees in Paradise	1968 Publication "The Legends of the Jews"
1000 AD; 1980 Translation By George Maloney S.J.	St. Symeon the New Theologian (942-1022), Syriac Church Father	Extasy In The Light, How Not To Lose The Kingdom Of Heaven, And The Final Reward	Discourses On Christ's Resurrection
1120 AD	Hugh Of Saint-Victor (1078 – 1141), Founder of Catholic Monastic Order	Of The Four Steps Of The Ascents; Of The Three Paradises, And The Tree Of Life In Each; Of The Fifteen Steps By Which Wisdom Arises And Grows In The Hearts Of The Saints	Noah's Ark (Excerpts)
1150 AD? (Latin); 1701 (First English Edition); 1818 (Publication in England)	St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090 – 1153), Doctor of the Church and Founder, Cistercian Order	Eternal Life, Where Men Shall Be Equal To Angels Of God, Righteous Shall Shine As Sun In Kingdom Of Father; How Gloriously Bright May We Suppose Souls Of Men Shall Then Be, When Even Their Bodies Shall Be As Resplendent As Stars In Firmament	Devout Meditations of St. Bernard With Regard to the State of Human Nature, otherwise called his "book of the Soul"
1150 AD?	St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090 – 1153) (French	Il y a Plusieurs Demeures Dans La Maison De Mon Père; Le Sens De Ces	Oeuvres Complète de Saint Bernard

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	abbot & Leader of Cistercian order)	Paroles Est, Vous Régnez Avec Moi Dans La Vie Éternelle En Laquelle il y a Plusieurs Demeures, C'est-À-Dire Plusieurs Dignités; En Cet Heureux Séjour, Autre Est La Clarté Du Soleil, Autre Celle De La Lune, Autre Celles Des Étoiles	
1151 AD	Peter Lombard (1100—1160AD), Catholic Scholastic	Just As Lighting Up Of Bodies Will Be Different, So Glory Of Souls Will Be Different; For Star Differeth From Star, That Is, One Elect, From Another, In Glory Of Mind & Soul	Sentences
1155 AD	Richard Of Saint-Victor (1110-1173), Leader of Cistercian Order	How Third Level Differs From & Rises Above Second; How Fourth Level Differs From & How Much It Rises Above Third	The Mystical Ark (Ark of Covenant, NOT Noah's Ark) (Excerpts)
1160 AD	Aelred of Rievaulx (1110-1166), Monastic Leader	The Perfection of the Coming Life: Lord Thus Distinguished Various Degrees Even Among The Perfect; You Know That Among Saints There Are Distinctions Of Reward, Just As Of Merit	Aelred of Rievaulx: Pursuing Perfect Happiness
1208 AD	St. Dominic (1170-1221); Catholic Saint and Theologian	The Faithful Children Of The Rosary Shall Merit A High Degree Of Glory In Heaven	The 15 Promises Of Mary To Christians Who Recite The Rosary
1208 AD (Oldest Date for Text); Translated Into English By Rev. Dr. Jacques Issaverden s (1901)	Pseudepigraphical work in name of Esdras	Concerning The Inquiries Made By The Prophet Esdras Of The Angel Of The Lord Concerning The Souls Of Men; There Are In It Seven Steps Up To The Divinity	Uncanonical Writings Of The Old Testament Found Armenian Mss
1259 AD (Latin)	St. Bonaventure (1221 - 1274): Franciscan Monk, Doctor of Catholic Church	These Six Levels of Ascent Are Six Steps Of True Throne Of Solomon By Which One Ascends To Peace; On Six Wings Of Cherub By Which Contemplative Man Grows Strong, Filled With Supreme Wisdom	Itinerarium Mentis ad Deum (The mind's road to God )
1290 AD	Moses De Leon (1250-1305 AD), Rabbi and Kabbalist (or Rabbi Shim'on Bar Yohai)	The Multiplicity Of Rewards That Await Mankind In The World To Come In the Zohar	The Zohar
1300 AD; Translated	Pseudepigraphical work in name of Gorgorios	Everyone Is Rewarded According To His Deeds; He Who Dies Without Repentance	Apocalypse of Gorgorios

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by Wolf Leslau (1951)		Will Not Witness God's Glory Or His Grace Forever; He Who Feels Him Will Be Freed From This Bad World; He Will Leave It And Will Abide In The Great Abode Of Life	
1300's AD	Helmut A. Hatzfeld, Modern Scholar of Religious Studies	Linguistic Investigation of Old French High Spirituality (1946)	P.M.L.A.
1350 AD	St. Gregory Palamas (1296-1359 AD); Monk of Mount Athos in Greece, Archbishop of Thessaloniki, Preeminent Theologian of Hesychasm	Illumination & Knowledge Of Incorporeal & Ever-Existing Light Of Savior Transfigured On Tabor, In His Glory, & Of Father From All Eternity, & Life-Creating Spirit, One Radiance, One Godhead, Glory, Kingdom, Power Now & Ever & Unto Ages Of Ages	Sermon on the Transfiguration
1350 AD	St. Gregory Palamas (1296-1359 AD); Monk of Mount Athos in Greece, Archbishop of Thessaloniki, Preeminent Theologian of Hesychasm	Then Shall We Be Children Of God, Seeing & Experiencing God's Radiance, With Rays Of Christ's Glory Shining Around Us, & Ourselves Shining As Moses & Elijah Proved To Us When They Appeared With Him In Glory On Mount Tabor; "Righteous Shall Shine Forth As Sun In Kingdom Of Their Father"	Homily Fifty-Seven, Delivered On The Sunday Of The Fathers
1370 AD (First Flemish in 1848)	John of Ruysbroeck ((1293 – 1381), Flemish Christian Mystic and Saint	It Is Same Sun, One Radiance, Which Enlightens Both Our Wilderness & High Mountains; But State Of Saints Will Be Transparent & Shining & Therefore They Receive Brightness Without Intermediary	The Sparkling Stone
1393 AD	St. Julian of Norwich (1342-1416), Catholic Abbess and Christian Mystic	God Shewed Three Degrees Of Bliss That Every Soul Shall Have In Heaven That Willingly Hath Served God In Any Degree In Earth; & The Harder Our Pains Have Been With Him In His Cross, The More Shall Our Worship; I.E. Glory, Be With Him In His Kingdom	Revelations of Divine Love
1472 (Italian); 1814 (English)	Dante Alighieri (1265 – 1321): Italian Poet	While There Are Different Degrees Of Reward In Heaven (The Light Shining More In Some Places, In Other Places Less), Light Of God Still Shines Abundantly For All; Dante Sees Divisions Of Heaven; Just As There Are Three Parts To Hell & Purgatory, So Three Parts Of Heaven	Divine Comedy: Paradise
1474 (Published in Latin); 1487 (French)	Ludolphe le Chartreux / Ludolph of Saxony (c. 1300 — 1378) Catholic Philosopher	Des Peines De L'enfer Et De La Gloire Céleste	La Grande Vie de Jesus-Christ. Tome 6. Vie souffrante



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1510 (Latin)	St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Catholic Scholastic	The Happiness Of The Saints And Their Mansions; & Of The Aureoles (Circles Of Light Or Radiance Surrounding The Head Or Body Of Sanctified Persons, Saints & Angels)	Summa Theologica
1579 First Publication; 1606 Date of this Edition	George Segusien Pacard (Ministre à la Rochefoucaut, Lionnois)	Recueil contenant plusieurs arguments, raisons et démonstrations, Prises de la Nature, par Lesquelles est Prouve Manifestement qu'il y a un Seul Dieu, qui par sa providence gouverne cest univers, que le Monde a este Cree, que l' Ame humaine est immortelle, & que l'Escriture Sancte est Céleste & Divine, contre les Epicuriens & Atheistes	Théologie Naturelle
1580; 1882 (Spanish); 1888 (English)	St. Theresa of Avila (1515 - 1582), Catholic Mystic	The Effects Of The Divine Graces In The Soul; The Inestimable Greatness Of One Degree Of Glory	Life of St. Theresa of Jesus
1600 (Latin); English Translation in 1909	St John of the Cross (San Juan de la Cruz) (1542 - 1591), Catholic Monastic Leader and Mystic	Each of Blessed In His Own Degree Of Glory, Continually Singing Before God; As Every One Of Saints Had Gifts Of God In Different Way, So Every One Of Blessed Sings His Praises In Different Way, & Yet All Harmonize In One Concert Of Love	Spiritual Canticle of the Soul and the Bridegroom Christ (Excerpts)
1616 (Latin); 1638 (First English Translation); 1850 (This Translation in London)	The Ven. Cardinal Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), Jesuit Cardinal, Catholic Reformer, Doctor of the Church	Their Habitation Not Only Called a City, But a House; There are Many Mansions in Heaven, Some High, Some Low; Also Diversity of Crowns, Some Great, Some Inferior, According to Degree of Merit: Yet All Citizens are Blessed & Happy, All Clean of Heart, Full of Charity	The Joys of the Blessed; Being a Practical Discourse Concerning the Eternal Happiness of the Saints in Heaven
1616 (French Publication)	St. Francis de Sales (1567 – 1622), Saint and Doctor of the Church	Now This Light Of Glory Will Regulate Sight & Contemplation Of Blessed, & According As We Have Less Or More Of That Holy Brightness, We Shall See Less Or More Clearly & Blessedly That Godhead Wherein We Shall Attain To Various Degrees Of Glory	Treatise on the Love of God
1617; 1832 (Boston)	William Fulke (1538-1589) English Puritan divine	As Stars Differ In Glory, Not According To Their Merits, But According To God's Gift In Their Creation, So Bodies Of Saints Shall Differ In Glory, Not According To Their Merits, But According To God's Free Gift In	Confutation of the Rhemish Testament

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		Resurrection	
1622	Jacob Boehme (1575 – 1624), German Christian Mystic	Of Heaven and Hell	A Dialogue Between a Scholar and His Master
1631	John Donne (1572 - 1631): British Anglican preacher and poet	We Deny Not This Difference Of Degrees Of Glory In Heaven; But That Frame, & That Scale Of These Degrees, Which They Have Set Up In Roman Church, We Do Deny	The Works of John Donne
1632 (Latin)	John Cameron (1529-1623): Scottish Calvinist Theologian	Fifteen Arguments In Favour Of Heavenly Degrees Of Glory, Each Of Which Carefully Refuted, & Twelve Arguments Against, Which He Defends, Concluding That Elect In Heaven Are Equal In Glory	Praelectiones
1650	Yves de Paris (French Capuchin theologian, humanist and spiritual writer; 1588 – 1678)	Degrees of Glory & Heavenly Rewards	La Theologie Naturelle
1650?; Published in London in 1829	Baxter, Richard (1615-1691), English Puritan Pastor and Theologian (rejected Limited Atonement)	The Necessity Of Diligently Seeking The Saints' Rest	The Saints' Everlasting Rest
1651 (French); 1810 (26th English Edition)	Charles Drelincourt (1595-1665), French Protestant Leader	Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ Ne Dit Pas Qu'il Y A Plusieurs Étages Ou Plusieurs Appartemens, Dont Les Uns Sont Plus Beaux Et Plus Riches Que Les Autres, Mais Simplement Qu'il Y A Plusieurs Demeures Dans La Maison De Son Père	Les Consolations De L'âme Fidèle Contre Les Frayeurs De La Mort
1651 (French); 1810 (26th English Edition)	Charles Drelincourt (1595-1665), French Protestant Leader	As Light Of Firmament Differs Much From That Of Bright Stars; & As Among Stars There Is Diversity Of Light; In Like Manner There Shall Be Divers & Different Degrees Of Glory Amongst Blessed In Heaven	The Christian's Defense Against the Fears of Death
1657	Moïse Amyraut (1596-1664) French Calvinist Protestant theologian and metaphysician	De Forte Que Nous Parviendrons A La Gloire Comme Celuy Qui Court En Lice, Qui Void Le But Où Il Tend; Au Lieu Que Nous Parviendrons A Ses Plus Hauts Degrés Comme Les Rameurs, Qui Tournent Toujours Le Dos Au Port Auquel En Fin Pourtant Ils Arrive	Discours De L'estat Des Fidèles Après La Mort
1659	Johann C. Dannhauer (1603-1666) German Philosopher and Theologian (In Response to J. C. Sondershausen)	An In Vita Aeterna Futuri Sint Gloruae Gradus? (Answered in Affirmative)	Text Not Found
1662; last	Thomas Brooks (1608 –	Lastly, To provoke you to labor after	Holiness, the Only

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English publication in 1866	1680): Puritan Clergyman	higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holiness you have here—the more happiness you shall have hereafter. The more grace you have on earth—the more glory you shall have in heaven.	Way to Happiness
1665	John Bunyan (1628 - 1688), English Christian Preacher and Author	In Temple Were Chambers Bigger & Lesser, Higher & Lower, More Inward & More Outward: Which Chambers Were Types Of Mansions That Our Lord Told Us He Went To Prepare For Us	The Resurrection of the Dead, and Eternal Judgment
1668 (London); 1836 (New York)	John Howe (1630 – 1705), English Puritan Theologian and Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell	Conformity To God, Of Our Present State, Is In Extent Larger & More Comprehensive Than That Of Our Future; Though It Be Unspeakably Less Perfect In Degree; There Is No Moral Excellency Belonging To Our Glorified State, Which Is Not In Some Degree Necessarily To Be Found In Saints On Earth	The Blessedness Of The Righteous Opened, And Further Recommended From The Consideration Of The Vanity Of This Mortal Life
1669	Johannes Cocceius (1603 – 1669), Dutch religious thinker	A Noticeable Feature Of Cocceius's Account Of Both Eternal Punishment & Eternal Glory Is That He Spoke Repeatedly In Terms Of Steps & Degrees	Structural Elements In The Eschatology Of Johannes Cocceius
1676 (London); 1702 (London); 1841 (London)	Thomas Comber (1645 - 1699), English Puritan churchman, Dean of Durham; Attempted to reconcile Puritanism and Anglicanism	One Glory Of Sun, Most Illustrious Of All; Another Glory Of Moon, Next In Magnitude & Splendour; Another Glory Of Stars, Less, Though Glorious Also: Difference Among Stars, Some Bigger & Others Less, For One Star Differeth From Another Star In Glory, Though All Shine In Same Heaven; So Also Difference Between One Righteous Man & Another In Resurrection Of Dead	A Companion to the Temple, or, A Help to Devotion
1686	Johan C. Van Bleiswijk, Dutch Theologian	Geestlyck Graad-boek (“On the Degrees of Future Rewards and Punishments”)	No Text Found
1695 (1815 Publication in Versailles)	Jacques Bénigne Bossuet (1627-1704) French Catholic Bishop and Theologian	Il y a plusieurs demeures dans la maison de mon Père; s’il n’en était pas ainsi, je vous le dirais.	Méditations sur l’évangile, Volume 2 - Page 55
1695 (died)	John Scott, DD., Rector of St. Giles’s in the Fields, London	The Christian Life: From Its Beginning to Its Consummation in Glory	Collected Works of John Scott??
1699	Jane Leade (1624 – 1704): Christian Mystic, Founder of Philadelphian Movement	The Ascent to the Mount of Vision	Online Text
1700	William Burkitt (1650 – 1703), English Biblical Expositor	Learn Hence, That There Are Degrees Of Glory In Heaven, Probably According To Measures & Degrees Of Service We Have	Expository Notes, With Practical Observations, On

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		Done For God On Earth; There Is, No Doubt, An Equality Of Glory There, As To Essentials, But Not With Respect To Accidentals	The New Testament
1701 (First Publication)	His Holiness St. Leon, Pope (Actual Name Jean-Baptiste Morvan de Bellegarde)	Des degrez pour monter à la Beatitude	Sermon XCV
1703 (Latin); 1827 (English Translation)	Dr. George Bull (1634–1710): English theologian & Bishop of St David's	Different Degrees Of Bliss & Glory In Christ's Heavenly Kingdom Answer To Different Degrees Of Grace Here Below; Several Objections Against This Doctrine Are Answered	The Works of George Bull, D.D. Lord Bishop of St. David's Volume 1
1707	John Norris, M.A. (1657 – 1711)), Rector of Bremerton Church near Serum	That There Are Degrees Of Glory, Though By Some Much Contested, Is Yet I Think Most Certain & Unquestionable Truth; Certainty Of Which I Shall Endeavour To Establish Upon These Few Evident Principles	Discourses On The Beatitudes
1710	David Hollaz (1648-1713), Lutheran Theologian	Make Me Partaker Of First Resurrection Lest Second Death Have Any Power Over Me! Arouse My Apathetic Spirit To Frequent Pious Meditation Of Coming Resurrection; Give To Me Peaceful Death, Glorious Resurrection, Life Everlasting!	Examen Theologicum Acroamaticum (A Scholarly Theological Examination)
1716 (English); 1826 (English)	August Hermann Francke (1663 – 1727), Important German Pietist Leader	Three Practical Discourses: I. Of The Love Of God. II. Of Charity To The Poor. III. Of The Differing Degrees Of Glory	Missing Online Resource
1717	David Constant de Rebecque (1638-1733): Pastor / Philosopher, Lausanne, Switzerland	Discours sur les degrés de gloire (Discourse on the Degrees of Glory)	Livres Imprimés A Lausanne Au XVIIIe Siècle
1723; Reprinted in London in 1830	Thomas Green (1658–1738), English academic and bishop Church of England	Of The Different Degrees Of Glory And Happiness In Heaven	Four Discourses on the Four Last Things
1728 Date of Death	Joseph Boyse (1660–1728), Presbyterian minister and religious writer	Sermon on 1 Corinthians 3:8: The Different Degrees of Future Rewards	Sermons of Joseph Boyse
1731; 1815 (American Edition in Philadelphia)	Thomas Ridgley (c.1576–1656)	Whether There Are Degrees Of Glory In Heaven?	A Body Of Divinity: Wherein The Doctrines Of The Christian Religion Are Explained And Defended
1732	John Wesley (1703 –	On The Resurrection of The Dead	Sermon

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	1791), Arminian Reformer		CXXXIV—On the Resurrection of the Dead
1733	Adam Lebrecht Müller, Christian Scholar	Significant investigation of Matters of Eternal Life (Gradus Vitae: Oder Deutliche Untersuchung derer Stufen des Ewigen Lebens)	No Text Available
1737	Jonathan Edwards (1703 – 1758), Arminian Reformer	Many Mansions	Online Text
1738; republished in 1820	Jonathan Edwards (1703 – 1758), Calvinist Reformer	Not Only Higher Degrees Of Glory In Heaven, But Heaven Itself, Is Given In Reward For Holiness & Good Works Of Saints; God May Bestow Heaven's Glory Wholly Out Of Respect To Christ's Righteousness, & Yet Reward Man's Inherent Holiness In Different Ways	Justification by Faith Alone
1739 (English Publication Date)	Rev. Dr. Thomas Burnet (1635-1715), British Theologian	Of The Resurrection Of The Dead; And In What State They Will Be After They Are Risen, And What Sort Of Bodies They Will Have	Treatise Concerning the State of Departed Souls Before and At and After the Resurrection
1740	Jonathan Edwards (1703 – 1758), Calvinist Reformer	All Christians Should Follow His Example & Should Not Content Themselves With Thought That They Have Goodness Enough To Carry Them To Heaven, But Should Earnestly Seek High Degrees Of Glory; For Higher Degrees Of Glory Are Promised To Extraordinary Labors For God, For No Other Reason, But That We Should Seek Them	The Character of Paul an Example to Christians
1748	Charles Louis de Villette (1700 - 1769), Minister of French Huguenot Church of St. Patrick in Dublin, Ireland	Il Y Aura Pour Nous Dans La Vie À-Venir Differens Degrez De Bonheur; La Récompense Assignée À Chacun Répondra Exactement Aux Soins, Que Chacun Aura Pris, Aux Efforts, Que Chacun Aura Faits, Suivant Le Nombre Des Talens, Qui Lui Auront Été Confiez	Essai sur la Felicite de la Vie a Venir (An Essay on the Felicity of the Life to Come)
1755	John Wesley (1703 – 1791): English Arminian Reformer	There Is Inconceivable Variety In Degrees Of Reward In Other World; Let Not Any Slothful One Say, If I Get To Heaven At All, I Will Be Content; Such A One May Let Heaven Go Altogether	Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament
1756; 1822 (American Publication)	William Law (1686-1761), English cleric and theological writer	Whilst We Are Labouring After Christian Perfection, We Are Labouring For Eternity, Building To Ourselves Higher Stations In Joys Of Heaven	A Practical Treatise on Christian Perfection

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1756 (London and Boston)	John Gill (1697 – 1771), British Baptist Calvinist Theologian	The Glorious State of the Saints in Heaven	Works of John Gill
1757 Publication Date	John Conybeare, D.D. (1692-1755) Episcopal Bishop of Exeter	Sermon on 1st John 3:2: Different Degrees of Happiness in a Future State	No Text Available
1758	Jonathan Edwards (1703 – 1758), American Calvinist Reformer	The Different Glory Of The Sun, The Moon And The Stars Represents The Different Glory Of Christ And The Glorified Saints	New England Stone Carving And Its Symbols (Allen I. Ludvig, 1975)
1758 (Teubingen)	Johann Friedrich Cotta	Dissertatio Historico-Theologica Prior de Diversis Gradibus Glorae Beatorum (Historico-Theological Dissertation on the Diverse Grades of Blessed Glory)	No Text Available
1758 (Latin)	Emanuel Swedenborg (1688 – 1722), Swedish Mystic and Theologian	Heaven (excerpts)	Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell
1759 (England); Reprinted 1813 (England)	Isaac Watts (1674-1748) English Non-Conforming Protestant Theologian and Author of Hymns	The World To Come; Or Discourses On The Joys Or Sorrows Of Departed Souls At Death, And The Glory Or Terror Of The Resurrection	Works of Isaac Watts?
1770	John Flavel (1627 – 1691): English Presbyterian clergyman and scholar	We Reject With Abhorrence Popish Doctrine Of Diversity Of Glories As Founded In Diversity Of Merits	The Whole Works of the Reverend Mr. John Flavel
1770	Augustus M. Toplady (1740-1778) British Calvinistic divine and author, a Premillennialist	The Millenium and Degrees of Glory	The Works of Augustus Toplady
1773	Johann Friedrich Cotta	Dissertatio Dogmatico-Polemica de Diversis Gradibus Glorae Beatorum	No Text Available
1793 (English translation and Condensation by “Miss Hunt”)	Charles Louis de Villette (1700 - 1769), Minister of French Huguenot Church of St. Patrick in Dublin, Ireland	There is generally in this world a balance of good and evil, which reduces our several lots almost to an equality; In heaven, on the contrary, there will probably be degrees of rank infinitely varied	An Essay on the Felicity of the Life to Come
1797 Publication date	James Hervey (1714 – 1758) British Calvinistic Clergyman	In World Above Are Various Degrees Of Happiness, Various Seats Of Honour - Some Will Rise To More Illustrious Distinctions And Richer Joys	James Hervey's Meditations and Contemplations
1797	Johann Friedrich Flatt (1759 – 1821) German theologian and philosopher	Remarks about the proportion of morality and Felicitousness in relation to the doctrine of Christianity (Bemerkungen uber die proportion der Sittlichkeit und Glukseeligkeit in Beziehung auf die lehre	No Text Found

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		des Christenthums von der kunktigen Seeligkeit gebesserter Menschen)	
1805 Publication Date	Philip Doddridge (1702 - 1751), English Nonconformist Leader, Educator, & Hymnwrite	There Shall Indeed Be Some Difference In Degree Of That Glory, Correspondent To Different Excellencies In Characters Of Good Men	The Works of the Rev. Philip Doddridge
1807 (Article by Susan Easton Black in 1992)	Solomon Chamberlain (Early Convert to Mormonism)	Chamberlain's Vision of Three Heavens	Stories From the Early Saints
1808 Publication date	Joseph Hall (1633-1710), Bishop of Exeter and Norwich, England	Discoursing Of Different Degrees Of Heavenly Glory; Of Our Mutual Knowledge Of Each Other Above	Works, Right Reverend Father in God, Joseph Hall, D.D.
1809 Publication Date In London	Samuel Drew (1765-1833) British Wesleyen Theologian	Different Degrees Of Lustre With Which Heavenly Bodies Appear, Afford Strong Presumption That They Are Specifically Unlike Each Other In Their Internal Constitutions, As In Their Magnitudes & Distances From One Another	Essay on the Identity and General Resurrection of the Human Body
1820 Publication (Edinburgh, Scotland)	Hugh Blair (1718 – 1800), Scottish Theologian	Sermon X - On The Immortality Of The Soul, and A Future State	Sermons
1820	Editor: Samuel C. Loveland	Magazine Masthead: In my Father's house are many mansions.—Jesus	The Christian Repository, (Universalist Journal published in Vermont)
1821	Unnamed Letter to the Editor	Covenant That Assigns To Greater Degrees Of Grace Here, Greater Degrees Of Glory Hereafter	The Christian Remembrancer
1822 Publication date	Henry Kollock (1778-1819): Pastor of Independent Presbyterian Church	Sermon 82: Degrees of Glory in Heaven	Sermons on Various Subjects
1824 Publication date	John Angell James (1785-1859): British Congregational Minister and prolific author	In Dwelling Upon Two States Of Heaven & Hell, We Are Not To Conceive Of Them As Conditions Of Being, Where All Persons In Former Will Be Equally Happy, & All In Latter Equally Miserable; Different Degrees Of Glory In One, & Different Degrees Of Torment In Other	The Christian Father's Present to His Children
1826	Adam Clarke (1760-1832)	Many Mansions & Degrees of Glory in	Adam Clarke's

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Publication date in New York	British Methodist Biblical Scholar and Theologian	Resurrection	Commentary on the Whole Bible
1829	Alexander Campbell (1788 – 1866); Founder of Campbellite Restorationist Movement	The Three Kingdoms	The Christian Baptist
1830	St. Philaret (Drozdov) of Moscow, Russian Orthodox Author	Will all be equally happy? No. There will be different degrees of happiness, in proportion as every one shall have here endured the fight of faith, love, and good works. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42.	The Longer Catechism of The Orthodox, Catholic, Eastern Church
1832—1835	Joseph Smith (1805-1844), Latter-day Saint Founder	Doctrine and Covenants 76 Sources	Saints Without Halos website December 2009
1833	John Davis, Editor & Frequently Author	Besides Sanctuary, Temple Contained Numerous Courts & Piles Of Buildings, Appropriated To Variety Of Purposes. To This Vast Number Of Apartments Our Lord Is Supposed To Allude, John Xiv. 2, Where He Speaks Of Many Mansions In Heaven	The Visitor: or, Monthly instructor . By Religious Tract Society (Great Britain)
1833 (London)	Richard Mant, D.D., M.R.I.A. (1776-1848) Lord Bishop of Down and Conner; English churchman and writer	Different Degrees Of Happiness Among The Blessed	The Happiness Of The Blessed Considered As To The Particulars Of Their State
1833 (Cambridge; Available in U.S.)	Bernard Whitman (1796 - 1834), Unitarian Minister, Educator, Apologist, And Missionary	Rewards and Punishments	Friendly Letters to a Universalist on Divine Rewards and Punishments
1835	Joseph Smith (1805 – 1844), Latter-day Saint Founder	The Three Degrees of Glory in its current form	D&C Section 76
1836	REV. Daniel A. Clark (1779-1840) Congregationalist Pastor, Massachusetts & New York	The Nature And Results Of Sanctification. JOHN Xvii. 17. Sanctify Them Through Thy truth; thy word Is truth.	The National Preacher Magazine
1837	Rev. Stephen Remington (Methodist Episcopal Pastor, New York)	Gift Of God, Which Is Eternal Life, Contrasted With Wages Of Sin, Which Is Death, Closed With Objections Against Universalism	Anti-Universalism; or, Universalism Shown to be Unscriptural
1837	Thomas Jefferson Sawyer (1804 - 1899), Universalist	Letters to Stephen Remington in Review of his Lectures on Universalism	Universalist Union Newspaper



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	Minister and Educator		
1839	Rev. Joseph Jones of Newchurch, London	In Expression 'Many Mansions,' He Alludes To Palaces Of Earthly Potentates, Or To Jewish Temple, Which Had Chambers Round About It: Probably Intimating That In World Of Blessedness There Is Ample Room For Saints In Their Various Orders, According To Their Different Measures Of Attainment In Pious Excellence	Plain and Practical Sermons
1843	W.W. Phelps (1792 – 1872) or Joseph Smith (1805-1844), Latter-day Saint Founder	The Answer to W.W. Phelps, Esq.: A Vision	Times and Seasons
1844	Hosea Ballou 2nd (1796-1861) son of Universalist Founder	Article 11 - In My Father's House are Many Mansions	Universalist Quarterly
1844	Joseph Smith (1805 – 1844), Latter-day Saint Founder	Nauvoo Address on Resurrection	History of The Church
1848 Publication date	John Angell James (1785-1859): British Congregational Minister	High State Of Religion In World, Exalted State Of Honor & Happiness In World To Come; Different Degrees Of Glory In Celestial Kingdom	The Church in Earnest
1850	Henry Bidleman Bascom (1796—1850), Methodist Episcopal Bishop	Different Degrees Of Glory Affirmed With Regard To Inhabitants Of Heaven, Not Inconsistent With Preceding Views	Sermons from the Pulpit (1850)
1854 (Second Edition)	George S. Faber (1773 – 1854), Anglican Theologian	Imagery Employed By Christ Has Been Borrowed From Numerous Small Chambers Or Mansions, Which Were Attached To The Outer Wall Of Both Temple And Oracle Round About; Mansions Must Be Sought Elsewhere; They Belong To Far More Ample House Of God	The Many Mansions in the House of the Father, Scripturally Discussed and Practically Considered
1859	John Angell James (1785-1859): British Congregational Minister	Different Degrees of Glory	Grace Gems Website
1860	President Brigham Young (1801—1877)	The Three Glories	Journal of Discourses
1860	Octavius Winslow (1808—1878) Calvinist Baptist Author	Chapter “The Clouds of the Christian, the Chariot of God”	Help Heavenward
1860	J.C. Ryle (1816—1900) (Evangelical Anglican Bishop of Liverpool)	Eternity!	Gospel Gems Website
1860	J.C. Ryle (1816 – 1900) (Evangelical Anglican Bishop of Liverpool)	Chrysostom, Augustine, Several Other Ancient Writers Think "Many Mansions" Mean Degrees Of Glory; Argument In	Expository Thoughts On John 23, Expository

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		Favour Of Idea Does Not Appear To Me Satisfactory; That There Are Degrees Of Glory In Heaven Undoubtedly True, But I Do Not Think It Is Truth Of This Text	Thoughts on the Gospel
1860	Editor and author of many articles: Norman MacLeod, D.D. (1812 – 1272), One of Her Majesty's Chaplains for Scotland	Meditations on Heaven No. VIII. "In my Father's house there are many mansions."— John xiv. 2.	Good Words
1863	Ernst Noeldechen, German Biblical Scholar	Die Kirchliche Lehre Von Den Graden Der Seligkeit Nach Ihrem Biblischen Grunde Und Ihrer Geschichtlichen Entwicklung (The Church's Doctrine Of The Degrees Of Happiness After Their Biblical Basis And Its Historical Development)	Die Grade Der Seligkeit: Ein Beitrag Zur Eschatologie (The Degree Of Happiness: A Contribution To Eschatology)
1864	William Branks (1812-1879), Minister of the Parish of Torpichen & Author	Differences Of Rank Exist Among God's Children In State Of Grace; Analogy Countenances View, Which Scripture Confirms, That Same Is Case Among Those Who Are In State Of Glory	Meet for Heaven: A State of Grace Upon Earth the Only Preparation for a State of Glory in Heaven
1877	F W Farrar (1831—1903), British Pastor and Theological Writer	Sermon IV - Are there Few that Be Saved?	Eternal Hope: Five Sermons Preached in Westminster Abbey
1880	Elder Orson Pratt (1811 – 1881), Latter-day Saint Apostle	The Power Of God To Communicate Intelligence—Difference In Capacity Between The Mortal And The Immortal—The Future Of Man, Etc	Journal of Discourses
1881	President Wilford Woodruff (1807—1898), Latter-day Saint Prophet	"Vision" Revelation Gives More Light, More Truth, More Principle Than Any Revelation Contained In Any Other Book	Journal of Discourses
1881	l'abbé Charles Arminjon (1824-1885), French Catholic Spiritual Leader	Enfin Les Élus Ressuscités Posséderont La Clarté. Ils Seront Environnés D'une Telle Splendeur, Qu'ils Apparaîtront Comme Autant De Soleils – A La Vérité. Cette Clarté Sera Départie À Des Degrés Divers Aux Élus, Suivant L'inégalité De Leurs Mérites	Fin du monde présent et mystères de la vie future
1881	Rev. Samuel Cox (1826 – 1893), English Nonconformist Divine and Christian Universalist	Some Features of the Life Everlasting: St. John xiv. 2, 23.	The Expositor, edited by Samuel Cox, Sir William Robertson Nicoll, James Moffatt
1882	Marcel Bouix (1806-1889), French Catholic Spiritual Leader	Que l'Union des Bienheureux avec Dieu aura Différents Degrés	Traité de l'amour de Dieu

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1886	Rev. Nathaniel West, D.D.	Daniel's Revelation—Sublime Events of the Future—Destiny of Israel's Righteous Dead—Splendor of the Coming Age—Millennial Glory Succeeded by "The New Heaven and the New Earth."	The Home Work Of D. L. Moody
1888	President Charles W. Penrose (1832—1925), Latter-day Saint First Presidency	Justice Tempered with Mercy; Loss Sustained by Disobedient; Doom of the Sons of Perdition; Celestial, Terrestrial and Telestial Glories; Redemption & Glorification of Earth; Salvation of Whole Race	"Mormon" Doctrine, Plain and Simple: or Leaves From the Tree of Life
1889	James M. King	Lord Christ Spoke Of Temple As Father's House; In It Were Many Mansions Or Apartments: One For Leper, Who Was Healed. To Purify Himself; Another For Nazarite, Term Of Whose Vow Had Expired, To Be Shaven And Cleansed; Another For Treasures And Musical Instruments Of Levites	Homiletic review: an international magazine of religion, theology ..., Volume 17
1897	St. Therese of Lisieux (1873—1897), French Catholic Saint	In Heaven God Will Give His Chosen Their Fitting Glory, Last Will Have No Reason To Envy First	Story of a Soul
1897	St. Therese of Lisieux (1873—1897), French Catholic Saint	I Desire To Fulfill Perfectly Thy Holy Will, And To Reach The Degree Of Glory Thou Hast Prepared For Me In Thy Kingdom	Prayers of Saint Thérèse
1898	Alexander Maclaren (1826—1910), Leader Of English Non-Conformist Baptists	In My Father's House Are Many Mansions; If It Were Not So, I Would Have Told You—JOHN Xiv. 2.	Many Mansions
1902	Contributor "A.G."	Eschatology	Theological Quarterly, Evangelical Lutheran Church
1902	Pastor D.L. Moody (1837 - 1899), American Evangelist and Publisher	Heaven: Its Riches	Chapter in book entitled "Heaven"
1913	Charles George Herbermann (1840 - 1916), Catholic Scholar and Publisher	Individual Eschatology	The Catholic Encyclopedia
1918	President Joseph F. Smith, Latter-day Saint Prophet	Vision of the Redemption of the Dead	Doctrine and Covenants
1918	Joseph Casimir Sasia, S.J. (1843 - 1928), Jesuit Catholic Scholar	Chapter 18 - The Various Degrees of Merit	The Future Life: According to the Authority of Divine Revelation, the Dictates of Sound Reason

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1920	Henry Barclay Swete, English Biblical Scholar	Like Temple, Many Such Chambers In World To Which Lord Going; Heavenly Temple Not Only For Divine Majesty, But Vast Palace Gives Shelter & Rest To As Many As Lord Willed; In Its Chambers, In Close Proximity To Presence-Chamber Of God, Many Will Find Rest & Refreshment	The last discourse and prayer of our Lord: a study of St. John XIV-XVII.
1922	Melvin J. Ballard, Latter-day Saint Apostle	The Three Degrees of Glory	Address, Ogden Tabernacle
1936	Fr. Reg. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (1877 – 1964), Catholic Thomist Scholar	La charité parfaite et les beatitudes (1er janvier 1936)	La Vie Spirituell n° 196
1941	C. S. Lewis (1898 – 1963), British Catholic Essayist, Theologian, and Apologist	The Weight of Glory	The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis: Family letters, 1905-1931
1942	N. B. Lundwall (1884 – 1969), Latter-day Saint Compiler and Publisher	The Vision Or The Degrees of Glory: Eternity Sketched in a Vision from God	Deseret Book
1947	Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (1877 - 1964), Philosopher / Theologian at Vatican	Degrees Of Pain In Hell; Our Immortal Soul Reunited Forever To That Body, Though In Different Degrees Of Merit & Demerit; Degree Of Our Life In Eternity Depends On Degree Of Merits At Moment Of Death; Many Mansions In Father's House Corresponding To Varied Merits	Life Everlasting
1949	E. Cecil McGavin, Latter-day Saint Scholar	Chapter 13: The Vision of Glories	Historical Background of the Doctrine and Covenants
1955	LaVerne Wesley Hofer, Biola University	Degrees In Reward And Punishment	Thesis at Biola University
1961	Sterling W. Sill (1903—1994), Assistant to Quorum of the Twelve	The Glory of the Sun & A Journey through Hell	Chapters in book entitled “The Glory of the Sun”
1964	Craig J. Ostler and Joseph Fielding McConkie, BYU Religious Scholars	Section 76: Revelations of the Restoration	A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants and Other Modern Revelations
1971 (1830’s Period LDS Beliefs)	Robert J. Matthews, BYU Religious Scholar	Degrees of Glory and the Bible Translation	The New Translation of the Bible 1830 – 1833: Doctrinal Developments
1974	Robert J. Woodford (BYU)	Section 76	The Historical

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	Ph.D Dissertation)		Development of the Doctrine and Covenants (Volumes I-III)
1984	Larry E. Dahl, BYU Religious Professor	The Vision of the Glories (D&C 76)	Studies in Scripture: The Doctrine and Covenants
1985 (1830's Period LDS Beliefs)	Grant Underwood, BYU Religion Professor	Saved Or Damned: Tracing a Persistent Protestantism in Early Mormon Thought	BYU Studies
1986	Robert L. Millet and Joseph Fielding McConkie, BYU Professors of Religion	Many Mansions (Chapter)	Life Beyond (Book)
1987	D. Michael Quinn, Former Professor of LDS History	"The Vision"	Early Mormonism and the Magic World-View
1991	Dr. Emma Disley, Non-LDS Professor of Religion	Degrees of Glory: Protestant Doctrines and the Concept of Rewards Hereafter	Journal of Theological Studies
1992	John MacArthur Jr., Evangelical Calvinist Pastor and Scholar	Different Degrees of Reward in Heaven and Punishment in Hell	Tape, GC 70-13, titled "Bible Questions and Answers"
1992	Larry E. Dahl, BYU Professor of Religion	Degrees of Glory	Encyclopedia of Mormonism
1992	Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, BYU Professor of Religion, Then CES Coordinator, Irvine, California	"Eternity Sketch'd in a Vision": the Poetic Version of Doctrine & Covenants 76	The Heavens are Open: 1992 Sperry Symposium on Doctrine and Covenants
1992	Craig Blomberg, Evangelical Calvinist Professor of Biblical Studies	Degrees Of Reward In The Kingdom Of Heaven?	Journal of Evangelical Theological Society (excerpts)
1993	J. I. Packer, Calvinist Evangelical Professor of Religion	There Will Be Different Degrees Of Blessedness And Reward In Heaven	Mortality; Judgement; Heaven: hell
1993	Alister McGrath, Calvinist Evangelical Professor of Religion	Whether There Are Relative Grades Or Ranks Among Those In Heaven	Christian Theology: An Introduction
1994	Wayne A. Grudem, Calvinist Evangelical Theologian	Degrees of Reward in Heaven	Systematic theology: an introduction to biblical doctrine
1994	John Brooke, Non-LDS Professor of Religious Studies	Chapter 8: The Mysteries Defined (Including Section 76)	The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644-

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			1844
1994	Dr. Michael Hicks, BYU Professor and LDS Historian	Joseph Smith, W. W. Phelps, and the Poetic Paraphrase of "The Vision"	Journal of Mormon History
1994	William J. Hamblin, George L. Mitton, and Daniel C. Peterson, BYU Professors of Religion	Mormon in the Fiery Furnace Or, Loftes Tryk Goes to Cambridge; A Review Of "The Refiner's Fire: The Making Of Mormon Cosmology, 1644-1844" By John L. Brooke	FARMS Review of Books
1995 (1830's Period LDS Beliefs)	Daniel Peterson, BYU Professor of Religion and Arabic	Review Of Grant Underwood, Saved Or Damned? Regarding Belief In Degrees Of Glory By Some Early Converts To Mormonism	BYU Studies
1996	Bob Wilkin, Executive Director, Grace Evangelical Society	The Biblical Distinction Between Eternal Salvation And Eternal Rewards: A Key to Proper Exegesis	Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society
1998	R. C. Sproul, Evangelical Calvinist Professor	There Will Be Degrees Of Blessedness In Heaven	Essential Truth of the Christian Faith: 100 Key Doctrines in Plain Language
1998	Bishop Kallistos Ware, Eastern Orthodox Scholar	Dare We Hope For The Salvation Of All? Origen, St Gregory of Nyssa and St Isaac the Syrian	The Inner Kingdom
1998	Robert L. Millet, BYU Professor of Religion	Chapter 2 - More Kingdoms Than One	Life After Death
1999	Dr. Barry R. Bickmore, BYU Professor	Three Degrees of Glory and Outer Darkness	FAIRlds website in Restoring the Ancient Church: Joseph Smith and Early Christianity
2000 (Expanded Commentary in 2006)	Lawrence R. Flake	Background of Doctrine & Covenants 76, "The Vision"	Three Degrees of Glory: Joseph Smith's Insights on the Kingdoms of Heaven
2001	Father Alexander, Russian Orthodox Leader	Kingdom of Glory	Father Alexander.org Website
2001	Stephen H. Robinson and H. Dean Garrett, BYU Professors of Religion	Section 76	A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants, Vol. 3
2001	LDS Church Curriculum	Section 76 - The Vision of the Degrees of Glory	LDS Institute Manual, Doctrine and Covenants
2001	Randy Alcorn, Evangelical Author	Christ's story about treasure in field is object lesson concerning heavenly treasure. No matter how great value of that earthly fortune, it would be worthless	The Randy Alcorn Treasure Principle

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		in eternity. In fact, it's exactly this kind of treasure that people waste their lives pursuing. Jesus appealing to what we do value—temporary, earthly treasure—in order to make analogy about what we should value—eternal, heavenly treasure	
2002	Bruce Wilkinson, Evangelical Professor and Author	We think that if God does reward us for serving Him, His reward will be a general commendation that will apply to everyone equally and won't change our future opportunities in His kingdom. But the truth of the Second Steward is that God will reward our work for Him, but it will be in direct proportion to how much we have multiplied our life for Him. His response will have a major and eternal impact on our future.	A Life God Rewards: Why Everything You Do Today Matters Forever
2002	Craig J. Hazen, Evangelical Professor at Biola University	The Apologetic Impulse In Early Mormonism: More Reasonable Beliefs about the Afterlife	The New Mormon Challenge
2002	Asher Intrater, Messianic Jewish Leader in Isreal	Rewards in Heaven	Revive Isreal.org Website
2002	Wayne Jackson, Editor, "Christian Courier" (Church of Christ)	Are There Degrees of Blessedness and Punishment in Eternity?	Christian Courier Magazine
2002	Craig Miller, Scholar of LDS History	Did Emanuel Swedenborg Influence LDS Doctrine? (excerpts)	Sunstone Symposium August 7-10, 2002
2005	Lutheran Church Missouri Synod	Degrees of Heaven / Hell	Lutheran Website
2005	Robert L. Millet, BYU Professor of Religion	Degrees of Glory	A Different Jesus? The Christ of the Latter-day Saints
2005	Dr. Richard L. Bushman, Latter-day Saint Scholar of LDS History	"The Vision," in Chapter Ten: Exaltation (1832-33)	Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling (195-202)
2005	Elder B. Renato Maldonado, LDS Area Authority Seventy, South America North Area	Messages from the Doctrine and Covenants: The Three Degrees of Glory	Ensign Article
2006	Blake Ostler, Latter-day Saint Scholar and Philosopher	Soteriology in LDS Thought - The Vision	Exploring Mormon Thought, Vol. 2
2006	Fr. Stephen Salaris, Father in the Antiochian Orthodox Church	"Sneak Previews" of the Heavenly Kingdom	The Word Magazine
2007	Marc A. Schindler, Latter-day Saint Scholar	Heaven and Hell	FAIRlds Website
2007	L.G., Blogger, Biola	Rewards and Punishment	Biola University

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	University Student		Blog
2008	J. B. Haws, Latter-day Saint Scholar and Seminary Teacher	Joseph Smith, Emanuel Swedenborg, and Section 76: Importance of the Bible in Latter-day Revelation	Doctrine and Covenants: Revelations in Context, 2008
2008	Casey Paul Griffiths, Latter-day Saint Scholar and Seminary Teacher	Universalism and the Revelation of Joseph Smith	Doctrine and Covenants: Revelations in Context
2008	Dr. David Reim, Lutheran Pastor and “Confessional” (Traditionalist) Lutheran Theologian, B.C., Canada	Examining and Applying the Scriptural Teaching of Rewards	Journal of Theology
2009	Donna Max, GospelDoctrine.org Administrator	DC 76 Historical Background	www.gospeldoctrine.org (Outstanding Independent Site for Gospel Doctrine Teachers)
2009	Edward T. Jones (Latter-day Saint Researcher)	Patristic Teachings on Degrees of Glory	Mormonism And The Christian Doctrine Of Deification (Excerpts) on the BackyardProfessor.com website
2009	Brandon Washington, Outstanding Black Pastor and Theology Student at Denve Seminary	Eternity, Life After Death - pt. 3 of 4	The Lamppost Online
2009 (December)	John Tvedtnes, BYU Professor of Religion	Three Degrees of Glory	Meridian Magazine Website

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## **Source Documents**

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### **Old Testament / First and Second Temple Period**

**Rachel Elior, Jewish Scholar**

**The Merkavah and the Sevenfold Pattern**

**The Three Temples (2009 Publication)**

#### **Chapter One - The Merkavah and the Sevenfold Pattern**

It seems that they consider the number as the principle of things, in respect both of matter; and of their changes and situations ... And all these seven heavens, as it is said, are number.



## **The Merkavah**

THE origins of the Merkavah concept lie in the Chariot Throne of the cherubim, whose divine pattern or prototype was shown to Moses in heaven and whose first representation in a cultic context is as 'two cherubim of gold', with outstretched wings, mounted on the cover of the Ark of the Covenant in the desert sanctuary. In the Holy of Holies (devir) of Solomon's Temple, two gold-plated cherubim shielded the cover of the Ark with their wings; their appearance, revealed to David in a vision as a divine pattern, is described in the parallel passage in Chronicles, which explicitly links the cherubim with the heavenly Chariot Throne: 'for the pattern of the chariot—the cherubim—those with outspread wings screening the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord'. The various traditions that pictured the cherubim as screening the Ark differ in their particulars: some place them above the cover of the Ark, others have them standing before it; common to all is the fact that their four wings touched. The divinely patterned chariot of the cherubim in the First Temple's Holy of Holies, the supposed throne of the Deity or site of his revelation in the Temple, did not survive the destruction, but lived on in mystical memory, which linked its cosmic prototype with its ritual meaning, and was perpetuated in prophetic and priestly traditions and in liturgical testimony. In these traditions, the very word merkavah became a symbolic concept expressive of the Holy of Holies and the Temple, both as a whole and in detail; it figured both in the divine prototype of the Temple (the supernal Heikhalot and their angelic cult), and in the memory of its earthly archetype (the Temple and its priests); its roots lay in the numinous foundations of an ancient ritual tradition that forged a bond between heaven and earth.

Biblical tradition explicitly ascribed the origins of the Merkavah to a divine pattern or prototype. The visionary tradition of the Merkavah repeatedly emphasized its four faces, while post-biblical tradition associated this divine prototype, facing all four points of the compass, with the universe and its microcosmic cultic representations: the Merkavah represented the annual cyclic cosmic order of time, based on a chronotopic fourfold axis unifying time and space. This unified space-time concept governed the fourfold cycle of seasons in nature, the four winds of the heavens', the 'four foundations of the wondrous firmament', and other multiples and derivatives of four in fixed proportions to the twelve months of the year. Thus, there were twelve diagonal divisions of the universe, twelve signs of the zodiac and forty-eight constellations, twenty-four hours in a day, twenty-four priestly and angelic courses performing their sacral duties, and 'twenty-four myriad thousand miles'. All these divisions derived from the divine chronotopic division melding time and place; they represented unifying links between the cosmic, the chronotopic, and the ritual, or between cycles of nature and cycles of time as reflected in the cultic order.

The Merkavah reflected time as the mystery of the creative process in nature, the eternal, divine order of Creation as embodied in fixed numerical proportions of cycles of time. Its constituent parts formed a multidimensional, concrete representation, in cultic terms, of the great clock of nature with its numerous fourfold subdivisions, whose interrelations were based on a fixed cyclic order that transformed time and place in accordance with the four seasons of the year. Correlated with this cosmic order was a fixed, fourfold order of ritual which observed the solar calendar; the latter was divided into 364 days, fifty-two sabbaths, and four equal quarters of ninety-one days—the annual seasons—each consisting of thirteen sabbaths (see below).

The Merkavah was thus a representation of the ritual order of cyclic ritual time, measured in sabbaths of days, i.e. weeks. But the four annual seasons in turn subdivided in accordance with a fixed sevenfold cyclic order; similarly, the concept of sacred cosmic place was also associated with a fixed sevenfold axis. The cyclic axis of sacred time derived from the seven days of Creation; accordingly, there are seven days in a week, counted in 'Sabbaths of days'; seven days of service performed by each priestly course serving in the Temple; seven days of consecration (miluim; see Lev. 8: B); and seven-week intervals between harvesting times (see below). The fixed spatial axis of sacred place, on the other hand, was embodied in seven firmaments, seven heikhalot, seven devirim, and seven merkavot.

The Merkavah tradition, then, established a chronotopic synchronization between the fourfold cycle and the sevenfold cycle, in regard to sacred time and sacred place alike, as a manifestation of the creative process of

nature; the eternal, cyclic, cosmic order was preordained in terms of set times and testimonies, a divine pattern maintained by angelic forces. This tradition was preserved by priests and angels, all observing a hallowed solar calendar based on these two cycles, to which ritual and liturgy conformed in both earthly Temple and supernal Heikhalot. Thus, sacred time was reflected on a microcosmic ritual scale by the natural cosmic order and the divine order in the calendar of seasons, weeks, and set times (= festivals), correlated with a cyclic order of liturgy; while sacred place was similarly reflected by various sevenfold, fourfold, and twelvefold ritual representations linking the Earthly Temple with the supernal worlds. All these elements came together in the sacred service as performed on earth by the priests and in the heavens by the angels, all guardians of the sacred heritage.

The origins of the mystical Merkavah tradition lie in the vision of the exiled priest Ezekiel son of Buzi, who prophesied towards the end of the First Temple period. Deported from Jerusalem to Babylonia with Jehoiachin, he saw a vision in which the Chariot Throne and its cultic representations in the ruined Temple assumed a divine dimension, to become the Merkavah, combining various elements from the Holy of Holies and the Temple courts into an eternal, visionary, cosmic entity transcending the limits of time and space. In addition to the heavenly Chariot Throne, Ezekiel also envisioned the future earthly Temple, whose service was entrusted exclusively—as Ezekiel repeatedly stressed—to the priests of the House of Zadok.

The next stage in the Merkavah tradition was the mystical vision of seceding priestly circles, who were barred from serving in the Second Temple in the last centuries BCE because of fundamental dissension concerning the sanctity of time and place and polemical disputes about sabbath and festivals, calendar and cult. Having withdrawn, as a consequence, from the earthly Temple, these circles, who called themselves 'sons of Zadok, the priests', ministered in their mind's eye, together with their angelic counterparts, in a divine Chariot Throne which, inspired by Ezekiel's Merkavah vision and the tradition of the Temple service, they recreated in their writings in poetic and visionary terms. The Zadokite priests are referred to by a variety of priestly epithets: in the Community Rule; in the 'Rule for all the congregation of Israel ... when they shall join the Community to walk according to the law of the sons of Zadok the priests', in a Qumran scroll known as the Damascus Document, which calls them 'the sons of Zadok, the priests ... behold they are the interpretation of the last Law'; in the fragments of the Damascus Document found in the Cairo Genizah; in the War Scroll; and in other Qumranic works. They served together with their mystical angelic counterparts, referred to in Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice in typically priestly terms: 'priests of the inner sanctum (kohanei korev) who serve before the King of holiest holiness', 'Priests of the inner sanctum in his royal sanctuary, ministers of the Presence in his glorious &via', 'priests of the highest of high', 'Angels of Holiness', 'chief priests', 'seven priestly factions for the wondrous Temple', 'Chief Princes', and 'Chiefs of the Princes of Wondrous Priesthoods'. The terrestrial chief priests, who had withdrawn from the Temple, and the heavenly priests of the inner sanctum, who were painted with a clearly priestly brush, sang together, in a permanent cyclic order, the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice; in a regular, prescribed daily, weekly, monthly order of set times they recited psalms, songs, hymns, and Kedushahs, shared by angels and men. They did all this in a cyclic, weekly order of liturgy, governed by the ritual solar calendar of weeks (sabbaths) and quarterly seasons, and correlated with the order of priestly courses, also subdivided in conformity with sabbaths and multi-annual cycles, and named after the new months and the festivals.

The last stage of the Merkavah tradition in ancient mystical literature was formulated by certain circles of priestly affiliation, active after the destruction of the Second Temple, who composed the Heikhalot literature in the first centuries CE. The protagonists of this literature—known as 'descenders of (or to) the Chariot' and associated with the high priest Rabbi Ishmael' and with Rabbi Akiva, who 'entered the Pardes' (an expression symbolizing engagement in esoteric speculation pertaining to the heavenly sanctuaries)—aimed to perpetuate the destroyed Temple and its cult through their vision, by 'descending' to the Chariot Throne and 'ascending' to the supernal Heikhalot—that is, heavenly temples or sanctuaries. There they met their mystical counterparts: the ministering angels, the angels of glory and the angels on high, as well as the high priest of the supernal worlds, Enoch son of Jared, also known as Metatron, the mystical angelic protagonist of the priestly literature from Qumran. The angels who serve in those supernal worlds bathe and purify themselves,

sing and recite the Kedushah, exalt, bless with holy names, the kindle fiery flames, thus perpetuating the priestly and Temple ceremonies in the seven supernal sanctuaries, the Heikhalot.

Scholars are divided as to the historical identity and social, religious, and cultural venue of the various circles that were associated at different times in antiquity with the Merkavah and Heikhalot traditions, the mystical priesthood and the angels, the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, the heavenly Kedushah, and the songs of the ministering angels. However, sizeable excerpts and fragments from the highly diverse literary opus of these circles are now available and invite discussion and investigation. Though generally incomplete, these excerpts provide sufficient evidence of the cosmic, mystical, and ritual attitudes of these circles; of their affiliation with the priesthood and the Temple; of their connections with worship and the cyclic liturgical ceremonies performed together with the angels; of their myths, mystical lore, and cult, linking heaven and earth; of their stringent rules of purity and impurity; of their calendar and festivals; of the prohibitions that they practised; and of their polemical position and self-perception as earthly correlates of the angels. In what follows I shall discuss the various stages in the formation and development of the mystical priestly tradition in antiquity, with its visionary metamorphoses of Temple and priesthood which, destroyed and desecrated, became objects of controversy; lost in earthly reality, they were perpetuated in an ideal, utopian guise through the divine Chariot Throne—the Merkavah—and the angelic priesthood in the supernal sanctuaries.

### **The Sevenfold Pattern**

As already stated, the mystical Merkavah tradition evolved from the vision of Ezekiel son of Buzi the priest, in which the cherubim and sacred creatures in the earthly and heavenly Temples were fused together. Ezekiel envisioned a fourfold configuration of sacred, multi-faced, winged creatures, which could not be subsumed under any category clearly distinguishable as either earthly or heavenly; the fourfold nature of these creatures, facing all four points of the compass, is stressed again and again. The Merkavah tradition was taken up again in the literature of the secessionist priesthood discovered at Qumran, which is frequently “concerned with deciphering the cosmic order as revealed through harmonies expressed in fourfold numbers and sevenfold cycles, in both earthly Temple and heavenly sanctuaries. Many of the works of this literature, written in the heat of polemics and controversy towards the end of the Second Temple period, ignore the barriers between heaven and earth, angels and human beings, providing descriptions of visions featuring Merkavah, cherubim and angels, priests and their heavenly counterparts blessing, praising, and singing sacred songs in the supernal sanctuaries, according to a fixed, cyclic, cosmic order]] The final stage was that of Heikhalot and Merkavah literature, composed in mystical, ornamented language in the first centuries after the destruction of the Temple with the aim of mystically perpetuating the tradition. Many works of Merkavah tradition feature such subjects as crossing the borders between the worlds; 'descending to the Merkavah'; heavenly sanctuaries; angelic rituals and sacred song; the cyclic liturgies preserved by the angels whose task it was to supervise cosmic order; and the portrayal of that order in the divine Merkavah in the supernal worlds.

In the early, formative stages of Merkavah tradition, the priestly authors, whose writing drew on their own mythical and mystical traditions and displayed a unique affinity for the book of Ezekiel and its peculiar perceptions of priesthood and the Temple (chs.40-8), were unreservedly opposed to the Temple cult as performed in their times and to the very concept of time that governed it. In their works, written in the last centuries BCE and the first century (before the destruction of the Temple), they referred to themselves by various names alluding to the priesthood in general and the House of Zadok in particular, to concepts bound up with adherence to the righteous path and observance of the covenant, with upholding testimony and the sacred set times (festivals), with light, sanctity, and the priestly-angelic community: 'sons of Zadok, the priests, guardians of the Covenant', 'chief priests', 'knowers of righteousness', 'plantation of righteousness', 'root of growth', 'shoot of righteousness', 'congregation of holiness', 'Council of the Community', 'those who enter the Covenant', 'Sons of Light', 'Sons of Dawn', or 'those who enter the new Covenant'. In Heikhalot literature, composed after the destruction of the Temple, they were known by names referring to the divine Merkavah: 'descenders of [or to] the Merkavah', 'viewers of the Merkavah', or 'heroes of the company', as against 'band after band of angels from the firmament and company after company from the heavens'.

The priestly circles whose works were found at Qumran were adamantly opposed to the Temple cult of their times. They rejected the lunar calendar then governing the cult and instead upheld the superiority of a cultic calendar based on the solar year, demanding that the regular succession of sabbaths and festivals be derived from that calendar. Up until the destruction of the Second Temple, they fought for the concept of the Covenant and the Festival of Oaths or Covenants, also known as the Festival of Weeks (Heb. shavuot / shevuot), for every dimension of the sacred service that explicitly involved any aspect of cycle, number, date, fixed time, and counting, thus reflecting the regularity of the cosmic order; they stressed observance of the laws of purity and the rules of the Temple service associated with the perception of sacred place; and insisted on the superior right of the Zadokite priests to settle any question relating to Temple rituals and matters of purity and impurity, by virtue of their divine election to serve in the Temple and their eternal, sacred, heaven-granted authority. In much of their struggle over the legitimate performance of the cult, in questions relating to the calendar, the festivals, and the administration of Temple affairs, they relied on traditions of angelic origin found in Enoch, Jubilees, the Rule Scroll, and the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice. They saw themselves as a congregation or community revolving, so they believed, around an angelic and priestly 'oneness' or 'togetherness' (Heb. yahad), beyond time, from which derived the authority and legitimacy of their traditions, laws, and sacred service; they in fact referred to themselves, the Community, by the same word, yahad. The angels were witnesses to the Covenant, guardians of the calendar of sabbaths and festivals, and partners in sacred rites that conformed to the cyclic solar calendar, with its subdivision into quarters (= seasons) and sabbaths (= weeks).

The Heikhalot mystics, active after the destruction of the Temple, relinquished the oppositional aspect of their thought and the cultic controversies characteristic of the mystical priesthood prior to the destruction. Instead, they formulated heavenly, priestly, and mystical perceptions of the Temple and its rites, concentrating on perpetuating the now defunct earthly cult through its angelic counterpart in the world of the Merkavah—the Chariot Throne—and the Heikhalot—the heavenly sanctuaries. To that end, they created mythical, mystical, and liturgical modes of expression that bridged the gap between the sacred service of angels and human beings. These modes of expression were a numinous written record of priestly and angelic traditions concerning (1) sacred place—the world of the Merkavah, portrayed as seven sanctuaries or palaces in vertical sequence, facing all four points of the compass, thus preserving a sevenfold liturgical cyclicality synchronized with the four seasons of the year; (2) sacred time—the solar calendar, subdivided into four seasons and into sequences of seven-day sabbaths or weeks, associated with the figure of Enoch son of Jared, the seventh patriarch of the world, also known as Metatron, the Angel or Prince of the Countenance; and (3) sacred ritual—the tradition of oaths and covenants, names, songs of praise and blessings, the Kedushah, thanksgiving, all associated with septuples, shared by angels and priests, rooted in the teachings of Metatron and the angels.

The cultic conceptions and controversial positions espoused by the secessionist priesthood, which took shape in the stormy atmosphere of the last centuries ace, were excluded from the canon and considered non-canonical or 'extraneous' literature; their traditions were suppressed and almost vanished until rediscovered in the Judaean Desert Scrolls at Qumran. They were opposed, directly and otherwise, to the positions commonly maintained in the second and first centuries BCE, the Hasmonaean period, in regard to the three foundations of the cult: sacred place, sacred time, and sacred ritual.

All over the ancient world, temples were considered as a microcosm of the universe; they embodied sacred place, expressing the oneness of time, space, and ritual as a reflection of cosmic order, the numerical harmony inherent in that order, and the eternal cycles of heaven and earth. This ideal order, seen as an archetypal reproduction of the order of Creation and the underlying secret of creation and life, had a sacred numerical dimension, associated with the laws of nature and the fixed times of cult and ritual; a mythical, narrative dimension, delimiting the group's shared identity with its commandments and prohibitions, of heavenly origin but recorded in an earthly text; and a ritual dimension, creating a bond between secret and manifest and perpetuating these affinities between text, number, and narrative. These various dimensions

were proclaimed in cyclic ceremonies which measured out the creative progress of manifest time in terms of seasonal changes and fertility cycles; the passage of time was celebrated in song and sacrifice which strove to close the gap between heaven and earth, picturing an ideal relationship between the manifest and the secret dimensions—a relationship representing a cosmic ritual unity between sacred place, sacred time, and sacred testimony, which together determined the continuity of Creation, agricultural plenty, and human fertility. The meaning of ritual in relation to the temple as microcosm has been aptly defined by a historian of religions, Jonathan Smith: 'Ritual represents the creation of a controlled environment ... [It is] a means of performing the way things ought to be in conscious tension to the way things are in such a way that this ritualized perfection is recollected in the ordinary, uncontrolled, course of things.' The temple and its ceremonies represent the ideal world, ruled by the primary divine order. Hence, a disturbance of any one of its components—the pattern of sacred time, sacred place, or sacred ritual—bound up as they are in the numerical and ritual oneness of nature and culture, testimony and festivals, signs and covenants, religion and law, purity and impurity, life and death, is seen as having a calamitous effect on the cosmic order of things: it wreaks havoc with the mutual relationship between heaven and earth.

The secessionist priesthood whose works were discovered at Qumran considered the Temple of their times, throughout the Hasmonaean period and the previous two decades, as desecrating and violating the hallowed rules of purity, as impure, so defiled that they withdrew from its service. This follows from the letter known as *Miktsat ma'asei hatorah* (MMT), written at the beginning of the Hasmonaean period. In this work, which deals with the laws of purity in the Temple and recounts the various sins which brought about the defilement of the Temple, we read: 'And you know that we have separated from the mass of the people and from their impurity and from mingling with them in these matters and from being in contact with them in these matters.' The same is stated explicitly in the Commentary on Habakkuk: 'As for that which he said, Because of the blood of the city and the violence done to the land [Hab. 2: 71: interpreted, the city is Jerusalem, where the Wicked Priest committed abominable deeds and defiled the Temple of God.] The target of the attacks in both works is most probably Jonathan the Hasmonaean, who defiled the Temple through his priesthood; in any event, the text is clearly referring to the Temple of the writer's time as defiled by the Hasmonaean priesthood. Similarly, we read in the Damascus Document: 'Moreover, they profane the Temple', 'they profaned the Temple', 'the third is profanation of the Temple', 'to defile the city of the sanctuary with their uncleanness', and even more strongly in the Testament of Levi: 'You will be inflated with pride over your priesthood, exalting yourselves not merely by human standards but contrary to the commands of God; . . . you will deride the sacred things. Therefore the sanctuary which the Lord chose shall become desolate through your uncleanness.'

As against the impure, defiled Temple from which they had withdrawn, administered as it was by 'Sons of Darkness' (implicitly identified as the priests of the Hasmonaean dynasty, of the division of Jehoiarib, who had usurped the high priesthood), those priestly circles who considered themselves to be the 'Sons of Light' and explicitly identified themselves as the priests of the House of Zadok (deprived of the priesthood in the Hasmonaean period), together with their allies, envisaged a super-temporal, heavenly Temple, drawing on traditions of the First Temple and Ezekiel's vision, as one deduces from the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and from the Blessings Scroll, both found at Qumran. Parallel to the heavenly Temple in the world of the Merkavah was a 'sanctuary of men' for the priests and other members of the Community—an expression occurring in 4QFlorilegium and defined as follows: 'He has commanded that a Sanctuary of men be built for himself, that there they may send up, like the smoke of incense, the works of the Law.' The nature of this 'sanctuary of men' is described in detail in the Rule Scroll and in MMT. On the evidence of the scrolls, the members of the Community scrupulously observed the cyclic order of sabbaths and festivals according to the solar calendar, shared the cyclic celebrations of the sacred rites with the angels, and meticulously adhered to the stringent laws of purity and impurity that made it possible for them to keep angelic company. Before the schism became complete, probably in the early stages of the separation, when there was still some communication, the writers of MMT proposed the institution of alternative, pure rites, to replace the impure, false order prevailing in the earthly Temple;<sup>35</sup> elsewhere, however—as in the Temple Scroll, New

Jerusalem, the Damascus Document, and the Rule of the Congregation of Israel at the End of Days—they appear to have lost hope of any further contact with the Temple of their times.

The works of this literature describe a different, gigantic, earthly Temple, or a future Temple built mostly according to a square plan measured in sevenfold units, influenced by biblical traditions and by Ezekiel's vision of the Temple's Between rejecting the contemporary, desecrated Temple, deploring the defiling rites performed in it by unworthy priests, and harbouring hopes for the reconstitution of the future Temple, with its legitimate cult restored, at the End of Days, the seceding priests seem to have focused their sacred service on the eternal heavenly Temple and its angelic cult.

The essential feature of the heavenly Temple—the world of the Merkavah - was its profound relationship with Ezekiel's Chariot Throne/Merkavah, the cherubim, and the sacred creatures, mounted in their four-faced spatial pattern and their sevenfold vertical pattern, representing sacred time measured in weeks/ sabbaths and sacred place as embodied in seven heikhalot and seven merkavot. This chronotopic order, unifying time and place around a common sevenfold-fourfold axis, was associated with the mysteries of sanctity, eternity, communion, and life itself, with the mutual relationship between cycles of time, cycles of fertility, and tangible prototypes representing the mystery of hidden things. The concepts of season, cycle, sanctity, four/quarter, seven/week/oath (all three derive from the same root in Hebrew sh-v-a'), purity and benediction, community and communion, all have double meanings, referring to sacred time and place alike and through them to the divine Covenant, to the cycle of seven festivals, to holiness and benediction. On the human plane, the same concepts are also associated with betrothal and union for purposes of fertility and reproduction, which involve cycles of ovulation counted in four-week periods, the seven-day term of purification, self-sanctification, covenant and oath, the seven benedictions of betrothal, the husband's conjugal duties, and the laws governing conjugal union.

Many of the spatial, temporal, ritual, and liturgical components of the heavenly Temple are arranged in a sevenfold pattern relating to time and place in a context of holiness: the seven days of Creation and their cyclic recurrence as fifty-two weeks, celebrated by the priestly courses performing their sacral duties in cycles of seven days and sequences of seven festivals; and by septuples of angels discharging their functions in similar fashion. Alongside this sevenfold motif, as noted above, was a fourfold motif: four seasons of the year, four points of the compass, twelve diagonal boundaries, twelve months of the solar year, and twelve signs of the zodiac. (Cultic representations in the earthly Temple of this sevenfold and twelvefold order, such as the seven-branched candelabrum, the twelve stones of the priest's breastplate, and so on, will be discussed later.) It was the task of the priests and their angelic counterparts to observe the seasons and festivals; that observance was governed on the time axis by a synchronization of the calendar of sabbaths, divided into four equal quarters/seasons of thirteen sabbaths each, with the calendar of biblical festivals, which provided for seven festivals within a seven-month period from Passover in the first month (Nisan) to the Festival of Ingathering in the seventh (Tishrei).<sup>37</sup> In this twenty-eight-week period there were four festivals of first fruits at intervals of seven sabbaths (the first two coinciding with the biblical festivals of Omer and Shavuot): the Festival of the First Barley (26 Nisan), the Festival of the First Wheat (15 Sivan), the Festival of the First Wine (3 Av), and the Festival of the First Olive Oil (22 Elul). They were always celebrated on a Sunday and involved pilgrimage to the Temple; they are detailed in the Temple Scroll and in MATT 4Q394, frgs. 1-2 i-v.

The components of the heavenly Temple constitute a multifaceted cosmic reality, unifying place, time, and ritual. The dimension of place is represented in myth and ritual, as we shall see later, by such elements as the Garden of Eden and the tree of life, Paradise (the mystical Pardes), the Merkavah, the Holy of Holies, the cherubim, conjugal union and communion; time is represented by the eternity of the cyclic laws of nature, which dictate, on the one hand, cycles of life and fertility and, on the other, the sequence of covenants and festivals; while ritual consists of sacred song, sacred service, blessing, and praise recited by priests and angels. The axis that holds all these disparate elements together is the number seven, which is common to the divine, sacred cycles of the seven days of Creation and the seven days of purification, the seven days of consecration (of the priests) and the seven appointed times, the seven benedictions, the seven branches of the

candelabrum and the seven priestly vestments, and the whole complex of 'sevens' (or heptads) associated with the sacred service and specified in the Priestly Code.

All components of the Merkavah undergo a process of liturgical personification, by virtue of which they themselves become the bearers of sanctity and ritual. The ritual and liturgical elements were divided or multiplied by seven after experiencing a visionary metamorphosis that linked them to their divine origin, to become seven holy precincts, seven chariot thrones, seven devirim (Holies of Holies), seven heikhalot, and seven angelic priesthoods, in a vertical heavenly space comprising seven firmaments, as we read in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice. This fixed vertical sevenfold axis of space is correlated with a cyclic horizontal axis of time: the sacred space is sliced, as it were, into horizontal septuples/ heptads of time, invested with sanctity in accordance with the solar calendar, which itself is divided into sabbaths and weeks in a fixed, eternal, cyclic sequence preserved by angelic and priestly courses. This ritual and liturgical calendar, measured from the fourth day of Creation—the day on which the heavenly luminaries were created—and onward, in regular, sevenfold cycles, is observed in the heavens by the princes of the angelic priesthoods, who recite the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and continuously proclaim 'seven times with seven . . . ; and on earth by the twenty-four priestly courses, which share their sacral duties according to an immutable order, each for an appointed seven-day span. The names of the twenty-four priestly courses—whose number corresponds to the number of hours in a day—designate the order of succession of weeks in the ritual and liturgical calendar, in which each of the four seasons is a cycle of thirteen sabbaths.

The system of priestly courses was based on I Chronicles 24, where the Chronicler, expressing priestly tradition, describes how King David and two leading priests, Zadok and Ahimelech, divided the two families of Aaronide priests, the descendants of Aaron's sons Eleazar and Itamar, into twenty-four divisions or 'courses'. Various historical problems are presented by this biblical tradition and the lists of priestly courses in the Bible. Whether the priestly courses were indeed established only in the early days of the Second Temple, as claimed by modern scholars, or whether they in fact go back to the time of David and Solomon, in accordance with biblical tradition, Qumran writings surely considered them of paramount importance. The various fragments of the so-called 'Calendars of Priestly Courses' (also referred to as the Scroll of Priestly Courses, known in Hebrew as mishmarot) describe a sequence of twenty-four priestly courses, officiating in rotation for one week each in a fixed liturgical order, thus attesting to the fixed, cyclic rhythm of cosmic and liturgical time. The Calendars specify the name of the officiating course on the first day of each month, at each appointed time, and on each sabbath in a concise formulation, for example 'The first year; the first month; on the fifth, in Jedaiah, on the thirtieth of the month', that is, 'In the first year of the six-year cycle, in the first month [Nisan], on the fifth day [= Thursday] of the week of [the course of] Jedaiah, which falls on the thirtieth of the first month.' Only the priestly courses serving in the first week of the month are named, as well as those serving on festivals; the other courses officiated consecutively in the prescribed order. Days of the week are also specified with reference to the priestly courses then on duty, for example 'Creation, on the fourth, in Gamul', that is, 'On the fourth day [= Wednesday] of the week of the course of Gamul will fall the New Year of the week of Creation.' The lunar phases (new moon, full moon, etc.) and times relating to sabbatical and jubilee years are also stated in that way. The underlying reference system is thus a sequence of six-year cycles, rigidly prescribed over periods of six jubilees.

In order to prevent any possible desecration of the sabbath, each course, having served its term of duty, was replaced by its successor on the morning of the Sunday of the new week. Rabbinical tradition, in contrast, decreed that the rotation should take place on the sabbath itself, after the additional sacrifice of the sabbath had been offered. Indeed, the Sages did not prescribe a fixed order of service; instead, lots were drawn during the pilgrimage festivals in Jerusalem to determine which priestly course would serve first, the rest continuing in order.

The six-year cycle was necessary to correlate the calendar of priestly courses with the solar calendar. Indeed, elementary arithmetic shows that the lowest common multiple of the two numbers 24 (the number of courses) and 364 (the number of days in a (solar) year) is  $2084 = 6 \times 364$ . Thus, for example, the priestly

course on duty in the first week of the year (which began on a Wednesday) would come back to the same week after a cycle of six years, during which it would have served a total of thirteen times. The New Year festival the first day of the first month—in the first and fourth years of the six-year cycle always fell on a Wednesday, the day on which the heavenly luminaries had been created. This was also the vernal equinox, when day and night are of equal length; and since the moon was created full, it is full on both those days. In other words, once in three years, on the first day of the first month (Nisan), the sun's and moon's paths return to their position at Creation; this event is referred to in Qumran literature as a sign, Heb. ot. According to Milik, thirty days were added every three years to co-ordinate the paths of the sun and the moon ( $364 \times 3 = 354 \times 3 + 30$ ). Another possibility, more plausible, is that a week was added every seven years in the sabbatical year (shemitah) ( $7 \times 365 = 7 \times 364 + 7$ ).

As against the mishmarot scrolls with their twenty-four courses as in the Bible, the number prescribed in the War Scroll is twenty-six, which is half the number of weeks in the solar year:

The fathers of the Community are fifty-two. The chief priests shall be appointed after the High Priest and his deputy, twelve chiefs to serve always before God. And the twenty-six chiefs of the courses shall serve in the courses. After them the chief Levites, to serve always twelve, one for each tribe, and the chiefs of their courses shall serve, each in his place. And the chiefs of the tribes and fathers of the Community after them, to attend always at the gates of the Temple. And the chiefs of their courses, with their numbered men, shall attend at their appointed times, at the beginnings of months and On Sabbaths, and on all the days of the year.

This may be a reference to a system based on the number of weeks in a half-year. Another possibility is that the War Scroll was referring to some ideal, eschatological situation featuring a sevenfold correlation between weeks, courses, and years.

Various inscriptions listing priestly courses have been found, both in the Land of Israel (Caesarea, Ashkelon, Kisufim, Beit El, Rehov, Nazareth) and elsewhere (Yemen); their presence is undoubtedly linked with the move of priests to Galilee after the Bar-Kokhba revolt. The question of the relationship between these inscriptions and the Qumran tradition of priestly courses and their preservation of liturgical order has yet to be studied. The same applies to a possible relationship with the evidence of priestly and liturgical traditions in Heikhalot literature, written long after the destruction of the Temple (see below, Ch. 10), when the priestly courses were meaningless as an organizational framework for Temple service. Their only possible significance then was to memorialize the sacred ritual and preserve its liturgical calendar.

Sacred heavenly space exhibits a vertical sevenfold pattern; it is divided in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice into 'seven lofty holy places', 'seven wondrous territories', 'seven holy mysteries', 'seven most holy precincts', 'seven devirim of the priesthoods', 'seven holy precincts', or into seven heikhalot in seven firmaments. But it also displays a fourfold pattern, exemplified by the four sides of the Chariot Throne, the four points of the compass, 'four foundations of the wondrous firmament'. In parallel to these spatial patterns the secessionist priests observed and preserved a fixed, eternal and continuous, cyclic, sevenfold pattern of sacred time, divided into four equal seasons. They regarded the cultic calendar that governed the sacred Temple services around the time of their secession—based on a lunar calendar of 354 days, counted in months of unequal length dependent on human discretion, based on variable human observations of the new moon—as false and arbitrary, an infringement of the Covenant, sinful and wicked. This newly imposed lunar calendar was to be replaced by the ancient priestly solar calendar, re-establishing the sacred ritual and liturgical calendar of divine origin, extant from the very beginning of time, characterized by a fixed, eternal, cosmic, sevenfold and fourfold symmetry, counted in sabbaths of days (= weeks) and cycles of annual seasons. The sacred divisions of the solar calendar are outlined by the Angel of the Countenance, speaking to Moses in Jubilees:

And all of the weeks which will be commanded will be fifty-two weeks of days, and all of them are a complete year. Thus it is engraved and ordained on the heavenly tablets.... And you, command the children



of Israel so that they shall guard the years in this number, three hundred and sixty-four days, and it will be a complete year. And no one shall corrupt its (appointed) time from its days or from its feasts.

This system was based on a solar calendar of 364 days, consisting of fifty-two weeks, whose sabbaths were counted in a fixed annual cycle, divided symmetrically among the four annual seasons, and on a prescribed mathematical calculation of the progress of the solar year: twelve thirty-day months, with four further days added to differentiate the four annual seasons. These 364 days were divided into four quarters, or seasons, each of thirteen weeks, which together constituted a year of fifty-two sabbaths.

The principles of the beautiful, harmonic, mathematical calculation underlying the solar year, which according to priestly tradition derived from a divine origin, are enunciated in detail in 1 Enoch 72: 32, 74: 10-12; 75:2; 82: 6; 2 Enoch 13-17, 41-8; Jubilees 6: 23-38; 4QMMT A II-III; Psalms Scroll IIQPs<sup>o</sup> XXVII, 2-I I; mention of these principles may also be found in the Temple Scroll, the Damascus Document, the Scroll of Priestly Courses, and the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice. The solar year began on the day on which the heavenly luminaries were created Wednesday—and was divided into consecutive quarters of fixed structure: ninety-one days divided into thirteen weeks; the sabbaths fell on fixed dates—the same ones in each quarter; the days on which the first days of months and the festivals fell were also known in advance—always falling on the same day of the week, the festivals on the same day of the month and in the same position within the quarter. No festival could ever fall on a sabbath, and neither could the first day of any month; the solar calendar could be used to determine the cycles of service of the twenty-four priestly courses, in sevenfold cycles of sabbatical years and jubilees.

This calendar, 'ordained and written in the heavenly tablets' and imprinted in the cyclic laws of nature, divided into seasons and signs of the zodiac based on an underlying fourfold, annual principle, reflects the divine pattern of time—the seven days of Creation and the various sevenfold divisions derived therefrom—as well as the harmonic principle linking cosmic divine time, as revealed in nature, and cultic time, as entrusted to human beings.

The sevenfold solar year, measuring time on the basis of a sacred principle amalgamating the cosmic, astronomical order and the ritual and liturgical order, was first learned from its guardians, the angels in heaven, who taught it to men in the time of Enoch, the seventh patriarch of the world, who in turn taught it to his descendants the priests Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah, as we read in the books of Enoch. It was later learned in Moses' day too, for he learned it on Mount Sinai on the roth of the third month, after being given the Torah on the 15th, from the Angel of the Countenance. Qumran literature also refers in this way to the high Priest, of whom it was said, May you be like an Angel of the Countenance in the Abode of Holiness, to the glory of God before you . . . Moses then imparted what he had heard from the angel to his brother, Aaron the priest, who became the cultic guardian of that information, as we read in Jubilees. From then on the solar calendar of sabbaths and festivals, seasons and jubilees, was in the keeping of the witnesses to the Covenant, angels and priests--the ministering angels known as the 'priests of the inner sanctum' and the Zadokite priests serving in the sanctuary.

Subsequently, the order of sabbaths and festivals was observed by the twenty-four priestly courses in Solomon's Temple, until the time of the Second Temple. The fifty-two weeks of the solar year were named in a multi-annual cyclic order after the twenty-four priestly courses and correlated with the fifty-two 'fathers of the Community', as noted in the War Scrolls.

That there was a cultic link between the solar calendar and the high priesthood of First Temple times follows from the fact that the guardians of the Qumranic liturgical tradition of the Temple associated the psalms of David, which they believed to have been revealed to the seventh son of Jesse, a fourteenth-generation descendant of Abraham,<sup>52</sup> in a prophetic vision, on the one hand, and the sequence of sabbaths and festivals as recorded in the sacrificial order of Temple service according to the solar calendar, which was of divine origin:

David son of Jesse was wise and brilliant like the light of the sun; (he was) a scribe, intelligent and perfect in all his ways before God and men.

And YHWH gave him an intelligent and brilliant spirit, and he wrote 3,600 psalms and 364 songs to sing before the altar for the daily perpetual sacrifice, for all the days of the year; and 42 songs for the Sabbath offerings; and 30 songs for the offerings for the beginnings of months, for all the festivals and for the Day of Atonement.

In all, the songs which he uttered were 446, and 4 songs to make music on the intercalary days. In all, they were 4,050.

All these he uttered through prophecy which was given him from before the Most High.

The calendar alluded to in this passage—the earliest source ascribing the composition of the book of Psalms to David—refers to a year of 364 days on which the songs accompanying the daily sacrifice were recited; to fifty-two weeks on which the sabbath sacrifice was offered; and to thirty songs sung on the thirty days on which an additional sacrifice was offered: that is, the twelve first days of months and the seven Temple festivals celebrated between the first and seventh months—all the festivals listed in Leviticus 23, on which sacrifices were offered to God, which amount to eighteen days (Passover—1, the Festival of Unleavened Bread-7; the Omer-1; the Festival of Weeks (Shavuot)-1; the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)—1; and the Festival of Ingathering-7). Special songs were composed for these eighteen days. Four further songs were added, for the days at the junctures of the four seasons; these days were known as 'meeting (day)s' (Heb. *peguim*: see Gen. 32: 2). As stated, the calendar was divided into fifty-two sabbaths designating fifty-two weeks, each of seven days, amounting all in all to the 364 days of the solar year.

The 4,050 psalms and songs that David composed were divided into three groups:  $4,030 = 3,600 + 446 + 4$ , representing a ritual and liturgical calendar 3,600 psalms, that is, ten times the number 360 of days in the solar year ( $4 \times \text{no} = 360 = 12 \times 30$ ), on each of which ten psalms were recited; 446 songs for the cumulative total of days on which sacrifices were offered: 364 days of the 'perpetual' daily sacrifice, fifty-two days of the sabbath sacrifice, and thirty days (the festivals and the first days of months) on which an additional sacrifice was offered ( $364 + 52 + 30 = 446$ ); and, finally, the four 'meeting' songs for the days between each two of the four seasons. On the basis of this calendar, the Temple year was divided into four ritual and liturgical quarters, each with the same number of days, sabbaths, and months; accordingly, this rich poetic opus was also divided into four. Thus we find at Qumran thirteen Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, which were probably recited four times a year, on the fifty-two sabbaths. Most probably, the book of Psalms, both the familiar traditional text and the recensions found at Qumran, contained songs and hymns representing a fourfold division of the poems and songs to accompany the various sacrifices offered on weekdays, sabbaths, and festivals, and of the poems accompanying the cyclic sequence of the Temple service, which as we have observed was correlated with the cosmic order of the seasonal cycle.

The basic idea of the calendar of fifty-two sabbaths was to consecrate the pattern of time beginning with the seven days of Creation, extending in sevenfold cyclic symmetry over the whole year. In addition, the annual cycle of sabbaths and weeks was synchronized with the fourfold cycle of the year, by dividing it into four symmetric periods of thirteen sabbaths each, co-ordinated with the cycle of thirteen Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice ( $9: 13 = 7; 52 \times 7 = 4 \times 91 = 364$ ). Special importance attached to the seventh (middle) sabbath in each of the thirteen-sabbath cycles, which always fell on the 16th of the month in the second, fifth, eighth, and eleventh months of the year and was the midpoint of the division of the whole ninety-one-day season.

The division into sabbaths was the basis for the division of twenty-four priestly courses, which served in the Temple twice a year in six-year cycles: each of the twenty-four courses served thirteen times in six years. As seen above, the division into thirteen sabbaths per quarter and thirteen cycles of service of the twenty-four

priestly courses was a consequence of the fact that there were thirteen twenty eight-day cycles in a solar year [ $13 \times 28 = 364$ ], corresponding to thirteen lunar cycles—but also to thirteen cycles of fertility each year in a woman's body, as will be seen below. The product of the numbers 4 [annual cyclic seasons/quarters/ annual liturgical and ritual units] and 7 [days of the week/seventh day/weekly liturgical and ritual units] is 28, which is counted 13 times [cycle/period = monthly cycle/lunar cycle/new moon] in the solar year of 364 days.

The priestly Temple calendar of the solar year, embodying the assumption that cosmic order was revealed through harmony as expressed in number, counting, and cycle, was associated with the mythological tradition of Enoch son of Jared, the seventh patriarch of the world;<sup>55</sup> with the perception of the sabbath as symbolizing the sanctity invested in the universe since the week of Creation and forming a link between the seventh day and the oath, 'a covenant for all time; it shall be a sign for all time';<sup>5s</sup> with the seven days of ordination at the start of the year, beginning with the fourth day, on which the heavenly luminaries were created; and with Shavuot, the Festival of Weeks/Oaths, celebrated seven sabbaths after the elevation of the Omer. The continuous calculations of the solar calendar revolved around a sevenfold axis, associated with the fifty-two sabbaths of the year, on which the sabbath sacrifice was offered; with the seven Temple festivals—which, together with the fifty-two sabbaths, make up a total of seventy days of complete cessation of labour; and with festivals celebrating the first harvests of wine and olive oil and the Wood-Offering, all of which revolved around a Pentecostal axis, each festival being celebrated on the fiftieth day, after seven sabbaths, that is, after seven complete weeks ( $7 \times 7 + 1 = 50$ ).

The agricultural sacral year extended over the period elapsing from the elevation of the Omer to the Festival of Ingathering—seven months, from the first month (Nisan) to the seventh (Tishrei); or from the Festival of Unleavened Bread, which fell on the 15th of the first month and was celebrated for seven days (from the 15th to the 21st), to the Festival of Booths (Sukkot), which coincided with the seven days of the Festival of Ingathering in the middle of the seventh month. The festivals thus began in the middle of the first month with a seven-day festival and ended in the middle of the seventh month with another seven-day festival; they were celebrated at intervals of seven sabbaths (seven complete weeks), as described in the Temple Scroll and in MMT. Seven weeks elapsed from the elevation of the Omer (the sheaf of the wave-offering—the first produce of barley) on Sunday, the 26th of the first month (Nisan), to Shavuot (marking the first wheat harvest) on Sunday, the 15th of the third month (Sivan). Another seven weeks separated the 15th of the third month from the first harvest of wine on Sunday, the 3rd of the fifth month (Av). Still another seven weeks elapsed until the first harvest of olive oil on Sunday, the 22nd of the sixth month (Elul), and the next day—Monday - was the time of the Wood-Offering, which began on the 23rd of the month and lasted six days. In other words, the Festival of the First Olive Oil and the Wood-offering were consecutive, forming a seven-day festival, seven full weeks after the Festival of the First Wine. The ritual year ended with the seven days of the Festival of Ingathering, halfway through the seventh month.

All these elements formed a link between two manifestations of sacred time. One was the permanent recurrence of the four seasons and the cycles of the agricultural year, whose first produce, of 'seven species' (barley, wheat, olive oil, wine, and the ingathering of fruit, completed by the addition of the Wood-Offering), was brought to the Temple at seven-week intervals, during the first seven months of the year. The other manifestation was the ritual determinism of the preordained calendar, based on a divine sevenfold pattern of sacred heavenly time; this time, given the status of an oath and a 'covenant for all time', was measured in sabbaths and weeks in cycles of four seasons, representing the continuity of the cosmic order, but also in terms of times of first yields, weekly divisions, and seven days of ordination, representing the parallel cultic order.

The cosmic clock of nature as measured in the solar calendar, with time demarcated in multiples of 4, 13, and 7 ( $4 \times 7 \times 13 = 364$ )—each sabbath being the seventh day, thirteen sabbaths in each ritual quarter of the liturgical cycle, i.e. in each of the four seasons—also governed another set of thirteen: any woman's thirteen fertile periods, once every four weeks, in the 364-day year ( $364 = 4 \times 7 \times 13$ ). These calculations were all based on the idea of an all-embracing divine presence, beyond the limits of human apprehension but

manifested in a permanent, cyclic, numerical harmony—a harmony based on data not subject to erratic human observation. In other words, the priestly calculations were supposed to evoke an abstract, harmonic, cosmic order, revealed in cyclic relations and recurrences of numbers; whereas the calculations of the rival lunar calendar were founded on erroneous sensory data, dependent on the limits of human visualization.

All this seven-based counting, as we have seen, was associated on the one hand with sabbaths, festivals, and agricultural fertility as laid down in a permanent solar calendar. It represented divine, mathematical time flowing at a fixed rate, without regard for human comprehension, as reflected in the creative process of nature or the rhythm of fertility of Creation and Covenant, of nature and the seasons. On the other hand, every woman has a variable, personal calendar of weeks, which also involves counting in sevens. This personal calendar reflects the rhythm of human procreation—the cycle of fertility/infertility which a woman experiences every four weeks, which guarantees the fertile period following the seven days of purification and hence the very possibility of conception, birth, growth, and life. The synchronization achieved by such seven-based counting ensured fulfilment of the Covenant of continued life and procreation which, like nature itself, depended on a fixed number of cycles. As if to confirm this link between seven-based counting and procreation, only two commandments in the Bible are referred to as a 'covenant': the sabbath, which is called an 'everlasting covenant', observed once every seven days and delineating the basic unit of the cosmic ritual order—the week; and circumcision, also called an 'everlasting covenant', observed seven days after the birth of a son—the result of conception, which, too, occurs after the observance of seven days in the mother's personal calendar of purification, also measured in weeks. The two commandments involving the number seven, one termed 'a sign for all time' and the other an 'everlasting covenant', are associated with an eternal covenant between God and his people: for the sabbath, seven days are counted repeatedly, throughout the annual cycle of agricultural fertility; and for the seven days of purification, seven days are counted repeatedly throughout a woman's personal cycle of fertility.

The rhythm of feminine fertility is associated with the cycle of the moon with its phases; indeed, the Hebrew word for the waxing of the moon, *ibur*, also means 'conception'; while the Hebrew word for the appearance of the new moon, *molad*, is of the same root (w-l-d) as the word *ledah*, 'birth', and its cognates; similarly, the words that refer to a woman's monthly cycle may also be applied to the lunar phases. Both cycles are associated with the passage of four weeks. A menstruating woman is forbidden to her husband until seven 'clean' days (i.e. days on which no blood whatsoever has been seen) have elapsed, and only then—when the probability of conception is highest—may cohabitation occur. The ritual calendar was concerned with the Temple and the Holy of Holies; with sabbaths, festivals, and sacrifices; with purity and impurity; with sabbatical years and jubilees. The personal calendar was associated with sanctification, betrothal, isolation (when a woman is menstruating or otherwise 'unclean'), purification, and cohabitation. Both calendars, as we have seen, were marked off in sevens; both guaranteed continued fertility, the eternal continuity of life as dependent on a sevenfold rhythm; and both involved counting and number, oath and covenant, testimony and set times, holiness and sanctification, unification and separation, the eternity of Creation. On the one hand, the year is divided into weeks, which delineate the cycle of fertility and agricultural yields, as well as the phases of the moon; on the other, the seven days of purification guarantee the maximum probability of conception, birth, and the continuation of life.

It is not insignificant that the sanctity and purity which condition manifestations of life and fertility are bound up with numbers and cycles, while impurity and death have no numerical or other measure. Very probably, the sacred creatures/ cherubim, which various traditions portray as if their bodies were 'intertwined with one another', possibly alluding to sexual intimacy (see below), were originally a cultic representation of the secret of life and cycles of fertility. There is thus an affinity between the sanctity of the Temple, ceremonially expressed through interlocking septuples of time, place, and ritual in the Holy of Holies (*kodesh kodashim*) and symbolizing the link between the revealed and the concealed, and *kidushin*, 'sanctification', the Hebrew term for betrothal and conjugal union -a personal covenant whose purpose is to perpetuate life, also associated with ceremony and number, with cycle and counting, with sanctity and purity. Both the sanctity of

the Temple and betrothal connect with the number seven, with oaths, with 'a covenant for all time', with blessing and fertility and the cycle of life.

The relationship between the divinely preordained, eternal, cosmic pattern of sacred time and the solar calendar representing it, on the one hand, and the tradition of covenants, sacrifices, and agricultural sacral festivals of sacred space and time, on the other, is described in Jubilees and the Temple Scroll. It is a deterministic relationship, linking the eternity of the natural cycles with the eternity of the Deity; it posits a permanent, cyclic, sevenfold pattern of divine time, which governs both seasonal changes and agricultural yields, and the ritual of the priestly courses in the Temple, through the latter's dependence on the solar calendar. The cosmic time concept, reflecting a divine reality beyond the apprehension of human observation and based on a permanent, cyclic, mathematical calculation, was quantified by the endless recurrence of the calendar from beginning to end, demarcated in sevens and multiples of seven, in fourfold cycles of thirteen.

This numerical conception, rooted in the symmetric, cyclic recurrence of four seasons, but also associated with the cycles of continued life and reproduction in nature, celebrating the first fruits and other agricultural produce at seven-week intervals, supplanted the conception of human, variable time underlying the lunar calendar. Human time was based on the estimated sighting of the new moon—an act of human observation and discretion—and on historical and national vicissitudes, rather than on cosmic, cyclic events. This human element led the secessionist priesthood, as we shall see, to reject the cult based on the lunar calendar, as well as the familiar, historical reasons for the festivals. They abhorred a conception of time based on human sovereignty, relying on variable counting and thereby on humanly observable data, which were inherently changeable and subordinate to variable human needs. Instead, they advocated a cosmic conception of time, based on permanent numerical calculation and thereby rooted in a comprehensive, eternal, abstract, divine reality, beyond the reach of the senses and of human observation, but measured in the permanent numerical proportions of the elements of the solar calendar.

Thus, the seven-based solar calendar, fixed and stable since antiquity, was symmetrically, harmonically, and cyclically structured it was limed on synchronization of the four seasons with sevenfold cycles of sabbaths and festivals—all dependent on calculations reflecting a world whose laws and order were open to systematic discovery and expression. The keepers of sabbaths and festivals according to this calendar saw themselves as initiates privy to wondrous mysteries, or to a divine revelation that explicated the secrets of time. In their own eyes, they were the guardians of divine times and festivals, celebrating covenants and cycles of agricultural produce, testifying to the annual seasons and the sabbaths of the year; their task was to preserve the secret pattern of the order of divine time, with its implications for agricultural plenty and the continuity of life:

But with the remnant which held fast to the commandments of God He made His Covenant with Israel for ever, revealing to them the hidden things in which all Israel had gone astray. He unfolded before them His holy Sabbaths and His glorious feasts, the testimonies of His righteousness and the ways of His truth, and the desires of His will which a man must do in order to live.

The unstable ritual year governing the sacred service in the Second Temple period—based on the false, variable, lunar year with its unreliable concept of time dependent on human observation, estimation, and discretion; a year in which the first days of months and festivals wandered from one day of the week to another—was condemned by the seceding priests as a sinful, blasphemous violation of the Covenant. The practices of the then officiating Temple priests were seen as impure and defiled: they had rejected the cyclic, cosmic, harmonic 'clock' of nature, measured by mathematical calculation, of the solar calendar, and the seasons counted in sevens ('mysteries of marvels'), in favour of an arbitrary 'clock', based on observation of the appearance of the new moon, which had nothing to do with the preordained and precalculated cyclic, symmetric, permanent, regular order of things. This condemnation is clearly implied by the highly polemical tone of Jubilees, MMT, the Damascus Document, the pesharim, the Rule Scroll, and the Temple Scroll.

As against the defiled Temple, distorted calendar, and sinful priesthood, which had arbitrarily caused this chaotic dislocation of the sacred service, defiled the Temple, and disturbed the synchronization of the set times of fertility and those of the Temple—as described in considerable detail in Qumran literature, both in terms of myth and vision and in terms of law and precept—the priestly authors envisioned a horizontal, seven-based pattern of divine time, reflecting a perfect, harmonic, world order and dictating a fixed, preordained continuum of appointed times, covenants, and oaths, as laid down in the solar calendar with its four seasons and twelve months of equal length. But their vision also included a vertical seven-based pattern of sacred, heavenly space, linked with the four cardinal directions that engender the universe and its fourfold and twelfold divisions, in accordance with the tradition of the four-faced Merkavah and the diverse spatial elements associated with it: cherubim and sacred creatures, the Garden of Eden and Paradise, peruyim and apiryon (both words from a Hebrew root with the connotation of 'fertility'), the 'eternal plantation', 'sacred plantation', and 'plantation of righteousness'; and the seven-based sanctuary, the 'seven holy precincts', the seven Heikhalot, and the twelve diagonal boundaries. The third overarching component of the secessionist priesthood's vision was the ritual seven-based pattern of the angelic service and sacred song, also associated with the Merkavah tradition, with the sacred service and the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice sung by seven angelic priesthoods, with the 'seven words of wondrous exaltations' sung every seven days, in accordance with the weeks of the solar calendar, in the seven supernal sanctuaries.

Alongside the seven-based pattern, there was also a fourfold/twelfold pattern: the four archangels Uriel, Raphael, Gabriel, and Michael; the four faces of the sacred creatures; the twelve heavenly gates, the twelve months and signs of the zodiac; the twelve tribes; the twelve gates of the Temple; the twelve stones of the breastplate; the twelve leaders of the Community; the twelve diagonal boundaries dividing the space of the universe into twenty-four parts, correlated with the twenty-four priestly courses; and so on. This ritual and chronotopic unity bound together sacred time and sacred space in a ritual continuum; it thus amalgamated the concepts of cosmic and earthly time, space, and ritual, around one single sacred prototype, all of whose components were interdependent and interlocked.

These priestly circles expressed profound identification with the angels—guardians of the covenants and the oaths, the sabbaths, the weeks, and the festivals, as engraved on the heavenly tablets; guardians of the gates and entrances representing the days, months, and seasons of the year. They described priestly and angelic liturgical ceremonies, organized in a sevenfold order according to the eternal, sacred solar calendar; they envisaged a community of angelic priests in the world of the Merkavah and in the 'sanctuary of man' (Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, Florilegium). In place of the arbitrary, sinful, chaotic, and distorting ritual of the human priests, which divorced time from space, disturbed ritual cosmic synchronization, defiled the Temple, and endangered the cycles of life and fertility, they envisaged a heavenly cult of angelic priests, a sacred ritual archetype, organized in an eternal, harmonic, seven-based pattern, in which the days of the year defined an orderly, symmetrical continuum in sacred space. This rite, with its cyclic, mathematical patterns delineated by the sabbaths and the festivals, rooted in divine paths of righteousness, observed in purity and sanctity by the priestly courses simultaneously with their angelic counterparts, was designed to uphold the Covenant, the blessing, the eternity of life and fertility for the guardians of the covenants and the festivals, of sanctity and purity.

In the various Merkavah traditions and the writings of the Community (or, as already noted, the yahad, implying the simultaneity of heavenly and earthly worship), priests and angels were witnesses to sacred time, observing sabbaths and festivals together in accordance with the solar calendar; together, in the supernal worlds and the visionary Temple, at seven-day intervals, they chanted the 'seven wondrous songs' and 'seven psalms of magnification'—the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice. So priests and angels together, observing the holy appointed times in their preordained, cyclic, divine order, uttered words of praise and thanks, recited blessings and divine names, pronounced the Ineffable Name with its benedictions as done in the Temple—all in regular sevenfold formulations. The tradition of the priestly courses, succeeding one another at weekly intervals in a prescribed order, was scrupulously adhered to—it had been instituted by Zadok the priest during King David's reign, and numerous lists of such courses have been discovered at Qumran, attesting to

the observance there of the calendar of sabbaths and festivals and their regular liturgical order. In parallel, the names of the angelic courses, divided into seven or twenty-four, were carefully preserved, as indicated by Josephus' reference in his account of the Essenes: 'They swear ... to preserve the books of their sect and in the same way the names of the angels', the chief priests on earth regularly chanted, in the prescribed order, the thirteen Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, each sung on one of the thirteen sabbaths of the recurring season, together with the heavenly 'priests of the inner sanctum'. Such formulas as

Give thanks to God

Bless His Holy Name always

In the Heavens and their dominion All the angels of the holy firmament.

or

All the spirits of those who bring to the sanctuary

In their companies and in their dominions

All bless in community Your holy name.

may be found in a variety of versions, clearly demonstrating the participation of angels in the ritual and the interaction between heavenly and earthly worship. The holy names of the Deity are recited by angels and priests, just as the blessings, praises, and thanksgiving for the favour of Creation are uttered by those performing their sacral duties in both upper and lower worlds.

Angelic revelations, inscribed on heavenly tablets or imparted in dreams or mystical visions, recorded in holy books of divine origin, constitute the primary fount of religious validity and authority in this literature. They relate to the consecration of the priesthood, its affinity with the angelic world, the participation of angels in the cult, and the establishment of liturgical formulas recited jointly by the earthly guardians of the Covenant and their heavenly counterparts. All this revolves around the solar calendar, which sanctifies heavenly time in the Heikhalot, the supernal sanctuaries.

The alternatives proposed by the proponents of the secessionist priestly rite in these three areas—sacred time, sacred place, and sacred ritual, intertwined in a complex system of mutual relationships—were closely associated with the seven days of Creation, so that seven became a sacred typological number, an archetypal numerical model of divine origin governing time, place, and ritual. The priestly opposition venerated the number seven with all its derivatives and multiples, its mythical and mystical manifestations. It became a distinctive, identifying label, a sacred typological number pervading the universe and dictating the cultic rhythm of life, an eternal, ritual and liturgical axis combining septuples of time, of place, and of sacred ritual, and interchanging them in mystical metamorphoses. The number seven—dictating the span of time needed for the transition from chaos to Creation, from impurity to purity, and from death to life, associated, linguistically and conceptually, with oath, week, sabbath, the calendar, and the priestly courses—thus assumed a transcendental, cosmic, cultic significance, bridging the gap between the heavenly and the earthly through sacred sevenfold formulas.

The liturgical axis engendered mystical metamorphoses that unified cosmic, heavenly, angelic time and earthly, cultic, priestly time—both measured in multiples of seven: sabbaths and weeks; the seven Temple festivals, seven weeks apart; seasons, sabbatical years, jubilees—with cosmic space as manifested in seven sacred precincts, seven merkavot, seven devirim, and seven heikhaloi. All these components were reflected in the angelic priestly ritual observed in the 'sanctuary of man' by the 'seven chief princes' and the priestly courses, and in the supernal sanctuaries by the seven 'priests of the inner sanctum' and the angelic courses. The sacred service was performed by the priestly courses, succeeding one another at weekly intervals, thus observing the order of sabbaths. Among its main elements were the oaths of the guardians of the Covenant and the sacred song, sung every sabbath by septuples of angels and priests. These metamorphoses, which will be discussed below, created a link between the Chariot Throne of the cherubim in the ruined earthly Temple and its heavenly memorialization, Ezekiel's Merkavah, on the one hand, and Shavuot, the festival of the Covenant of fertility and first fruits, of Temple pilgrimage, celebrated in heaven by the angels and on earth

by the priests, on the other. A mutual relationship, or interaction, was thus established between angelic worship in the heavenly sanctuaries and worship by priests and Levites singing in the earthly Temple, beyond the limits of time and space.

These seven-based traditions, consecrating cosmic time and place and their terrestrial representations, revolved around several elements: the focus of that sanctity was the Merkavah, the Chariot Throne of cherubim that had stood in the devir or Holy of Holies since the time of the desert sanctuary and the time of Solomon's Temple, and whose memory was perpetuated in various priestly traditions. The solar calendar hallowed by Merkavah traditions had probably been observed as a cultic and liturgical calendar by the Zadokite priests, who had officiated as high priests from the time of the First Temple until the middle of the Second Temple period. It was certainly regarded as the definitive ritual calendar by the priestly opposition circles of the Second Temple period and the Qumran priests, who identified themselves with the Zadokite priests; and it was the exclusive basis for the heavenly worship of the ministering angels, the priests of the inner sanctum, and chief princes as described in Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and in Enoch literature.

The circles among whom proto-Qumran and Qumran literature was composed, edited, preserved, and ultimately canonized proposed to replace the Temple cult of their time with three central priestly mystical traditions:

1. The Merkavah / Chariot Throne of the cherubim in the devir/ Holy of Holies of the desert sanctuary and of Solomon's Temple, built according to a heavenly prototype, and Ezekiel's Merkavah in its visionary transformation, as prototypes of sacred heavenly space;
2. The calendar of sabbaths—the solar calendar, as revealed in the tradition of Enoch, Jubilees, the Qumranic Psalms of David, and Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and preserved in the Temple Scroll, the Calendars of Priestly Courses, and MMT, as the prototype of sacred heavenly time; and
3. The angelic priesthood and the worship by the creatures of the Merkavah, described in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and the Blessings Scroll, as the prototype of the sacred heavenly ritual.

These three traditions of sacred time, place, and ritual were associated with the tradition of covenants, Shavuot, and the overarching predominance of the number seven, with regard both to numbers reflecting the laws and eternal order of the universe, which are open to systematic discovery and expression, and to abstract ideas concerning the mystery of life and blessing of fertility and procreation, reflecting divine law with its concrete manifestations and its cultic representation. The eternity of the divine order with its mysteries, referred to in the secessionist Priestly literature as 'wondrous mysteries' or similar expressions, and with its complex manifestations in terms of calculation and number, everlasting ages, seasons, and appointed times, is described in the Thanksgiving hymns:

All things are graven before Thee  
on a written Reminder  
for everlasting ages,  
and for the numbered cycles  
of the eternal years  
in all their appointed times....

I shall now examine each of these three traditions and the seven-based metamorphoses associated with them, in connection with Chariot Throne and Temple, calendar and Covenant, priests and angels.

**Old Testament / First and Second Temple Periods**  
**Dr. Joseph P. Schultz, Jewish Scholar**



## **Angelic Opposition to the Ascension of Moses and the Revelation of the Law (1971) The Jewish Quarterly Review**

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The presence of Angels at the Revelation of the Law on Mount Sinai is an old Jewish tradition evidently based upon the verse in Deut. 33:2 which begins "The Lord came from Sinai; He shone upon them from Seir; He appeared from Mount Paran", and goes on to say (what may be literally translated as) "He came from myriads of holiness (kodesh), At His right a fire of law unto them". Apparently, Jewish tradition, Palestinian and Hellenistic, takes the last part of the verse as referring to the presence of angels.

Thus the two Aramaic versions of Scripture, Onkelos and the Palestinian Targum, introduce angels into this verse. Onkelos takes the words "myriads of holiness" to mean "myriads of holy ones" which quite evidently means angels. More clearly, the Palestinian Targum renders the same words "myriads of holiness" as "myriads of holy angels". The last part of the verse is rendered in the Septuagint as: "With myriads from Kades, His angels with Him on His right". According to the Book of Jubilees, the Angel of God's Presence dictated to Moses a portion of the Law from the heavenly tablets. Philo, commenting on the verse, "Speak thou to us, and let not God speak to us, lest we die" states that though Israel asked for angelic mediation at Sinai, God Himself addressed the people directly. Josephus puts into the mouth of Herod the statement that "we have learned the noblest of our doctrines and the holiest of our laws from the messengers sent by God". The Biblical Antiquities of Philo also describes an angelic presence at Sinai. Similarly, Marqa the Samaritan, in his commentary on the Pentateuch which is dated some time between the second and fourth century, portrays numerous angels in attendance as Moses receives the Law.

In the Talmud too, the words "myriads of holiness" are taken to mean angels. Thus R. Akiba is said to have taken the word *v'atah*, "and he came", which precedes the words "from myriads of holiness", to be composed of two words (*v'ot hu*) and he interpreted the entire expression to mean, and He is the ensign among His myriads (of ministering angels).

Other rabbinic passages describing the theophany at Sinai describe the angels as active participants. Commenting on the verse "The chariots of God are myriads even thousands upon thousands, the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in holiness", the rabbis state that myriads of angels accompanied God to the site of revelation. As God uttered each commandment, the angels carried it to the people and kissed each individual who accepted it. In the New Testament we find the statement that the Law was ordained by angels which would seem to mean that angels were the authors of the Law. Although the Church Fathers and the Gnostics took these passages literally, it is quite possible that Paul took them in the same sense as the Talmud, namely, that angels participated as mediators between God and the people at the revelation.

In contrast to these sources, the medieval commentator Nahmanides, without knowing of Philo nevertheless follows him in rejecting the idea of angelic mediation. In his commentary to Deut. 33:2 he states: "Not from the hand of the angels (was the Law given) only from the right (hand) of the Almighty Himself in all His glory". Other medieval commentators, such as Rashi and Ibn Ezra, though not specifying the role of the angels at the revelation, still take the words "myriads of holiness" as referring to an angelic presence.

In addition to this tradition of the presence of angels at the theophany on Mount Sinai, there is another tradition that prior to the revelation, at which the angels were present, there was opposition on their part to the ascension of Moses and the revelation of the Law to him because they felt it should be given to angels and not to men. The best known account of the angel's opposition to Moses' ascent and the giving of the Law is that ascribed to R. Joshua b. Levi in the Talmud. If this ascription is correct, the legend can be dated in the first half of the third century. According to this version of the legend when the angels became aware of Moses' ascent they said to God: "What does he who is born of woman here?" When they are informed that Moses has come for the Law, they implore God: "Dost Thou seek to give to flesh and blood a hidden treasure that was hidden with Thee 974 generations before the world was created? 'What is man that Thou art mindful

of him? And the son of man that Thou thinkest of him? Oh Lord our God how glorious is Thy name in all the earth! Whose majesty is rehearsed above the heavens." God asks Moses to refute this argument but Moses expresses the fear that the angels will consume him with their fiery breath. God then bids him to hold on to the heavenly throne. R. Tanh'um adds that God spread some of the radiance of His Shekinah over Moses. Secured by Divine protection, Moses points out that the angels by their very nature cannot come within the purview of such requirements as would be imposed by several of the Ten Commandments. Do the angels work or engage in commerce that they require the commandment ordaining Sabbath rest? Do the angels have father and mother that they require a commandment to honor parents? Are the angels racked by jealousy and the evil impulse that they require commandments prohibiting theft, murder, adultery and covetousness?

The angels yield to Moses' logic, become his friends and bestow gifts upon him as he descends with the Law. Even the Angel of Death gives Moses a gift with which to stop the plague described in Numbers 17:12. In an anonymous version in a midrash we are told that when Moses was about to ascend to heaven a cloud appeared. He did not know whether to ride on it or grasp it until the cloud opened. He entered and was borne aloft. Then follows an account of how the angels sought to impede Moses' progress and how he successfully overcame their opposition.

On reaching the Divine Presence, he was attacked by a band of destroying angels surrounding the Throne of Glory. These angels tried to slay Moses with their fiery breath but the Almighty intervened. The story then continues as in the Talmud where Moses cites the first, second, fifth and tenth commandments in refutation of the angels and they bestow gifts upon him.

There is a third version of the legend attributed to R. Judah the Prince, which A. Marmorstein emends to R. Aha, thus dating it in the fourth century. In this version God Himself refutes the angels but instead of citing some of the Ten Commandments, He cites the laws of impurity relating to death, leprosy, menstruation and forbidden foods as examples of things which are applicable to humans but not to angels. Finally, in a late compilation we get a combination of versions one and three. Moses cites the fifth commandment as well as the laws of impurity. This source also describes the angels as giving Moses presents consisting of letters and tablets for healing disease.

In examining the various versions of the legend we find that the angels object not only to Moses receiving the Law but also to his ascent to heaven. "What does he who was born of woman here?" they protest. The expression *ylud 'ishah* is found in the book of Job where it describes the bleak and degraded condition of man. In rabbinic and post-rabbinic literature this utterance in the mouth of an angel is a designation of contempt for man and the context of several of the sources where the phrase occurs is that of a heavenly ascent. In the Ascension of Isaiah, the angels protest Isaiah's ascent in somewhat different words: "How far will he ascend that dwelleth in the flesh?"

In our tale and in cognate accounts of the heavenly ascent, the enmity of the angels for the ascending hero is expressed physically as well as verbally. The second version of our legend describes how the angels seek to prevent Moses' ascent by destroying him with their fiery breath. This physical danger facing Moses is alluded to in the late source *Gedullat Mosheh*, where Metatron, on receiving the divine command to bring Moses to heaven, states that the Lawgiver cannot come up and see the angels for they are of fire and he is but flesh and blood. A more explicit reference to the bodily attack of hostile angels is found in the Talmudic account of Rabbi Akiba's ascent. This motif is also contained in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* where Abraham is warned to keep away from the celestial heights lest he be destroyed.

However, the Ethiopic and Slavonic Books of Enoch, 3 Enoch and the Ascension of Isaiah also describe the heavenly ascent as taking place under the guidance of angels. Thus there appears to be two lines of thematic development, one in which the angels serve as guides for the ascending hero, the other in which they protest or try to prevent his ascent. Our legend falls in the latter category.

What is the background of the angelic opposition to the heavenly ascent and to the revelation of the Law? G. Scholem has demonstrated that this theme is a Jewish variation of a Gnostic myth of the second and third centuries which describes how the evil planets seek to prevent the ascent of the soul and its descent with the powers of light. A. Altmann has suggested that this myth is also the background of the angels opposition to the giving of the Law-the Law being the Jewish counterpart of the powers of light. Since our legend dates from this period, it seems that its two dominant features, angelic opposition to the ascent of Moses and angelic opposition to the revelation of the Law reflect a Jewish adaptation of the Gnostic theme. Of the two salient motifs, it is the heavenly ascent which provides the clue to a number of sub-motifs in the legend. According to the Talmud, the fear which overcame Moses on his ascent to heaven and in his encounter with the angels was mitigated by his grasping the Throne of Glory. Now the image of the heavenly throne as part of the context of a heavenly ascent and a revelation occurs in a number of sources but with a significant difference.

Ezekiel, the Hellenistic Jewish poet of the second century B.C.E. in his play the Exodus, portrays God as beckoning to Moses to sit on the heavenly throne. The Almighty then gives the Lawgiver His diadem and sceptre. Similarly, Marqa the Samaritan, in his commentary on the Pentateuch which is dated some time between the second and fourth century, describes the enthronement of Moses on his ascent to receive the Law. In a painting above the Dura synagogue, dating from the middle of the third century, there is depicted a throne with figures surrounding it. Goodenough suggests that the figure on the throne is Moses and he interprets the painting in the context of Jewish mystical literature dealing with the heavenly throne. An example of this literature is 3 Enoch where God provides Metatron with a throne just like the Throne of Glory.

Additional indication of the widespread use of the enthronement motif comes from the Mithraeum of Dura-Europas where there is a painting showing the two alleged founders of the Mithraic mysteries who are bearers of revelation- Ostanes and Hystaspes. Both are depicted sitting in a chair holding in one hand a book and in the other a black staff. The Talmudic legend apparently did not adopt this representation outright, possibly because it could not accept the idea that Moses should be seated on the Throne of Glory. Instead of sitting on God's throne Moses grasps it in order to gain temporary protection from the angels.

It should be pointed out that the image of enthronement on the ascension to heaven is not absent from rabbinic literature. The righteous sit on heavenly thrones but only after the resurrection. The postponement of enthronement until after death is also a feature of the Mandaean narrative concerning the ascent and descent of Denanuxt. Din-Mlikh shows hero the thrones which are prepared for unborn souls. Once they enter the world and their lives have run their earthly course, these individuals will ascend to heaven and sit on their thrones of rest. Din-Mlikh then shows Denanuxt the throne which will be his once he has completed his earthly mission. It is in this context that we understand the image in the Ascension of Isaiah 44 where the righteous sit on heavenly thrones and in the New Testament where they are pictured as sitting together with God on His throne.

Another prominent motif in the literature describing the heavenly ascent is the robing of the hero in royal or heavenly garments. The Slavonic Book of Enoch describes Enoch's transformation into a celestial being as accompanied by a change from an earthly robe into garments of God's glory. In 3 Enoch a similar transformation takes place. In the Ethiopic Book of Enoch the righteous are clothed with garments of glory which are identified with garments of life. The Apocalypse of Abraham and the New Testament also identify the heavenly vesture with immortality. According to the Ascension of Isaiah, the prophet, on ascending to heaven, is given a garment which makes him equal to the angels and he sees the saints similarly robed. The Mandaean text (in Lidzbarski's translation) has Manda d-Haya say to Enos: "Ich gewährte dir Glanz und Licht, das es bei dir an jenem ersten Gewande sei, das man dir aus dem Hause des Lebens verlieh ... In a different context Din-Mlikh Uthra tells Denanuxt that when his earthly mission is fulfilled he will return to heaven dressed in a stola of splendor and in a turban of light. The Patriarch Levi is instructed on his ascension to put on "the robe of priesthood ... the garment of truth ... and the turban of the head ... Finally, a

Samaritan hymn describes Moses on his ascent to heaven as being clad in the name of the Godhead. This background sheds light on the statement of R. Tanhum in our legend that God spread some of the radiance of His Shekinah over Moses.

In a parallel source we find a similar description but with one significant variation, God spread His garment talito, over Moses. It is clear that the image of investiture in heavenly garments is here as well. However, this garment does not endow Moses with immortality or with supernatural qualities, it is merely an indication of God's favor and protection.

The Talmudic legend makes no mention of several elements connected with the heavenly ascent which show up in the cognate literature. Enoch is anointed on his ascension while the patriarch Levi is first cleansed in pure water then anointed with holy oil and fed with bread and wine. Similarly, the commentary of Marqah describes how Moses was anointed on his ascent to heaven, how he washed in the trough of the angels and ate their bread. In addition, Marqah depicts Moses as being called by names of honor. In 3 Enoch, Metatron is called by seventy names which God took from His own name and gave to him.

According to the Talmud, the angels in protesting the giving of the Law to Moses refer to it as "the hidden treasure ... hidden with Thee 974 generations before the world was created". In the Mandaean sources describing the revelation of secrets to the ascending Savior, there is no reference to a book or heavenly tablets given to him when he is sent down to the world, despite the fact that Mandaeans do look upon holy writings as a vehicle of revelation. By combining several passages in the Mandaean texts, Widengren deduces that the Mandaeans conceived of hidden books in heaven existing before creation. The Savior who ascends to heaven has read these books and brings the primordial revelation contained in them to mankind. If this reconstruction is correct, we have a parallel to our legend where the hidden preexistent Law is revealed to Moses. The description of the preexistent Law or wisdom as something hidden is already found in the book of Job where it is stated that wisdom "is hid from the eyes of all living". In a similar vein the author of the Wisdom of Solomon says of wisdom that he will "search her out from her first beginnings" and "will not hide her mysteries". The implication here is that from the very beginning wisdom was hidden and contained mysteries. It is this hidden wisdom and its mysteries which are revealed to the initiate by means of a vision, through the words of angels or on heavenly tablets. He in turn conveys this communication to mankind. Philo too, in describing the Sinaitic Revelation, portrays each Israelite as "instructed in the holy secrets and accepted for admission to the greatest mysteries".

However, Paul, speaking of his visions and revelations, tells of a man he knew who ascended to the third heaven, entered Paradise and there heard "things that cannot be told, that man may not utter". Thus there seem to be two types of revelation described in these sources—a revelation intended only for the initiate and a revelation intended for the masses and recorded in a book or on heavenly tablets. In IV Ezra we get a synthesis of these two types of revelation. Ezra is ordered to write and publish twenty-four books, but the last seventy books are to be kept secret and transmitted only to the wise among his people. Similarly, in 3 Enoch Moses transmits the mysteries of Torah to a chain of tradition ending with the circle of initiates while a parallel passage has the chain of tradition ending with all Israel.

In reviewing the motifs of our legend, we find that a number of them fall into a pattern which can be traced to an ascension theme found in Mesopotamian literature. In the Mesopotamian texts, the heavenly ascent is made by the king who is both wise scribe and visionary seer and is described as "the Sent One".

The various aspects of this theme can be summarized as follows:

**Ascent to heaven**

**Entering the heavenly palace**

**Reception by the highgod in his assembly**

**Purification**

## **Anointing**

**Robing in royal or heavenly garments**

**Handing over the heavenly book or heavenly tablets to the bearer of revelation**

**Calling with names of honor**

**Initiation into the heavenly secrets**

**Enthronement on the god-father's throne**

**Sending forth with a commission or a message to instruct the generation**

The connection between this complex of rites and ideas and the role of Moses as described in the Bible is clear. Moses is "sent out" on his mission. He is both the wise judge and the visionary seer. On Mount Sinai he receives the tablets of stone, the Law and the commandments in order to instruct Israel. However, the succinct text of Scripture leaves out the other motifs enumerated in the Mesopotamian account of the heavenly ascent; but they reappear (though not necessarily in their entirety in any single source) in the rabbinic legend and in the cognate literature pre-dating it and post-dating it.

In the Talmudic narrative the following motifs are present: ascent to heaven, enthronement (in our legend portrayed as grasping God's throne), robing in heavenly garments. To these motifs the sources cognate to our legend add the following: purification, anointing, calling with names of honor, initiation into the heavenly secrets.

## **Old Testament / Second Temple Period**

**Paul M. Joyce, Old Testament Scholar**

**Ezekiel 40-42- The Earliest 'Heavenly Ascent' Narrative? (2007)**

**The Book Of Ezekiel And Its Influence, Chapter 2**

Editors: H. J. de Jonge, Johannes Tromp

It is generally assumed that not until I Enoch 14 (commonly dated to the third century BCE) do we encounter the first account of a visionary ascent to the heavenly Temple. That chapter is part of Book 1 of I Enoch, commonly called the Book of the Watchers (1 Enoch 1-36), The Watchers,, disgraced angelic figures, have sent Enoch to petition the deity on their behalf. Enoch reports:

Behold clouds called me in the vision ... and in the vision winds caused me fly and hastened me and lifted me up into heaven And I went into the tongue of fire and came near to a Cario house which was built of hailstones Its roof was like the path of the stars and flashes of lightning. and among them were fiery Cherubim ... And I went into that house, and it was hot as fire and cold as snow, and there was neither pleasure nor life in it. And I saw in the vision, and behold, another house, which was larger than the former. And in everything it so excelled in glory and splendour and size that I am unable to describe to you its glory and its size. And I looked and saw in it a high throne, and its appearance was like Ice and its surrounds like the shining sun and the sound of Cherubim, And from underneath the high throne there flowed out rivers of burning fire so that it was impossible to look at it. And He who is great in glory sat on it, and his raiment was brighter than the sun, and whiter than any snow ... And the Lord called me with his own mouth and said to me. Come hither, Enoch, to my holy word. (1 En. 14:8-24, excerpted)

What are the major biblical antecedents of this passage? There is certainly a debt to elements of Genesis. The tantalizing reference in Gen 5:24, which says of Enoch that 'he walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him' is probably to be understood as a mundane reference to the death of the pre-flood Patriarch, but because of its ambiguous nature it inspired later traditions about Enoch, including this classic passage about Enoch's heavenly ascent. The Watchers of 1 Enoch are based on the 'sons of God' who 'went in to the daughters of humans' in Gen 6:1-4, 2 Kings 2 speaks of a holy man going to heaven: it is reported that as Elijah and his disciple Elisha 'continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated

the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven' (2 Kgs 2:11), but no account is given of the journey to heaven or of what Elijah saw there. Another possible precedent is the remarkable scene set on the holy mountain in Exod 24:9-11 (assigned by many to the so-called Yahwist writer): 'Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. God did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; also they beheld God, and they ate and drank.'

Turning to Ezekiel, there are many parallels between I Enoch 14 and the various visions in the book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel alone of the classical prophets records the experience of being transported by God (for example, Ezek 8:1-3). The language of vision is shared, as is the imagery of cloud, wind, water and fire. The presence of the cherubim (e.g. Ezekiel 10-11) is another common factor. Again, the words of I Enoch 14, 'And I looked and I saw in it a high throne', echo the theme of the divine throne in Ezekiel 1. Moreover, the designation of the deity as 'He who is great in glory' recalls the emphasis on the divine glory in Ezekiel, and the words 'From underneath the high throne there flowed out rivers of burning fire' echo the river flowing from the Temple in Ezekiel 47.

But what about Ezekiel 40-42 specifically? Whilst the debt of I Enoch 14 to Ezekiel as a whole is clear, the parallels between I Enoch 14 and Ezekiel 40-42 may, at first sight, seem limited. There is the reference to the experience being 'in visions of God' (cf. Ezek 40:2), and to the cherubim (cf. Ezek 41:18-20); moreover, the first house entered by Enoch seems empty ('there was neither pleasure nor life in it'), arguably in this respect like the Temple of Ezekiel 40-42. But the key question is about the overall interpretation of Ezekiel 40-42. What are these chapters reporting? Could it be that they are to be interpreted as referring not to an earthly Temple, as has most often been assumed, but rather to the heavenly Temple? If so, Ezekiel 40-42 might provide the most important antecedent to I Enoch 14, and indeed arguably the earliest 'heavenly ascent' narrative, Himmelfahrt, whilst acknowledging parallels with Ezekiel, declares that 'Enoch's is the first ascent in Jewish literature'. The purpose of this essay is to consider whether this is so.

### **The Divine Presence in Ezekiel**

It is important briefly to set the enquiry in the context of the way the book of Ezekiel presents access to the divine and God's presence more generally: A major issue in the book is that of where on earth the deity may be encountered. The book opens with the great vision of ch. 1, where the throne of Yahweh is witnessed in far-off Babylonia. Indeed this amounts to nothing less than a vision of God himself: 'This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD' (1:28). The Lord is with his people in exile, no longer tied to the land of Israel. In the vision of chs 8-11, the divine glory is seen again, leaving the Temple. We read in 10:18: 'Then the glory of the LORD went out from the threshold of the house and stopped above the cherubim'. The vision of ch. 1, performing as it does the role of an overture to the book as a whole, has anticipated this departure. And then in the final section of the book, in ch. 43, the expected dramatic return of the deity to his shrine is presented: and the glory of the LORD filled the temple' (43:5). This return in ch. 43 does not undo or erase the various motifs whereby Ezekiel has affirmed the divine presence outside the land, the 'throne' of ch. 1 or indeed the 'sanctuary' of 11:16: 'I have become to them a sanctuary (albeit in small measure) in the countries where they have gone.'

The presence of God with his people wherever they are is not a temporary provision. Rather, the affirmation of 43:7 that 'This is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet' stands within the context of that overarching theology of the freedom of God. Having abandoned his Jerusalem sanctuary for a time, the Lord now commits himself to dwell there permanently. But this remains, within the grand architecture of the book of Ezekiel, in tension with the affirmation of his presence with his people in their dispersion, for whom he will indeed himself remain a 'sanctuary'.

So far the focus of this summary has been on God's local presence on the one hand and his mobility (or universalism) on the other. This might be described as the horizontal plane. But there is a further dimension to be considered, that which could be expressed, at least in picture terms, as the vertical plane. I refer to the

heavenly dimension, For it is important that for Ezekiel, as for the priestly tradition within which he stood, the divine 'glory', that dwells on earth is an expression of his immanent presence that does not exhaust his being. More needs to be said about the theme of transcendence; and this brings us to the central question of this essay: how are we to understand Ezekiel's great Temple vision? In particular, what are the implications of the initial tour of the Temple itself in chs 40-42?

### **A Tour of the Temple**

In Ezek 40:1-2, we read: 'The hand of the LORD was upon me and he brought me in visions of God, to the land of Israel, and set me down upon a very high mountain'. We have already noted some similarity to the visionary language of 1 Enoch 14, specifically in the reference to the experience being in visions of God' and more generally in the Language of divine transportation. One is reminded of Ezek 8:3, where the prophet reports that 'the spirit lifted me up between heaven and earth, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem'. Ezekiel 8:1-3 has been a key text in the debate over the location of Ezekiel's ministry, some arguing that it gives evidence of a physical return to Jerusalem by Ezekiel; but it is important to take seriously the visionary nature of both references (8:1-3; 40:1-2), neither of which gives grounds for a view that Ezekiel actually exercised a ministry in Jerusalem. Like its earlier counterpart, the vision that begins in Ezekiel 40 is seen in Babylonia; it is 'in visions of God' that the prophet is brought to the land of Israel.

The 'very high mountain' is probably meant to signal the Temple mountain. But Sinai may be in mind too, as argued by Levenson, who takes the reference to 'the law of the temple' (43:12) as evidence of this.' And there are also resonances here of the cosmic mountain of ancient Near Eastern mythology, echoes picked up in the account of the sacred river in ch. 47. Such multiple reference in the phrase 'very high mountain' is perhaps an early hint that we are dealing with something more than simply the earthly Jerusalem. On the very high mountain was 'a structure like a city to the south' (40:2): Jerusalem is not named as such anywhere in Ezekiel 40-48 (nor Zion, which is never used anywhere in the book), but Jerusalem in some sense is surely intended by this reference to a city in the land of Israel. Note, though, that in what follows the Temple is not in the city, which is located, as here, away to the south, That the Temple is not in the city is perhaps a further clue that we are dealing with the heavenly Temple, possibly an echo of the Canaanite theme of the mountain of the gods being in the far north' (cf. Ps 48:2). So although the reference to 'the land of Israel' sounds very specific in geographical terms, it is to be seen as symbolic of things divine, the locus of the gate of heaven.?

Ezekiel is met by a man 'whose appearance shone like bronze, with a linen cord and a measuring reed in his hand' (40:3; we may compare the 'man clothed in linen, with a writing case at his side' in 9:2,3,11; and now also the use of 'bronze' in another visionary context, at 1:7), The reference seems to be Co an angelic guide, a feature that later comes to characterize some 'heavenly ascent' narratives, such as that in the Apocalypse of Abraham 15-30 (though, as it happens, not 1 Enoch 14).

The tour takes the following course: most of the long ch, 40 is devoted to an account of the Temple area, the gates and the outer and inner courts, but before the chapter ends. Ezekiel is led to the Temple itself, whose tripartite structure is described. This section extends from 40:48 to the end of ch. 41, The basic shape of the Temple follows the pattern familiar from 1 Kings 6-8 and indeed from the archaeology of the ancient Near East.' At 40:48 we have the 'vestibule', at 41:1 the '5:7' or 'nave', and then in 41:3 the reran or 'inner room'. The word 1. 1 not used for the inner room in Ezekiel (as it is in 1 Kgs 8:6), but in 41:4 Ezekiel's guide declares that this is 'the holy of holies' or 'the most holy place', using the important phrase found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (including indeed 1 Kgs 8:6). Chapter 42 concerns the outer court of the Temple, and then in 42:15 Ezekiel is led out by the gate that faces east', and is shown the temple area all around'.

Chapter 43 begins with a dramatic and powerful scene, the return of Yahweh to his sanctuary. Ezekiel is taken to 'the gate facing east', and there 'the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east' (43:2) The statement that the 'glory of the LORD filled the temple' (43:5) echoes the words of both Exod 40:34 and 1 Kgs 8:11. Several scholars have highlighted the importance of ancient Near Eastern parallels to this theme of the return of the deity to the sanctuary from which he had earlier departed.'

Although the tour motif is picked up in a piecemeal way later, chs 40-42 appear to constitute a self-contained Temple tour. Several features mark out chs 40-42 as a coherent section. This is important to the argument I shall develop. Verse 5 introduces the first reference to the Temple within chs 40-43, This is a remarkably low-key reference, taking the Temple itself for granted: 'Now there was a wall all around the outside of the Temple area (40:5). Significantly, this wall is mentioned again at the end of ch. 42: It had a wall around it, five hundred cubits long and five hundred cubits wide' (42:20); this inclusio is one of the features that mark out chs 40-42 as a distinct section, as is the programmatic reference to 'separation between the holy and the common' in 42:20, The gate motif is also significant in this connection. Reference to 'the gateway' is found as early as 40:3 (cf, 'the gateway facing east' in 40:6) and again at the end of the section in 42:15 and 43:1 ('the gate that faces east'). The present phase of the activity of the 'man' seems to end with the start of ch. 43. At 43:6 we read 'While the man was standing beside me, I heard someone speaking to me out of the temple', that is someone other than the 'man' (who is not mentioned again until ch. 47). In the next verse it becomes clear that it is God himself who speaks, 'Mortal, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet, where I will reside among the people of Israel forever' (43:7), as he does explicitly in 44:2, 5 ('The LORD said to me ...'). Moreover, the cross reference of 43:3 seems to constitute another marker of a new phase and so to confirm the impression that chs 40-42 are to be read as a self-contained section; this verse alludes to chs, I and 1011, and identifies ch. 43 as sharing the concern of those chapters with the issue of where in the world Yahweh is to be encountered.

### **How Should Ezekiel 40-42 be Understood?**

Ezekiel's Temple as presented in the book's Last great vision has been understood in many different ways, Often interpreters combine elements of the main options but these may be isolated as three. Some have interpreted this Temple as based in part on a preserved description or even blueprint of the first, Solomonic Temple. There are elements of this in Cooke: 'We can imagine him poring over architectural plans 'in chs. 40-42 he describes its ground-plan, which is based partly on the lines of Solomon's temple Others have read it as first and foremost a plan for a restoration Temple-, so, for example, Clements: 'Ezekiel 40-48 is not just a vision of a new and restored Israel but a practical "renewal program" for national reorganization'. And others again have seen it as primarily an eschatological Temple; thus, for example, Eichrodt: 'they provide a picture of the temple, [and and people in the time of fulfilment`, referring to the `land and the people in the time of salvation'.

In the long run, this material would certainly be read both in the context of an actual restoration after return from exile and also in terms of eschatological hope, but what was the earliest situation? Was Ezekiel 40-42 in the first instance a vision of the heavenly Temple seen by Ezekiel during the Exile? The view that these chapters are indeed to be seen as the report of a visionary ascent to the heavenly Temple has had but a small place in modern scholarly discussion. In my judgement this proposal deserves more attention than it has received. The view was first seriously developed by Tuell in 1982." Something not dissimilar was proposed in 1985 by Cowan." Niditch worked along related lines in 1986," and recently, within the context of a Christian biblical theology, Beale has offered a comparable interpretation, seeing Ezekiel 40-48 as describing a heavenly Temple that will descend to earth at the eschaton. But it is Tuell who in 1996 developed the hypothesis most fully, and, as it is Tuell who has contributed most, we shall proceed by reporting and reviewing his case and then go on from there. The overall purpose of the present essay is to develop and nuance Tuell's important contribution, highlighting some problems with it but also adding additional evidence for his basic thesis.

In his 1982 article Tuell argued that an original vision of the prophet is recoverable, and that this vision involved a promise to Ezekiel's contemporaries of divine presence and accessibility, rather than a programme for the future (whether the return from exile or the eschaton). Tuell wrote of the need to reclaim the core vision, which he found in Ezekiel 40-42 (minus alleged additions), but also Ezek 43:1-7a, 44:1-3 and 47:1-12, Tuell wrote; Ezekiel, in exile in a foreign, unclean land, has experienced in mar'eh [vision] the presence of the Lord in power and fullness. He has seen the very dwelling place of God, and known it to be free of



historical and geographical limitations, Tuell's [1996] article presents the most detailed case for reading chs 40-42 as a 'heavenly ascent' vision narrative; the chapters are interpreted as the report of a vision:

Ezekiel describes what he and his contemporaries would have understood as an actual visionary journey to the heavenly temple, Tuell advances his case on a number of grounds; here I isolate what seem to me to be his three key arguments.

The Case for Taking Ezekiel 40-42 as a 'Heavenly Ascent' Narrative (a) In Ezekiel's Temple vision most vertical dimensions are omitted," The various structures of the Temple are generally measured in two-dimensional outline, and little is said about the elevation of the building. Whilst three-dimensional descriptions are found occasionally (for example. 40:5, 42; 41:16-17, 22), they are untypical. Ezekiel's Temple seems to lack proper Temple walls; particularly striking is the fact that no height is given for the inner room in 41:4 or for the Temple as a whole in 41:13-14.

Tuell contends that such absence of detail argues against the section being a description of the Solomonic Temple, the first of the interpretations listed earlier, In any case our text does not conform to the pattern of the first Temple in some significant respects, for example there is no bronze sea in the forecourt. Some have taken the massive gates to be Solomonic (for example, Zimmerli), but even if this were right they are out of all proportion to the walls, which might be described as so scanty as to be token, and thus the design seems hybrid. Tuell further contends that the absence of detail in Ezekiel 40-42 and the impracticality of the design argue also against the restoration plan theory, the second of the interpretations. The account conjures up an impressive picture of the Temple, but, for all this, information essential for construction is lacking,

(b) A second argument against the theory that the section concerns a restoration Temple is that nowhere does Ezekiel 40-42 claim to be a building programme, Tuell makes much of this. No decision to build is reported, no divine permission given. In contrast, Moses receives an explicit divine command to build in Exod 25:8-9 (compare also other Old Testament passages such as 2 Sam 7:13; 1 Kgs 5:3-5; 1 Chr 21:5-6, 9-19), And there are ancient Near Eastern parallels for an explicit building command, for example in the Gudea cylinders (where Gudea, ruler of the Sumerian city of Lagash, is commanded to build the Temple of Ningirsu) and also in the Ba'al cycle, But in Ezekiel 40-42 there is no such decision or decree.

So, the theory that the vision represents a preserved description of the Solomonic Temple is hard to square with the lack of full dimensions, whilst the restoration plan idea has two arguments against it, namely the lack of full dimensions and the absence of a clear command to build. But most of what has been said is arguably compatible with the theory of an eschatological Temple, which God himself will construct at the end time. This is consistent both with the lack of detail and also with the absence of a command to build. The mythological echoes of the 'very high mountain' of Ezek 40:2 could have an eschatological interpretation. And we know that Ezekiel 40-48 was read eschatologically by some ancient readers (for example, Rev 21:10). This brings us to the third argument of Tuell's that I highlight, that in which he particularly counters an eschatological interpretation.'

(c) Crucial to understanding ch. 40 aright is to understand it in the light of 1:1-3 and 8:1-3, with which it shares many features. In fact three key formulae occur together only in these three contexts. Ezekiel 40:1-2 opens with a date formula specific to the day. This is an introductory formula common in Ezekiel's prophecy, but in this case the date is followed by the formula for expressing prophetic ecstasy (The hand of the Lord was upon me) and also the specification , 'in visions of God'. These three formulae unite 1:1-3, 8:1-3 and 40:1-2. These passages are bound together also by the cross-reference formula of 43:3, possibly editorial, alluding to both chs. 10-11 and ch. 1: 'The vision I saw was like the vision I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and like the vision that I had seen by the river Chebar.' Parunak, following rabbinic precedent, treated these visionary sections together.' Indeed, he added a fourth shared feature found in the three general contexts, namely the use of nil (spirit) as the subject of 'lift up' with the prophet as object (3:12, 14; 8:3; 11:1, 24; 43:5). The three visions are like three great landmarks in the book of Ezekiel, The vision

beginning in Ezekiel 40-48 is closely related to the earlier visions and it invites interpretation in the same terms, The implications of this for the present discussion are vital. Chapters I and 8 are about present reality not future prediction: the appearance of the deity in Babylonia and the contemporary abuses in the Jerusalem Temple. Tuell importantly observes that 'none of the mar'oth are predictive prophesies' and 'As a mar'eh., the temple vision is an experience of a present, on-going reality'. Rather than seeing what will be Ezekiel glimpses what is now, in the heavenly realm' This third argument seems to me much the most persuasive of Tuell's three main arguments.

Such are the essentials of Tuell's cumulative case. He concludes that the detailed description serves to give us an overwhelming sense of the symmetry and order of the Temple's design, presenting the dimensions of the visionary Temple, as though a vision of an already built complex, through which Ezekiel is led.' Tuell posits a helpful parallel between Ezekiel 40-42 and the Mesopotamian descriptive inventories (not building plans) listed by Hurowity," like Ezekiel 40-42, these simply present the dimensions of the structure, without a command to build.

Tuell sees Ezekiel 40-42 as the fulfilment of the 'sanctuary' promise of Ezck 11:16. Yahweh had promised to be a sanctuary to his people in the countries where they had gone. Tuell writes:. 'Yhwh had promised to be present, in however small a measure, among the exiles. Ezekiel's detailed report of his vision would appear to be, at least in part, the means of this presence.'

### **Some Critical Issues Unaddressed by Tuell**

(a) Whilst there are important links between the three visions of chs 1-3, 8-11 and 40-42, more needs to be made of the differences between these passages. Tuell acknowledges this in the case of Ezekiel I. It is distinctive that here the throne of God comes to the prophet, not vice versa (as in / Enoch 14), Himmetfarb makes a point of this as part of her argument that J Enoch 14 is the first 'heavenly ascent' narrative. Tuell in his counter argument rightly contrasts Ezekiel 1-3 and 40-42 in this regard: 'Ezekiel 1-3 certainly does not describe an ascent, but that is exactly the experience described in Ezekiel 40-42.'

But more needs to be said about the difference between ch, 8 and chs 40-42. The Temple of ch. 8, where so many abominations are committed, is decidedly not the heavenly Temple: the whole point is that this is the sullied earthly Temple. Tuell's important observations that 'none of the mar'oth are predictive prophesies' and 'As a mar'eh, the temple vision is an experience of a present, on-going reality' are true of ch. 8, but the fact that it evidently does not refer to the heavenly Temple would be an important difference from chs 40-42. There are then significant discontinuities as well as continuities among the three passages of Ezekiel, though this does not undercut the importance of the close affinities between these passages for the interpretation of chs 40-42.

(b) A more serious critique of Tue concerns the relationship between chs 40-42 and what follows, Tuell is surely wrong to say of ch. 43 that 'Ezekiel has seen the glory of the Lord enter the real temple', by which he means the heavenly Temple, and that Ezekiel has been given access to the cosmic reality, where Yhwh's true enthronement takes place?' Tuell 's persuasive thesis that chs 40-42 constitute a vision of the heavenly Temple should not obscure the fact that the concerns of chs 40-42 and ch. 43 are different, It is significant that for Tuell the core vision extends beyond Ezekiel 40-42, to take in 43:1-7a, 44:1-3 and 47:1-12,37 The present article, on the other hand, has emphasized the self-contained nature of chs 40-42, in which a glimpse of the heavenly Temple is vouchsafed to the prophet. Consistent with this is the fact that ch 43 (like ch. I and chs 10-11), deals with a distinctive question, that about where on earth God reveals himself. Whilst one must remember not to contrast the earthly and heavenly Temples inappropriately (because the earthly Temple was perceived as the very gate of heaven), nonetheless it is important that Ezekiel 43 is understood as an anticipation of the deity's return not to the heavenly Temple (which he has never left) but rather to the soon-to-be-restored earthly shrine. This is the reversal of the divine abandonment of the sanctuary recounted in chs 10-11, The symmetrical relationship between chs 10-11 and ch. 43 constitutes a key feature of the 'architecture' of this most orderly of biblical books.

This leads me on to raise a question about the second of Their arguments highlighted above, namely that concerning the absence of a building command, This is the weak point in his case. Tuell contended that this alleged absence militated against the notion that the vision is to be interpreted in terms of restoration, thus clearing the ground for his own theory of a vision of the heavenly Temple experienced by Ezekiel within exile, But the hypothesis that chs 4G-42 present a vision of the heavenly Temple does not depend on there being no command to build. Moreover, ch. 43 in fact provides a command to build: 'Describe the temple to the house of Israel, and let them measure the pattern' (43:10) and 'Make known to them the plan of the temple ... and write it down in their sight, so that they may observe and follow the entire plan' (43:11).

### **Two Additional Arguments for a 'Heavenly Ascent' Interpretation**

(a) The reference to the 'following the entire plan' in ch. 43 in fact constitutes another argument for chs 40-42 being an account of the heavenly Temple, one not presented by Tuell. The key to this is a pentateuchal text that Tuell features prominently as part of the general background to his argument, namely Exodus 25. In fact at one point Tuell contrasts Exodus 25 and Ezekiel, arguing that Moses receives an explicit divine command to build in Exod whereas Tuell emphasizes that Ezekiel 40-42 lacks any command to build. I suggest that this Exodus text is actually more pertinent than Tuell claims. Let us consider it more closely. In Exod 25:9, 40 (commonly assigned to the Priestly source) Moses on the mountain receives detailed instructions for the construction of the tabernacle and its furniture.' This is a key passage for understanding the relationship between chs 40-42 and ch, 43 of Ezekiel. A 'model', is shown to Moses Exod 25:9, 40, Precisely what is meant by this is much debated: Hurowitz understands this to refer not to a structure but to a plan, on the basis of 1 Chr 28:11-12, which refers to a written pattern passed on from David to Solomon,' whilst in the interpretation of Exodus 25 presented by Cross the tabnit shown to Moses is the heavenly dwelling of Yahweh, of which the earthly sanctuary is the counterpart,'

Already early in ch, 40 we have a hint about the nature of the link between the tour of the Temple and what will follow. The 'man', the angelic guide, declares to Ezekiel, 'Mortal, look closely and listen attentively, and set your mind upon all that I shall show you, for you were brought here in order that I might show it to you; declare all that you see to the house of Israel' (Ezek 40:4). The length of the man's measuring reed is described (40:5) and then there are numerous references to measuring (for example, 40:5-23). In 43:10-11, as we have noted, we read: 'As for you, mortal, describe the temple to the house of Israel, and let them measure the pattern; make known to them the plan of the temple, its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, and its whole form — all its ordinances and its entire plan and all its laws; and write it down in their sight.' Particularly important are the words that follow, at the end of v. 11: 'so that they may observe and follow the entire plan and all its ordinances'.'

The key Hebrew words used in 43:10-11 are rare 'pattern' or 'measure', 'arrangement's (and also the related verb), 'plan' or 'form'. Nonetheless, in spite of this distinctive vocabulary, Ezek 43:10-11 seems to convey very much the same meaning as the more typical language of Exod 25:9, 4C, which use the fairly common word for that which was shown to Moses on the mountain, Unsurprisingly, some wish to emend Ezek 43:10-11 to assimilate it to the language of Exodus 25. But this is unnecessary; the very rarity of the words used here in Ezekiel supports their authenticity, as does the fact that occurs, albeit in a rather different context, at Ezek 28:12." Hurvitz, focusing specifically on Tilt, took Ezekiel's usage as evidence that he is later than the Priestly source. Be that as it may, Ezekiel's words may be chosen for particular effect, on the one hand recalling priestly terms perhaps already familiar, whilst on the other indicating at the same time that something even bolder is being spoken of, If Exodus 25 is best understood as Hurowitz (rather than Cross) argues (just a pattern shown to Moses, rather than the heavenly sanctuary), the point in Ezekiel may, by way of contrast, be that the prophet has glimpsed not merely the pattern but rather the heavenly Temple itself." If the heavenly Temple is in view, might not Ezekiel's tantalizing use of rare vocabulary in 43:10-11 share some affinity with the circumlocutory technique found at 1:28 (the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD) or again at 11:16, 'a sanctuary to them (albeit in small measure)', being an at once subtle and yet bold hint at the revelation of the very things of heaven."

Ezekiel 40:18 features then both the heavenly Temple and the earthly Temple, The Temple of the vision of chs 40-42 is the heavenly archetype, the 'real' Temple, of which the Temple of Jerusalem was but a copy and a shadow, Ezekiel in exile has been granted a glimpse of this. A time for rebuilding the earthly Temple will come and so ch. 43 appropriately refers to the anticipated rebuilding (43:11.), according to the heavenly model that the prophet has seen."

(b) A further argument in favour of the heavenly Temple, again one not presented by Tuell, relates to the fact that Ezekiel's Temple of chs 40-42 appears to be all but empty. (We have noted a possible parallel here to I Enoch 14, where the first house entered by Enoch seems empty: 'there was neither pleasure nor life in it') Virtually all the furnishings of the Solomonic Temple, and indeed the desert tabernacle, go unmentioned. Among these omissions is the Ark of the Covenant.' The emptiness is arguably more explicable on the premise that the heavenly Temple is in view, The table of the bread of the Presence (cf, Exod 25:23-30) would be otiose, since by definition the Presence is fully present in the heavenly sanctuary. Again, the Menorah (cf. Exod 25:31-40), which probably represented the heavenly luminaries," would not be needed if the Temple concerned were the heavenly Temple. The only interior furniture referred to is the 'altar of wood' in front of the inner room (41:22: 'the table that stands before the Lord). This is distinct from the stone altar of burnt sacrifice that stands outside the Temple itself (40:47; cf. 43:13-27). The presence of the wooden altar in the otherwise empty Temple has long been recognized as something of an enigma.' But if this 'altar of wood' in front of the inner room were the altar upon which incense was burned (cf. Exod, 30:1-10), this may in fact support the theory that it is the heavenly Temple that is toured in Ezekiel 40-1-2, for the worship of God is, of course, the central activity of the heavenly Temple.'

### **Historical and Textual Parallels**

We have already discussed in some detail the particularly close and important case of Exod 25:9, 40. There is other important comparative material in the Hebrew Bible, as Tuell shows, The ancient poem in 1Kgs 8:12-13 speaks of the Jerusalem Temple as Yahweh's earthly dwelling place COT-responding to his transcendent abode: The LORD has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. I have built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever.' The Temple itself was understood as a means of experiencing God (Ps 42:2, 'When shall I come and behold the face of God?'; Ps 84:7, The God of gods will he seen in Zion'), Margaret Barker has powerfully presented the Temple as the eery gate of heaven, drawing on these and other texts. Several Psalms evoke mythological imagery about the dwelling place of the gods (Ps 46:4, 'There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High'; Ps 48:2, 'Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King'). And then there is Isaiah's Temple vision (Isaiah 6), in which the earthly Jerusalem Temple context of the prophet's call seems to give way to a glimpse of the heavenly Temple, as the mere edge of the divine train fills the earthly Temple: 'and the hem of his robe filled the Temple' (6: 1).

The notion of a heavenly Temple has deep roots in the temple ideologies of the ancient Near East!' In Babylonia precise adherence of the earthly temple to the pattern of the heavenly temple was regarded as a matter of great importance, and deviation from the foundation lines of temples was a matter of grave concern. Reference has already been made to the Sumerian case of Gude% ruler of the city of Lagash: he was shown in a dream the model according to which the Temple of Ningirsu was to be built."

### **Cultural Analogies**

To historical and textual parallels may be added cultural analogies.

Tuell's own favoured analogy is that of the icon of Eastern Orthodox Christianity. which is understood to be a window into heaven. 'The text of Ezekiel's vision, thus, could become an aid to devotional piety, like the icon in Orthodoxy.' Moreover, as he points out, a written text (such as that of Ezekiel) can serve as an icon, there being a tradition within Orthodoxy of speaking of the Gospels as a 'verbal icon' of Christ.

Niditch (whose interpretation of Ezekiel's vision shares much with Tuell's) looks to Tibetan Buddhism, where the mandala is a symbolic representation of the sacred realm or cosmos, Niditch writes that the association of visionary experience with a detailed architectural plan in the Buddhist tradition provides a fascinating analogue helping one to appreciate a similar association in Ezekiel'. 'The 'real' mandala is the actual sacred realm', she reports, 'Closest to the realm itself are the three-dimensional buildings, palaces of the deities, built with real materials,' One is reminded here of the Mesopotamian descriptive inventories (not building plans), referred to earlier.

(c) A further parallel is the Platonic concept of ideal forms, Both ancients and moderns have posited actual influence between ancient Greece and the Hebrew Bible in this regard (in both directions in fact). I prefer to speak of cultural analogy in a more general sense rather than speculate about direct borrowing.

### **The Relative Dating of Ezekiel 40-42 and 1 Enoch 14**

If it is reasonable to understand Ezekiel 40-42 as in some sense a 'heavenly ascent' narrative, there is the question of how early it is, and in particular its dating in relation to / Enoch 14.1 Enoch 14 is commonly dated to the third century BCE, although Isaac prefers the second century BCE. But how about the dating of Ezekiel 40-42? Studies of Ezekiel 40-48 as a whole have been much influenced by the stratifying approach of Gese, which was followed through in detail by Zimmerli and adapted by others. This strategy distinguishes between original Ezekiel material and various layers of addition. Others have favoured a more holistic approach to Ezekiel 40-48, above all Greenberg, who is reluctant to see the hand of any but Ezekiel in these chapters. Niditch provides another, less thoroughgoing, example of this latter trend,'

In Ezekiel in general we have to take account of a marked homogeneity between the words of the prophet and material that may well be secondary, The fact that this "house style' of Ezekiel is particularly distinctive makes it more difficult to distinguish between primary and secondary material in this book than in some others.<sup>o</sup> Questions of purpose and authorship are often connected; indeed in this present case scholars sometimes argue that practical details are a sign of secondary elaboration of an original vision, there being a widespread view that the visionary elements of chs 40-48 predate the more detailed features of measurement and legislation, and indeed are likely to be primary. Tuell, for example, identified his original core vision as Ezekiel 40-42 (minus alleged additions), 43:1=4,44;1-3 and 47:1-42.

But whether or not the material we have been considering is all from Ezekiel himself, several factors favour a sixth-century date for Ezekiel 40-48 as a whole, including chs 40-42. And this is what really matters with regard to the relative dating of Ezekiel 40-42 and I Enoch 14. There is nothing that unambiguously refers to events after the sixth century. This is a principle that Clements employs very effectively in his treatment of chs 1-24,' and it may be applied to the latter part of the book as well.

Moreover, the fact that Ezekiel's vision, however it is to be understood, is so divergent from what we postulate of the restoration reality strongly suggests that it predates the latter. If the Second Temple had already been inaugurated (as it was in about 515 BCE), it would have been difficult to write in this way; the account would surely have been accommodated to the new reality," It is worthy of note that Ezekiel's vision is given a specific date: the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was struck down' (40:1) The year seems to be 573, The fact that 4111-2 anticipates an end to exile is crucial to the whole section of the book that it introduces. At the half-way point of the exile as he perceives it, Ezekiel anticipates that twenty-five years later an end to exile will be accomplished, in a Jubilee year.' This is integral to the understanding of this material and reinforces the arguments for a date in the sixth century. So the relative dating of Ezekiel 40-42 and I Enoch 14 is secure, or at least beyond reasonable doubt.

### **A Mystical Trajectory**

We can speak of an extended trajectory of mystical interpretation of this material over the centuries, Just as Ezekiel 40-42 has important antecedents (including Exod 24.9-11 and Isaiah 6), so the Ezekiel text has a rich

afterlife (including, I contend, its influence on I Enoch 14). We find evidence for a similar understanding of Ezekiel 40-48 to that which I have advanced in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice from Qumran. Carol Newsom has shown in detail the indebtedness to Ezekiel, not least chs 40- 48. One should mention also several non-sectarian compositions, found at Qumran but lacking the specific characteristics distinctive of the Qumran community, such as the Temple Scroll (11QTemple) and the work called the New Jerusalem, both of which make use of Ezekiel 40-4.8 in particular. Of the many who participate in the afterlife of this Ezekiel text, Niditch writes: 'All pine after the sacred in the face of disappointing, alienating earthly realities,'

Mention should be made also of Paul and the intriguing reference in 2 Cor 12:1-4: 'I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven - whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. And I know that such a person - whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows - was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. One may compare Bowker's theory that Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus was within the context of a merkavah visionary experience. And then there is the often-cited reference in the Babylonian Talmud to the 'marble steps' seen by the four who entered 'pardes' (b. Hag. 14b). And the trajectory continues on to the 'building vision' traditions in the mystical hekalot ('palaces') literature.

A long and deeply-rooted mystical tradition then. The apocalyptic traditions of 'heavenly ascent' and the often much later merkavah mystical materials must not be casually assimilated. But it is important to recognize the rich interrelation of these streams, as contended by Rowland, who has done much to chart the story of the reception of Ezekiel 1 within Judaism and Christianity.' Even Rowland, however, does not acknowledge sufficiently the contribution of Ezekiel. In the light of the above argument that not only the merkavah tradition but also the 'heavenly ascent' tradition may owe much to Ezekiel, it is no exaggeration to speak of a continuity of mystical tradition going back all the way back to the prophet Ezekiel himself, tightly seen as a visionary.

### **A Visionary Experience or an Actual Journey?**

Should one speak of a visionary experience or of an actual journey to heaven? Tuell writes of chapters 40-42 in a way that seems to fall between these two stools: the report of a vision: Ezekiel describes what he and his contemporaries would have understood as an actual visionary journey to the heavenly temple', Some comparable passages read like visionary experiences (e.g. Daniel 7, in the second century BCE, and Acts 7:55-56 and 22:17-21, in the first century CE). Others sound more like journeys, as in I Enoch 14:8-24 (commonly dated to the third century BCE), the Apocalypse of Abraham 15-30 (probably first to second century CE), and, in the New Testament, 2 or 12:2-4 and Revelation 4 (first century CE). As Alan Segal has recently argued, it is important both to take seriously that some ancients really did reckon to have been transported and also to be open to physiological explanations of the sensation of ascents. As for Ezekiel, the language of the book seems to indicate clearly that the prophet's experience is one of vision rather than physical transportation. Ezek 40:2 refers to 'visions of God', like 8:3; and just as 8:3 does not imply a real physical journey to Jerusalem, so 40:2 does not imply a real journey to heaven. It is in vision that Ezekiel ascended to and toured the heavenly Temple.

### **An Exegetical or an experiential Tradition?**

There is an important debate about whether the texts in question are exegetical or experiential in nature. Himmelfarb represents the former option, contending that evidence for rites or mystical practices designed to induce a heavenly ascent is scant', she writes that "the heavenly ascents of the hekalot literature functioned not as rites to be enacted but as stories to be repeated'..'. She offers a similar judgement with regard to the apocalyptic material: 'the apocalypses are best understood not as literary adaptations of personal experiences but as imaginative literature', Halperin, when discussing the apocalyptic material (in contrast to the hekalot literature), is more open to an experiential emphasis, 'When an apocalyptic visionary "sees" something that looks like Ezekiel's merkavah, we may assume that he is seeing the merkavah vision as he has persuaded himself it really was, as Ezekiel would have seen it had he been inspired wholly and not in part.' But when

discussing the merkavah texts properly so called (the hekalot literature), he is emphatic on their exegetical and anthological rather than experiential nature.'

But by no means all have agreed, and there are those who give a larger place to the experiential generally. For example, Scholem and others have understood the ascents as literary devices providing directions for would-be mystics who wish to repeat the ecstatic experience of the visionary. Tuell was attracted to this, writing of chs 40-42: 'By reading this report, Ezekiel's audience could share in the prophet's experience of transcendent reality and so be given access to the presence of Yhwh'," and again: 'The reader of the text is able to experience what the prophet experienced. independent of the original visionary.' Tuell seeks to bridge between a more exegetical/anthological approach and a more experiential one through his analogy of the Eastern Christian icon: 'If we view the texts as having a devotional function analogous to that of the icon, the distinction between ecstatic religious experience and literary imagination becomes less significant. The text may itself be understood to give the reader access to the transcendent realm.'" Niditch mediates in a very similar way: 'The line between the exegetical and the mystical, linked perhaps by the mantic, is less well-marked than Halperin suggests.'" And reflecting further on the use of the material in later times, she writes: 'The building not only becomes a symbolization of an image of God's realm, but also indicates the seer's participation in the very process of world-creation.'" One is reminded here of the emphases of Lieb and Rowland., highlighting the experiential and imaginative dimensions of reading visionary texts.'

### **Local and yet Universal, immanent and yet Transcendent**

Ezekiel, in spite of his priestly and Jerusalem-based formation, was able to articulate a theology of divine presence that took account of the exile, The exile and Yahweh's departure from Jerusalem were not only punishment for the sins of the nation, but became the occasion for a discovery that Yahweh was present to his people even in alien Babylonia (Ezekiel I; 11:16). Kutsko expresses this paradox effectively: 'The absence of God from the Temple (the removal of the divine kabod) is both theodicy and theophany; it allows the presence of God to be associated with Israel in exile.' Ezekiel goes on to present a return to Jerusalem, hardly surprising given his priestly and Jerusalem legacy and also in view of the anticipated fact of return and the need to give a theological account of it. But that left a problem. What are we to make of the twin poles that restoration leaves, namely renewed divine presence in Jerusalem and on-going divine presence elsewhere? Should one perhaps assume that Jerusalem is now again the unique place, just as before (at least from Josiah's reform in c. 620, an understanding that would obtain until the events of 70 CE made such a belief unsustainable? This might imply that just as Yahweh abandoned Jerusalem to be with the exiles, so now he has abandoned Babylonia (where a Jewish community remained in fact until modern times) to return to Jerusalem. Or should one speak rather in terms of a new dialectic suited to the two-fold life of the Jewish people after the exile: in the land and also in the diaspora? Surely the latter, And, moreover, if Yahweh could be encountered in Babylonia, then presumably potentially everywhere: have become to them a sanctuary (albeit in small measure) in the countries where they have gone' (Ezek 11:14' But in all of this we should not forget the heavenly, transcendent dimension, the focus of the present study. It is because Yahweh is transcendent and not immanently tied to Jerusalem that the affirmations of Ezekiel 1 and 11:16, the divine 'throne' and the 'sanctuary in small measure', are possible. They represent glimpses of the divine, much as the Temple vision of chs 40-42 reports a sight of the heavenly archetype, the 'real' Temple, of which the Temple of Jerusalem was only ever a copy and a shadow. It is this theology of transcendence that undergirds the theology of universalism. This is indeed a rich theology, with its finely-balanced dialectic between the presence of Israel's God with his people wherever they are and his honouring of the particular place of the special revelation of his holiness, and also, as we have now seen, a nuanced balance between the immanence of the deity and his overarching transcendence.

Paul M. Joyce

**Old Testament / Second Temple Period**  
**Dr. James D. Tabor, Scholar of Early Judaism**

**Ascent As Foretaste Of Heavenly World; Journey Or "Visit" To Heaven Which Functions As Foretaste Or Anticipation Of Final Or Permanent Ascent To Heavenly Life**  
**Anchor Bible Dictionary (published 1992)**

**Ascent to Heaven in Antiquity (1992)**

The motif of the journey to heaven is a vitally important phenomenon of ancient Mediterranean religions. There are five figures in the Bible who, according to standard Jewish and Christian interpretation, are reported to have ascended to heaven: Enoch (Gen 5:24); Elijah (2 Kgs 2:1-12); Jesus (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9); Paul (2 Cor 12:2-4); and John (Rev 4:1). There are also four related accounts in which individuals behold the throne, or heavenly court, of Yahweh: Moses, Aaron, and the elders of Israel (Exod 24:9-11); Micaiah (1 Kgs 22:19-23); Isaiah (Isa 6:1-13); and Ezekiel (Ezk 1, 10). Finally, there is the scene in which an otherwise unidentified "son of man" comes before the throne of God in an apocalyptic vision of Daniel (Dan 7:11-14). This notion, that mortals enter into, or behold, the realm of the immortal God (or gods) undergoes various complicated developments from the Ancient Near Eastern into the Hellenistic period. It is closely related to a number of other topics such as the descent or journey to the underworld of the dead, the heavenly destiny of the immortal soul, the apotheosis or divinization of selected mortals (rulers, philosophers, divine men), and aspects of Greco-Roman, Jewish and Christian mysticism. Sorting through this complex conceptual web, and trying to understand these Biblical texts with their contexts and complicated traditional development, has occupied historians of ancient religions for the past 150 years (Bousset 1901; Segal 1980).

The motif of the heavenly journey can be divided into four basic types or categories, based upon the fundamental purpose or outcome of the ascent as reported in a given text. Generally speaking, the first two categories are more characteristic of the Ancient Near Eastern, or archaic period, which would include most texts of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). The latter two categories are more typical of the Hellenistic period, which reflects the perspective of the New Testament.

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**1. Ascent as an invasion of heaven.**

In the cosmology reflected throughout most of the Hebrew Bible mortal humankind belongs on earth, not in heaven, and at death descends below to the nether world known as Sheol. Psalms 115 expresses this succinctly:

The heaven's are the LORD'S heavens,  
but the earth he has given to the sons of men.  
The dead do not praise the LORD,  
nor do any that go down into silence.  
But we will bless the LORD  
from this time forth and for evermore.

Generally speaking, just as there is no coming back from the dead, there is no idea or expectation that humans can go to heaven, a place reserved for God and his angelic attendants. This means that any report of a human being ascending to heaven would be seen as not only extraordinary, but often even as an intrusion or invasion of the divine realm. In an Akkadian text, Adapa, the son of Ea, attempts to ascend to heaven to obtain eternal life but is cast back down to earth (Pritchard 1969:101-3). A somewhat similar story is told of Etana, one of the legendary rulers of the Sumerian dynasty of Kish (Pritchard 1969: 114-18). A direct protest against such an ascent is found in Isa 14:12-20 (compare Ezk 28:11-19). There the prideful King of Babylon, who wants to ascend to heaven and become like God, is cast down to the nether world of worms and maggots (v 11). The ironic language of Prov 30:2-4 (compare Job 26; 38:1-42:6), though not a tale of ascent, emphasizes the contrast between the human and divine realms. A similar idea lies behind Deut 29:29 and 30:11-14. There is no need for one to ascend to heaven to learn the "secret things" which belong to God (compare Sir 3:21-22). Lucian's tale, Icaromenippus, though from the Roman imperial period, typifies this understanding of ascent to heaven as an invasion of the realm of the gods.



The accounts of Enoch and Elijah are best understood in this context. First and foremost, they are extraordinary. The normal fate, even of great heroes of the Hebrew Bible such as Abraham, Moses, and David, is death or "rest" in Sheol (Gen 25:7-9; Deut 34:6; 1 Kgs 2:10, cf Acts 2:29-34). Furthermore, both texts, particularly the one about Enoch, are ambiguous. Genesis 5:24, from the P source, in lieu of recording Enoch's death, simply says "Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." Where he was taken, the text does not say. Though the bulk of later Jewish and Christian tradition understood this text as ascent to heaven (Charlesworth 1983: 1: 3-315; Tabor 1989), this was not universally the case (compare Heb 11:5, 13-16). The author might have had in mind a journey "Beyond," to some special region on this earth (e.g. "Isles of the Blessed"), as in the cases of Gilgamesh's Utnapishtim or Menelaus in Homer. Such might also be the case with Elijah. Though he is clearly taken from the earthly scene in a chariot of fire that rises to heaven like a whirlwind, the author might well have had in mind his removal or "retirement" to some remote area. If so, "heaven" in this text is equivalent to "sky," and the author does not intend to imply that Elijah joined Yahweh as an immortal in the heavenly court. This appears to be the understanding of the Chronicles who reports that much later, Jehoram, king of Judah, receives a letter written by Elijah (2 Chronicles 21:12-15).

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## **2. Ascent to receive revelation.**

This type of ascent involves a "round trip" from earth to heaven and back again, or some visionary experience of the heavenly court from which one returns to normal experience (ascent/descent). In contrast to the previous type, the journey or experience is appraised most positively. The earth, not heaven, is still understood as the proper human place, so that the ascent remains a "visit," though not an intrusion, into the divine realm.

The complex literary traditions surrounding the ascent of Moses on Mount Sinai, now found in Exodus 24, though not explicitly referring to a journey to heaven, are closely related to this category. Moses (or alternatively Moses, Aaron and the seventy elders), in ascending the mountain, enter the presence of God, the realm of the divine. He is given revelation in the form of heavenly tablets, then descends back to the mortal realm. Though he is not explicitly deified or enthroned, he becomes a semi-divine figure, eating and drinking in the divine presence and returning from the mountain with his face transformed like an immortal (Exodus 24:11; 34:29-30). In later interpretation this was understood as full deification (see Philo, *De vita Mosis* 2.290-91; *De virt.* 73-75; Ezekiel the Tragedian 668-82). The prophetic call of Isaiah is a further example of this same pattern (Isaiah 6:1-3). Since there is no specific reference to Isaiah being "taken up," this is a "visionary ascent," though the distinction between the two types is not always clear (see 2 Cor 12:2-4). He sees "The LORD sitting on a throne, high and lifted up" (v 1). He is then given a message with a corresponding prophetic commission. As a mortal, he is out of place in the divine realm; he cries out "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips . . . for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" (v 5). The throne visions of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1, 10) should be compared here, as well as the scene before the throne of the "Ancient of Days" in Daniel 7:14 where a "son of man" is given cosmic rulership over all nations. Micaiah's vision of the heavenly court also belongs under this category (1 Kings 22:19-23). In all of these texts the ascent or vision of the heavenly throne serves as a way of claiming the highest and most direct heavenly authority for the message. Such experiences are clearly evaluated as more noteworthy than the epiphany of an angelic messenger or receipt of a prophetic "word of the LORD." Widengren (1950) has traced this motif of royal or prophetic enthronement (ascent, initiation into heavenly secrets, receipt of a divine commission) into later Jewish traditions involving kingship, prophetic commissions and the revelation of secret heavenly lore. This understanding of ascent dominates one of the oldest sections of 1 Enoch, the Book of the Watchers (chaps. 1-36). The legendary figure Enoch is taken through the heavenly realms and shown cosmic secrets, even appearing before God's lofty throne. The Greek version of the Testament of Levi (2nd century B.C.E.) draws upon the ascent motif in a similar way, as does the Latin Life of Adam and Eve (1st century C.E.) and the Apocalypse of Abraham. In each of these texts the ascent to heaven functions as a vehicle of revelation, offering divine authority to the cosmological and eschatological lore the authors were expounding.

The closest non-Jewish, or Greek, parallel to this notion of ascent is probably Parmenides' prooemium, which survives in only a few fragments (Taran 1965). He tells of being taken in a chariot through the gate leading to daylight, where he is received and addressed by a goddess. On the whole, for Greeks in the archaic period, revelations came through epiphanies, oracles, dreams, omens, and signs of various sorts, not by being taken before the throne of Zeus. The fair number of Jewish (and Jewish-Christian) texts which make use of ascent to heaven as a means of legitimating rival claims of revelation and authority is likely due to the polemics and party politics that characterized the Second Temple period. It became a characteristic way, in the Hellenistic period, of claiming "archaic" authority of the highest order, equal to a Enoch or Moses, for ones vision of things.

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### **3. Ascent to immortal heavenly life.**

This type of ascent to heaven is final or "one way:" a mortal obtains immortality, or release from mortal conditions, thorough a permanent ascent to the heavenly realms. Broadly, there are two overlapping ideas involved here, both of which have been extensively investigated. First, that a hero, ruler, or extraordinary individual has obtained immortal heavenly existence (Farnell 1921; Guthrie 1950; Bieler 1935-36; M. Smith 1971; Gallagher 1982). Second, the more general idea that the souls of humankind, bound by mortal conditions, can obtain release to immortal heavenly life (Rhode 1925; Bousset 1901; Burkert 1985). The second is not merely a later democratization of the first, rather, the two exist side by side throughout the Hellenistic period. While they are distinct from one another, both are related to a fundamental shift in the perception of the proper human place. Increasingly in this period one encounters the notion that humans actually belong in heaven, with life on earth seen as either a "fall" or temporary subjection to mortal powers (Nilsson 1969: 96-185; J. Z. Smith 1975).

The only candidates for such immortalization in the Hebrew Bible are Enoch and Elijah, though, as noted above, both texts are ambiguous. As early as the Maccabean period (2nd century B.C.E.) Daniel speaks of the righteous dead being resurrected and "shining like the stars forever and ever," having obtained immortality (12:3). A similar notion is found in the Wisdom of Solomon, where the "souls of the righteous" are promised immortal life (3:1-9). Gradually, in Jewish and Christian texts of the Hellenistic period, the older idea of the dead reposing in Sheol forever is replaced with either a notion of the resurrection of the dead or the immortality of the soul or some combination of the two (Nickelsburg 1972). Both ideas involve the notion of a final ascent to heaven.

The NT reflects this Hellenistic perspective in which mortals can obtain heavenly immortality. Matthew 13:43, reflecting the language and influence of Daniel, asserts that "the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Eternal life is promised to the righteous throughout the NT corpus (Mark 9:42-48; Q [Matt 10:32-33=Luke 12:8]; Matt 25:46; Acts 13:48; John 3:16; 14:1-3; Rom 6:23; Col 3:1-4; 1 Tim 1:16; Heb 12:22-23; Jas 1:12; 1 Pet 1:4; 2 Pet 1:4; 1 John 5:11; Jude 21; Rev 20). In most cases this involves ascent to heaven and life before the throne of God (1 Thess 4:13-18; Rev 7:9-17). According to the NT, the righteous of the OT, such as Abraham, Moses, and the prophets, are included in this promised resurrection to immortal heavenly life (Heb 11). In the NT the ascent of Jesus to heaven is the paradigm for all those righteous mortals who follow. Just as he was raised from the dead, made immortal, and ascended to the Father, so will followers experience the same at his return (John 14: 1-3; 1 Cor 15: 20-28; Rom 8:29-30). The state of the the righteous souls who have died prior to the time of the end and the resurrection and ascent to heaven is not always clear. Paul seems to prefer the metaphor of "sleep," which parallels the Hebrew Bible notion of Sheol (1 Thess 4:13; 5:10; 1 Cor 15:18-20). But in two places he might imply that these "souls" or "spirits" depart immediately at death and ascend to the presence of Christ in heaven (Phil 1: 21-24; 2 Cor 5:1-10). In Revelation the "souls of the martyrs" are pictured as under the altar, presumably in heaven, longing for their time of vindication (6:9-11). In distinction to both of these views, the story of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus, unique to Luke, pictures the Hadean world of the dead, which is below not above, as a place in which rewards and punishments are already being experienced prior to the final resurrection and judgment (Luke 16:19-31). This latter text is more in concert with other Jewish materials of the period which

see the "dead" as conscious, but in the Hadean world below, awaiting the resurrection and last judgment (cf. Rev 20:11-15). There is no uniform NT view of this subject of the "state of the dead."

Surprisingly, an actual narrative account of the ascent of Jesus to heaven occurs only in Luke (24:51, but see textual variants; Acts 1:9). It is assumed in Matthew and Mark and spoken of in John (20:17) and Paul (Rom 8:34). A similar resurrection from the dead followed by bodily ascension to heaven is prophesied for the "two witnesses" in the book of Revelation (11:7-12). They are God's final prophets before the return of Christ and the last judgment. The contrast between the NT and the Hebrew Bible regarding this expectation of ascent to heaven could not be more striking. Other than the doubtful examples of Enoch and Elijah, it is not until the book of Daniel, which is perhaps the latest text in the canon of the Hebrew Bible, that one finds any reference to mortals ascending to heavenly life (some would include Isa 26:19; Job 14:14-16 is a longing, not an affirmation). The NT is fully a part of the process of Hellenization in which notions of resurrection from the dead, immortality of the soul, and ascent to heaven were the norm rather than the exception.

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#### **4. Ascent as a foretaste of the heavenly world**

This type of ascent involves a journey or "visit" to heaven which functions as a foretaste or anticipation of a final or permanent ascent to heavenly life. Though related to the second category, ascent to receive revelation, it is fundamentally different. For example, when Isaiah is taken before God's throne, though he receives a commission and experiences the glories of the heavenly world, there is no idea that he will return to that realm. He remains a mortal who dies and descends to Sheol with all the other dead.

The earliest example of this notion of ascent is in the Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 37-71), probably dating from the 1st century B.C.E. In chapter 39 Enoch relates how he was taken to heaven. The experience transforms him (39:14) and he is told that he will later ascend to heaven permanently and receive glory and immortal heavenly life (chaps. 70-71). Second (Slavonic) Enoch also reflects a similar pattern. Enoch's journey through the seven heavens, which lasts 60 days (chaps. 1-20), is followed by a return to earth. The experience transforms him and functions in anticipation of his final translation to heaven.

Christians later took up and elaborated this understanding of ascent from such Jewish models, as seen in texts such as the Ascension of Isaiah. In the New Testament we have the striking firsthand account of Paul's own experience of ascent to Paradise (2 Cor 12:2-4). This text provides evidence for the actual "practice" of ascent to heaven in Jewish-Christian circles during this period, in contrast to a purely literary motif adopted to lend heavenly authority to a text. Obviously, Paul's experience functions as a highly privileged foretaste of the heavenly glorification which he expected at the return of Christ (Tabor 1986).

There are definite links between the language and ideas of these Jewish texts from Second Temples times, the testimony of Paul, and the Tannaitic and Amoraic Merkabah (and later Hekhalot) traditions (Scholem 1960; Gruenwald 1980; Halperin 1980).

It is noteworthy that Paul's testimony in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 remains our only firsthand auto-biographical account of such an experience from the Second Temple period.

#### **Old Testament / Second Temple Period**

**Christopher A. Morray-Jones, Scholar of Early Judaism**

**In Later Apocalypses, Three-Tier Cosmology Largely Displaced By More Complex Model Of Seven Heavens; The Idea That Universe Is Temple, Corresponding In Structure To Temple In Jerusalem Or At Least To Ideal Form, Continues To Pervade This Literature**

**“Paradise Now:” Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism**

**Steve St. Clair's notes:**

Jewish and Christian Ascents to Heaven were based on descriptions of Solomon's Temple in the Old Testament books of Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Second Kings, and originally depicted three levels in heaven corresponding to the threefold division in the Old-Testament temple. In Morray-Jones's words:

Enoch's journey to heaven leads him into a temple whose threefold structure, consisting of concentric houses surrounded by a wall, corresponds closely to that of the earthly sanctuary in Jerusalem. "The two -houses" correspond to the sanctuary building and the holy of holies. The wall (v. 9, according to the Ethiopic text) of white marble corresponds either to the wall surrounding the inner courts of the temple or, perhaps, to the balustrade beyond which no Gentile was allowed to pass. The wheels of God's throne identify it as Ezekiel's merkabah, and the cherubim mentioned in the same verse are clearly identical with Ezekiel's living creatures. The structure of this celestial temple involves a curious reversal of normality: the inner of the two "houses" is larger than the outer (vv. 15-16).

The threefold structure of the temple in First Enoch 14 reflects a cosmology of three heavens, which is also attested in other parts of the early Enoch literature. An early form of the Testament of Levi employed a similar three-tier cosmology, although the number of heavens was increased to seven in later versions. Here again the highest heaven, the "dwelling place of the Great Glory" is called "the holy of holies." As observed by Himmelfarb, in the extended version of the text the chambers of the Temple are identical with the higher celestial levels.

In the later apocalypses, the three-tier cosmology is largely displaced by a more complex model of seven heavens. As Himmelfarb has shown, the idea that the universe is a temple, corresponding in structure to the temple in Jerusalem (or at least to the ideal form thereof), continues to pervade this literature.

**Morray-Jones Paper:**

The celestial temple is a central motif of Jewish apocalyptic literature and of the "merkabah mystical" traditions preserved in the hekhalot ("palaces" or "temples") writings of the rabbinic and immediately post-rabbinic periods. For examples, see R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, "The Temple and the Origins of Jewish Apocalyptic" (VT 20: 1970); Martha Himmelfarb, "Apocalyptic Ascent and the Heavenly Temple" (SBL Seminar Papers 1987); idem., *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (1993); Allen J. McNichol, "The Heavenly Sanctuary in Judaism: A Model for tracing the origins of the Apocalypse" (JReIS 1987); Craig R. Koester, "The Dwelling of God: The Tabernacle in the Old Testament, Intertestamental Jewish Literature, and New Testament" (CBQMS 1989); Rachel Elijior, "From Earthly Temple to Heavenly Shrines: Prayer and Sacred Song in the Hekhalot Literature and its relation to Temple Traditions" (JSQ 1997). In these sources, the ascent into heaven is envisaged as a journey through the courts of a cosmic temple to the innermost sanctuary where God appears in the form of a vast manlike figure of fire or light, called the "Power" or "Glory" seated upon the throne of glory (kissei\_hakavod), also called the "chariot" (merkavah).

This imagery is deeply rooted in the Hebrew biblical tradition. For examples, see above all Jon D. Levensen, "The Temple and the World" (JR 64:1984m 275-98; and idem., *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (1985). See also E. Theodore Mullen, Jr., *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* (1980), 147-69, and Margaret Barker, *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* (1991) 151-2. The term merkabah is derived from I Chronicles 28:18, where it refers to the chariot of the cherubims that carried the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies. In Isaiah 6, a central text of the later mystical tradition, the prophet encounters the enthroned deity in the holy of holies of the temple:

In the year the King Uzziah died, I saw the LORD sitting upon a high and exalted throne, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above Him stood the Seraphim. Each one had six wings, two covering his face, two covering his feet, and two with which he flew. And they were calling to one another, "Holy! Holy! Holy is the LORD of Hosts! The whole earth is full of His Glory!" At the sound of their voices, the doorposts and thresholds shook and the House was filled with smoke.

The seraphim that Isaiah sees above the throne evidently correspond to the cherubim of 1 Chronicles 28:18, whose wings were outstretched above the ark. God's throne is, therefore, already identified with the chariot by which the ark was carried, as it is in the later esoteric sources.

Several commentators have maintained that there is a fundamental difference between the visions of the biblical prophets and the heavenly ascents described by the later apocalyptic writers. The prophets, it is argued, did not claim to have ascended to heaven but experienced their visions while remaining on the earth. Thus Isaiah's vision is said to have occurred in the earthly temple and not, as in the later apocalypses, its heavenly counterpart. This distinction may be somewhat overstated. Although it is true that detailed accounts of heavenly ascents are not found in the prophetic writings, the vision of the heavenly council provides the context for the commissioning of the prophet, who therefore experiences himself as present at the scene. George Widengren, moreover, has shown that the forms of these commissioning narratives originated in pre-biblical Mesopotamian enthronement ceremonies in which the king, having ritually entered the heavenly palace of the god, is awarded the status of a "sent one," like Enoch, Daniel, and other ascending heroes of the apocalypses, Isaiah is a participant in the action. His mouth is purified by an angel with a coal from the altar (Isaiah 6:6-7), after which he engages in a dialogue with God, volunteering his services and receiving his instructions (Isaiah 6:8-13).

Similar considerations apply to the commissioning scene in Ezekiel 1-3, which appears to take place not on earth but above the firmament, where the throne is said to be located (Ezekiel 1:20). Having fallen on his face (Ezekiel 1:28), the prophet gets up and interacts with the figure on the throne, eating the scroll that he offers him and receiving his commission (Ezekiel 2:1-3:11). Following this, he is returned to earth by a wind, which appears to be generated by the wings of the living creatures (Ezekiel 3:12) and, perhaps, to be identical with the words conventionally translated "spirit of the living creatures" of Ezekiel 1:20-21. Although Ezekiel is a priest, his vision does not occur in the earthly sanctuary but in Babylonia.

Isaiah is not said to be a priest and so is not permitted to enter the sanctuary on earth. He must, therefore, have been relocated in his vision. Whether the house into which he has been transported is the earthly temple or its celestial counterpart is nowhere specified, and it is perhaps doubtful whether this distinction would have been very meaningful to the author, for whom the ritual identification of the one with the other was not merely a dramatic metaphor. As observed by Levenson:

Isaiah is privileged to see the difference between the earthly antitype and the heavenly archetype disappear. Iconography becomes the reality it symbolizes ("The Jerusalem Temple in Devotional and Visionary Experience" (1986)).

The ritual identification of the earthly sanctuary with the heavenly throne room was, then, a central theme of the pre-exilic cult tradition, as expressed, for example, in the poetic parallelism of Psalms 11:4:

The Lord is in the temple of his holiness: the seat in the heavens is his throne.

### **I. Visions of the Enthroned Glory**

Under the conditions of the exile, access to the divine throne via the physical temple in Jerusalem was, of course, no longer possible. Ezekiel's visions of the enthroned "Glory of the Lord" drawn on awesome wheels by mysterious living creatures, who are identified in Ezekiel 10:11-15 with the temple cherubim, occurred in response to this situation and provided an assurance that the heavenly reality was still accessible by other

means. When the prophet is transported to and conducted around the temple of the future (Ezekiel 40-48), what he sees is, presumably, a celestial archetype, since it does yet not exist on earth.

Perhaps the earliest occurrence of the term merkabah in connection with Ezekiel's vision is in Sirach 19:8:

It was Ezekiel who saw the vision of the Glory, which was shown to him upon a chariot of cherubim.

The earliest detailed account of an ascent into heaven, however, occurs in I Enoch 14:8-25:

And it was shown unto me thus in a vision – Behold, there were clouds in the vision calling me, and thunderclouds were crying out to me, and stars and lightning flashes were hastening me and driving me on, and winds, in my vision, were bearing me aloft, and they lifted me upwards and carried me into heaven. And I went in until I approached a wall, built of hailstones, with tongues of fire surrounding it; and it began to terrify me. And I went into the tongues of fire, and approached a great house built of hailstones; and the walls of the house were like smooth ashlars, and they were all of snow, and the floors were of snow, and the ceiling was like shooting stars and lightning flashes; and between them were fiery cherubim, and their heaven was water; and a flaming fire surrounded the walls; and the doors were ablaze with fire. And I went into the house, hot as fire and cold as ice; and there was in it no sustenance for life, and fear overcame me and threatening seized me. And, shaking and trembling, I fell on my face. And I saw in my vision, and beheld another house greater than this one, with its door wide open before me, all built of tongues of fire. And in every respect, it excelled in glory and honor and greatness, so I was unable to express its glory and its greatness. And its floor was of fire, above which were lightning flashes and shooting stars, and its ceiling was a blazing fire. And I looked and saw a lofty throne; and its appearance was, as it were, and its wheels were like the shining sun, and there was the sound of cherubim. And from beneath the throne issued rivers of blazing fire, and I was unable to look at it. And the great glory was sitting upon it, and his garment was brighter than the sun, and whiter than any snow. No angel was able to enter this house, or to see His face, on account of its splendor and glory, and no flesh could look at Him. A flaming fire was round about him, and a great fire stood before him, and none of those who surrounded Him could come near Him. Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. He needed no counsel, for his every word was a deed, but the most holy angels who are near him turn not away nor depart from him at night. As for me, until then I had been prostrate on my face, shuddering and trembling; but the Lord called me with his own mouth and said to me: Come hear, Enoch, and hear my word.” And one of the holy ones approached me, and raised me to my feet, and led me to the door, and I bowed my face down low.

Here Enoch's journey to heaven leads him into a temple whose threefold structure, consisting of concentric houses surrounded by a wall, corresponds closely to that of the earthly sanctuary in Jerusalem. "The two - houses" correspond to the sanctuary building and the holy of holies. The wall (v. 9, according to the Ethiopic text) of white marble corresponds either to the wall surrounding the inner courts of the temple or, perhaps, to the balustrade beyond which no Gentile was allowed to pass. The wheels of God's throne identify it as Ezekiel's merkabah, and the cherubim mentioned in the same verse are clearly identical with Ezekiel's living creatures. The structure of this celestial temple involves a curious reversal of normality: the inner of the two "houses" is larger than the outer (vv. 15-16).

I have argued elsewhere that the threefold structure of the temple in First Enoch 14 reflects a cosmology of three heavens, which is also attested in other parts of the early Enoch literature. According to the majority of commentators, an early form of the Testament of Levi employed a similar three-tier cosmology, although the number of heavens was increased to seven in later versions. Here again the highest heaven, the "dwelling place of the Great Glory" is called "the holy of holies." As observed by Himmelfarb, in the extended version of the text the chambers of the Temple are identical with the higher celestial levels.

In the later apocalypses, the three-tier cosmology is largely displaced by a more complex model of seven heavens. As Himmelfarb has shown, the idea that the universe is a temple, corresponding in structure to the

temple in Jerusalem (or at least to the ideal form thereof), continues to pervade this literature. A similar idea is expressed by Philo:

The whole universe must be regarded as the highest and, in truth, the holy temple of God. As sanctuary it has the heaven, the most holy part of the substance of existing things: as votive offerings it has stars; as priests it has angels, ministers of His Presence.

## **2. The Merkabah at Qumran**

The Qumran sectarians, who believed the temple in Jerusalem to have been defiled and its cult perverted by a corrupt and illegitimate priesthood, evidently attached great significance to the prophecies of Ezekiel. It is perhaps possible that the site of the community settlement was chosen on the basis of Ezekiel 47:1-12, which states that in the last days a river will flow eastward from beneath the temple and revitalize the waters of the Dead Sea. In the Damascus Rule, the foundation of the Sect is dated to 390 years after the exile, on the basis of Ezekiel 4:4-5. In the same document, the leaders of the sect are identified with the "sons of Zadok" who, according to Ezekiel 44:15, are to serve as priests in the restored and purified temple of the coming age.

The most significant locus of merkabah material at Qumran occurs in the thirteen Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, which form a liturgical cycle intended for performance on the thirteen Sabbaths of the first quarter of the year according to the fixed solar calendar observed by the community. It is unknown whether or not the cycle was repeated during the second, third, and fourth quarters of the year. This is certainly possible, but we shall find that its integration with the first quarter of the cultic calendar was especially significant. ...

Each song begins with a summons to praise God, addressed to the angels, and goes on to describe the performance of the angelic liturgy. The heavenly temple is divided into seven sanctuaries (*debirim*) or, in two instances, also raised paths (*netivot*), each under the presidency of an angelic prince. The first five songs of the cycle deal with the angelic priestly councils of the lower *debirim* and create the framework of a ritual journey through the courts of the temple toward the sacred center. As observed by Newsom:

The language of songs 6-8, at the heart of the cycle, is characterized by a repetitious and hypnotic quality, suggestive of an increase in intensity of devotion.

In these songs especially, the number seven occupies a main role (cf. Masada *Shirshabb* 11.16-22; song 61).

The sixth song marks a transition, corresponding to entry from the outer courts of the temple into the sanctuary proper, the seventh song, at the heart of the cycle, taking us into the holy of holies. Here, instead of a single call to the angels to worship God, we find a series of seven such calls. These are almost certainly addressed to the angelic councils of the seven *debirim*. The temple itself is portrayed as an animate structure, and its architectural features and appointments as angelic entities who participate in the praise of God.

It is important to observe that according to this passage, the innermost sanctuary of the heavenly temple is also the highest heaven. This is indicated by the parallel expressions "firmament of His holy sanctuary" and "firmament of the uppermost heaven." The uppermost heaven, moreover, is said to have beams and walls. As in I Enoch and Testament of Levi, the courts and chambers of the temple are, in fact, the celestial levels. The temple is not "in" heaven; its seven sanctuaries are the heavens.

Carol Newsom observes that the praise of these multiple merkavot from the Qumran texts may well be related to the expression "debir to debir with the sound of holy multitudes"; in which case the merkavot are involved in the process of "relaying" the praise of God from the lower *debirim* to the higher ones. This might mean that there are seven merkavot, one in each sanctuary or heaven. The image of a throne in each of seven

heavens is found, for example in The Ascension of Isaiah, to a minor midrash entitled The Visions of Ezekiel, and in Hekhalot Zutarti. On the other hand, MT Psalm 68:18 states that the chariots of God are "twenty thousand and two thousand" and a midrashic tradition attributed to rabbis of the third and fourth centuries, and to a mysterious "band that came up from Babylonia," takes this to mean that "twenty-two thousand chariots of ministering angels descended with the Holy One, blessed be he, at Sinai."

The language of the text as a whole is very similar to that of the Sabbath Songs, and the reference to a plurality of merkabot should be noted. Nitzan identifies allusions to the merkavah descriptions of Daniel 7:9, Isaiah 6, and, indirectly, Ezekiel 1:26-27 and 8:2. There are detailed allusions to biblical lists of divine attributes occurring in contexts associated with renewal of the Sinai covenant (Exodus 34:6-7; Deuteronomy 10:17, 21) and to descriptions of the Sinai theophany in Moses' final blessing (Deuteronomy 33:2-5, 26-27). Allusions to Psalm 68 are also evident, especially in the second fragment.

A passage in the later hekhalot literature tells of vast numbers of angelic merkabot who, with their accompanying "flames," relay God's praises from the lowest sanctuary to the highest. In the seventh hekhal, the fiery chariot-thrones say:

Blessed be the King of the kings of kings, the Lord, the Lord of every power!  
Who is like God, who lives and endures?  
His praise is in the highest heavens!  
His holy kingdom is in the most exalted and highest heavens!  
His Power is in the innermost chambers!  
Sanctification from here, and sanctification from there!

And they pour out song unceasingly, and commemorate the Name of Neturiel the lord God of Israel, saying:

Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever from the place of the House of His indwelling!

These angelic merkabot are distinctly reminiscent of the "repeaters" of God's praise of Gad encountered in Lxx Ezekiel 43:2 (cf. Psalms 68:18-19), and it may well be that the expression "debir to debir with the sound of holy multitudes" in the seventh song of the Qumran cycle refers to a scenario very much like that described in this hekhalot passage. The formulaic style of the hekhalot passage is quite similar to what we find in the Sabbath Songs. The image of praise being relayed and repeated by the angels, which is reflected in the antiphonal structure of the Songs themselves, may also be associated with the calling of the seraphim "one to another" as they recite the Kedusha (Isaiah 6:3).

As observed above, the seventh song, marking the entrance to the holy of holies, brings the first half of the ritual cycle to its climax. The eighth song is only fragmentarily preserved but appears to be closely parallel to song 6. Songs 9-11 describe in detail the vestibules, courts, and furnishings of the temple. There are numerous references to celestial life-forms whose images are carved on the interior walls. These correspond to the carvings of cherubim, trees, and flowers in both Solomon's temple and Ezekiel's ideal form (I Kings 6:18-36; 2 Chronicles 3:5-6; Ezekiel 40:31-34; 41:17-26). As in the previous songs, they are animate beings and participate in the praise of God.

Newsom regards the seventh song as the climax of the Sabbath Songs cycle as a whole, forming the apex of a liturgical pyramid structure. I suggest that this analysis requires modification and that the seventh song is, in fact, no more than a preliminary crescendo. In my opinion, it is the twelfth song, falling on the Sabbath following the covenant renewal ceremony of 4QBerahot that forms the true climax of the liturgical cycle as a whole. This song describes the manifestation of the Glory upon the merkabah.



The second half of the Sabbath Songs cycle is evidently based on the description of the ideal temple in Ezekiel 40-48, and Newsom is clearly right to connect the passage shown above with the vision described in Ezekiel 43:1-5, where the Glory on the merkabah returns to the holy of holies:

'Then he brought me in the gate that faces eastward; and behold, the Glory of the God of Israel coming from the east! His voice was like the sound of many waters, and the earth was illuminated by his Glory. And the vision that I saw was like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and like the vision that I had seen by the River Khebar, and I fell upon my face. And the Glory of the Lord came into the house by way of the gate that faced eastward. Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the inner court, and the Glory of the Lord filled the house.

Newsom comments:

I would suggest that the author of the Shirot, still following the outline of Ezekiel 40-48, first describes the structure of the heavenly temple and then gave an account of the entry of the divine chariot throne into the temple and the appearance of its glory there, an account modelled after Ezekiel 43:1-5 but enriched with details from Ezekiel 1 and 10.

The thirteenth and final song of the Qumran cycle describes the sacrifices performed before the divine throne by the angelic priests and, especially, their ritual vestments. Fletcher-Louis considers these figures to be identical with the senior priests of the community, who are held to be the embodiments of the divine Glory itself. He concludes, therefore, that the climax of the cycle is located in neither the seventh song (as advocated by Newsom) nor the twelfth (as proposed by me) but in the thirteenth: it is here, in the thirteenth, that the liturgy truly reaches its climax with a vision of the community's priesthood taking the place of the occupant of the throne-chariot. It is in the thirteenth song that the human form seated on God's throne to Ezekiel 1 comes into view. The human high priesthood here makes manifest the anthropomorphic appearance of the Glory of the Lord.

This conclusion follows from Fletcher-Louis's very detailed and insightful exegesis of the cycle as a whole, in which he demonstrates that a relationship of "functional synchronicity" and "spatial overlap" exists between the priestly community on earth and the angelic denizens of the heavenly temple. It is undoubtedly true that the Qumran sectarians considered themselves to be in fellowship with the celestial hosts and attributed to themselves, (quasi-) angelic status. Moreover, the glory of the celestial Adam (or logos) was ritually embodied in the person of the high priest, and that his vestments were symbolic of that glory is, as Fletcher-Louis shows, by no means unique to the Qumran literature. His suggestion that at Qumran the chief priests of the holy community were considered in their liturgical function to be visible manifestations of the divine glory is not merely plausible but probable almost to the point of certainty. The role of this "glorified" human priesthood is to represent and mediate the divine glory to the community of worshipers, which is thereby incorporated into the celestial hierarchy of glory.

Fletcher-Louis seems, however, to imply that the celestial Glory has no other mode of visible appearance than in the person(s) of the Priest(s), and in this he overstates his case. The clothing of the priests with glory in the thirteenth song—if this is indeed what is happening—is an expression of their mystical communion with the divine glory, which in turn facilitates the union between the community's worship and the liturgy of the angels. It does not mean that the cosmic function of the manifest Glory has wholly usurped in the person(s) of the priest(s). Thus, while the glorification of the priests in song 13 may legitimately be regarded as, in a sense, climactic; it flows as a consequence from the descent of the glory to the sanctuary, as described in song 12. This descent, which, as we have seen, was preceded by the covenant-renewal ceremony of Shavuot, seems, therefore, to form a more fitting climax to the cycle as a whole. It may further be noted that, according to Flayutin, the lunar date of Ezekiel's merkabab vision "in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month" (Ezekiel 1:1) corresponds in the solar calendar to either the fourteenth or the fifteenth day of the third month, that is, to the eleventh Sabbath or, as is perhaps more likely, to the festival of Shavuot

Newsom describes the purpose of the Sabbath Songs cycle as "something like the praxis of a communal mysticism." which aimed to produce an intense experience of being present in the heavenly temple and participating in the worship of the angels!" She comments:

During the course of this thirteen week cycle, the community which recites the compositions is led through a lengthy preparation. The mysteries of the angelic priesthood are recounted, a hypnotic celebration of the sabbatical number seven produces an anticipatory climax at the center of the work, and the community is then gradually led through the spiritually animate temple until the worshippers experience the holiness of the merkabah and of the Sabbath Sacrifice as it is conducted by the high priests of the angels.

These songs, then, enabled the community to gain access to the heavenly temple and to join with the angelic hierarchy in its worship before the throne. By performing the liturgical cycle, the worshipers undertake a "ritual journey" which involves an "ascent" through the seven debirim (songs 1-7), followed by a detailed tour of the celestial temple, moving inwards toward the center, where the Glory manifests upon the throne. Another, perhaps better, way to understand this liturgy is to regard it as a process of "ritual construction." The performance of these songs, presumably combined with intensive visualization of the images described, will have had the effect of "building" the celestial temple in the personal and collective imagination of the participants.

The imperative formulae of the earthly hymns indicate that they are calling on the angels to participate with them in this ritual "temple building" project. The process of construction culminates in song II, which was performed immediately before the renewal of the community's covenant in the feast of Shavuot. On the two Sabbaths following this act of rededication, in songs 12 and 13, the divine Glory is called upon to indwell the temple that has been constructed by the now re-consecrated community, to clothe its priests with glory, and to receive its offerings. As observed above, it is the descent of the divine Glory in the holy of holies, described in song 12, that forms the true climax of the cycle. The sacred structure within which this manifestation occurs has been constructed by means of this extended ritual performance. The worship of the holy community and its celestial, angelic counterpart is, so to speak, the substance of which the temple is composed.

The idea that this spiritual temple is ritually constructed in and through the act of worship may perhaps be inherent in the very language and terminology of this remarkable liturgy. In addition to the emphasis on song and music that pervades the text, we have observed that, especially in the latter part of the cycle, this music is produced not only by the angels and the human worshipers but by the architectural components of the temple itself, which appears to be a living structure. The term *debir*, used of the seven courts or chambers of the temple, applies in scripture to the holy of holies (1 Kings 6:5-31; 7:49; 8:6-8; 2 Chronicles 3:16:4:20; 8:6-8; Psalms 28:2) and is probably derived from a common root with the Arabic word for "back" or "part behind." The King James Bible, however, renders the term by "oracle," a mistranslation that goes back via the Vulgate and that is based on the midrashic assumption that this word is derived from the root *DBR*, "to speak." it seems not impossible that the author of the Sabbath Songs may have made the same verbal association and interpreted the word *DBR* as indicative, in addition to its straightforward meaning, of "speech" or "utterance." If so, the phrase "debir to debir with the sound of holy multitudes" implies that the courts or sanctuaries of the temple are formed by the "utterances" of the angels and the worshiping community and that the heavenly temple is conceived of as a structure composed of living sound.

Elsewhere in the Scrolls, as is now widely recognized, the community itself is identified with the temple. The hierarchically ordered community thus embodies the living structure of the cosmic temple, and its members are incorporated into that celestial reality.

He has joined their assembly to the Sons of Heaven.  
To be a Council of the Community,

A foundation of the Building of Holiness,  
An eternal Plantation throughout all ages to come. (IQS 11:8-9)

The expression "an eternal plantation" reflects an ancient tradition according to which the temple, and especially the interior of the sanctuary building (corresponding to the sixth and seventh debirim of the Qumran model) is identified with the primordial garden of Eden, which was also the future paradise of the righteous. Incorporation into the structure of the temple confers "advance membership" of the world to come and is, at the same time, a return to humanity's original state of angelic purity. Thus, those who are admitted to this spiritual community "are destined to live for ever, and all the glory of Adam shall be theirs.

The same tradition occurs in a variety of rabbinic sources, where the righteous in the world to come are divided into seven hierarchal classes and where the garden of Eden is described as a series of seven concentric celestial chambers, built of gold, silver, and precious stones. This imagery appears to be derived at least in part from the language of Ezekiel's prophecy against the king of Tyre (Ezekiel 28:12-14):

You were the seal of perfect proportion, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty;  
You were in Eden, the Garden of God; every precious stone adorned you.

Ruby, Topaz, and Emerald; Chrysolite, Onyx, and Jasper; Sapphire, Turquoise, and Beryl;  
Your settings and mountings were made of Gold; they were prepared on the day of your creation.

You were the overshadowing, outstretched Cherub; for thus I appointed you;  
You were upon God's holy mountain; you walked amongst fiery stones.

It has long been recognized that behind this passage lies a version of the primordial paradise tradition that is independent of, and possibly older than that preserved in Genesis 2-3. The description, then, referred originally to the primordial Adam who is the embodiment of the Divine Image or seal of perfect proportion and is here identified with the golden, bejewelled cherub whose outstretched wings overshadowed the ark in the holy of holies of the temple. That the rabbis were aware of this meaning of the passage is confirmed to several sources.

By about the first century C.E., the seven-level cosmology had largely displaced the three-tier model, although Paul in 2 Cor 12 equates paradise (i.e., the holy of holies) with the third heaven. The sevenfold model is most commonly found in rabbinic sources, although alternative traditions that enumerate two or three heavens are also sometimes mentioned. A correspondence between the cosmos and the structure of the temple is implied in m. Kehin 1:64, which lists ten areas of increasing holiness in Jerusalem, three outside the temple and seven within. Differing opinions are expressed about the precise divisions between these areas, but all agree that there were seven levels of holiness in the temple. According to Rabbi Yosi, these levels were as follows:

the area within the balustrade, from which Gentiles were excluded;  
the court of women;  
the court of Israel;  
the court of the priests;  
the area between the altar and the entrance to the sanctuary;  
the sanctuary building; and  
the holy of holies.

This sevenfold conceptual structure doubtless reflects the seven planetary spheres of Greek cosmology and/or the seven heavens encountered in Sumerian and Babylonian magical texts. Since the sacred space of the temple is conceptually arranged in concentric "areas of holiness" around the ark or chariot on which

God's Glory is enthroned, it may be that the sevenfold structure also embodies "the appearance of the likeness of the Glory of the LORD" as described in Ezekiel 1:28:

As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the radiance that surrounded him

In other words, the seven heavens or courts of the temple may correspond to the bands of the rainbow-colored aura that surrounds the Glory on the throne. This hypothesis perhaps helps to explain an image encountered above, in song 12 of the Qumran cycle:

Like Hashmal, a radiant substance of glorious colors, wondrously hued and purely blended, are the spirits of the living elohim that move continuously with the glory of the wondrous chariots.

A similar description of the hashmal is encountered in Hekhalot Zutartei:

It is like the appearance of fire (Ezekiel 1:27), but it is not fire. Rather, it is like fiery flames of all kinds of color mixed together, and the eye cannot master their likenesses.

### **3. Descenders to the Merkavah**

The hekhalot writings represent the continuation and adaptation of these traditions within rabbinic Judaism. They are so called because they describe, and give instructions regarding a visionary journey through seven concentric "palaces" or "temples" (corresponding to the debirim of the Sabbath Songs) to the celestial holy of holies, where the Glory appears on the merkavah. The methods employed by the "Merkabah mystics" included the recitation of hymns and prayers that are very similar in content and tone to those found in the Sabbath Songs, though often with the addition of long strings of ramina barbara. These hymns, some of which are said to have been revealed to Rabbi Akiva by the angels, must be known and recited correctly by the adept if he is to make the ascent in safety. One must also know the names of the angelic gatekeepers of the hekhalot and show them the correct magic seals, on which are inscribed the secret names of God. As in the apocalypses and the Sabbath Songs, the chambers of the temple (the seven hekhalot) are identical with the celestial levels.

In one important respect, however, the temple and the cosmos are structural opposites. The temple's areas of holiness are concentric upon the holy of holies. Ascent of the levels is therefore conceptualized as a journey "inward" to the center. The ascent into heaven, on the other hand, proceeds outward, away from the earth, so that the sphere of greatest holiness is assigned to the periphery. This dimensional shift may perhaps help to explain why in 1 Enoch 14 the "inner" house is greater than the "outer."

A similar apparent confusion of dimensional relationships is encountered in the hekhalot literature. The journey through the hekhalot to the merkabah is described both as an "ascent", and, somewhat disconcertingly, as a "descent." The two terminologies appear to be virtually interchangeable, but the mystics themselves are always called "descenders to the chariot" even where the narrative verb is 'to ascend.'" Various explanations of this puzzling terminology have been offered. Here mention should be made of Alan F. Segal's suggestion that the conception of the journey as a "descent" may be associated with the "fetal" position that, according to Hai Gaon of Pumbeditha (writing in the eleventh century CE) was adopted by the hekhalot practitioners.

You may be aware that many sages were of the belief that an individual possessing certain explicitly defined qualities who wishes to behold the Merkabah and the palaces of the heavenly angels has methods of achieving it. He must sit in fast for a certain number of days and lay his head between his knees and whisper to the ground many hymns and song, whose words are known from tradition. He then gazes into the inner rooms and chambers as if he were seeing the seven palaces with his own eyes, and beholds as if he were journeying from one palace to another and seeing what is there. "The posture described by Hai corresponds

to that of Elijah on Mount Carmel in I Kings 18:42. Rabbinic sources state in passing that the first-century miracle worker Hanina ben Dosa adopted the same position when praying for the life of Yohanan ben Zakkai's son. Gershom Scholem found an intriguing parallel in a nineteenth century account. pia Chinese trance-somnabulist.

The idea that the Jerusalem temple embodies or reflects the structure of the universe is widely documented in rabbinic sources and in Josephus. The Even-haShati'ah, or foundation stone, beneath the altar possesses the attributes of an omphalos or "world-navel." Just as the Holy of Holies is said to be the sources of the light that shown forth on the first day of creation, so the foundation-stone, immediately outside the sanctuary, is identified with the primordial mound that emerged in the midst of the waters of chaos on day three. Josephus, moreover, tells us that the curtain at the entry to the sanctuary represented the firmament the was created on day two. Several midrashic sources add a further dimension to the model:

In the hour when the Holy One, Blessed by He, said to Moses, "And make me a sanctuary" (Exodus 25:8), Moses said, "How shall I know how to make it?" The Holy One, blessed be he, said "Do not be afraid. Just as I created the world and your body, so shall you make the tabernacle."

Whence do we know that this is so? You find in the tabernacle that the frames were fixed into the bases, and in the body the ribs are fixed into the vertebrae, and so in the world the mountains are fixed into the foundations of the earth. In the tabernacle, the frames were covered with gold, and in the body the ribs are covered with flesh, and in the world the mountains are covered and coated with earth. In the tabernacle, there were bolts in the frames to keep them upright, and in a body the limbs and sinews are extended to keep a man upright, and in the world, trees and plants are extended into the earth. In the tabernacle, there were curtains covering its top and both its sides, and in a man's body skin covers the limbs and ribs on both sides, and in the world, the heavens cover the earth on both its sides. In the tabernacle there was the veil separating the sanctuary from the Holy of Holies, and in the body the diaphragm divides the heart from the stomach, and in the world it is the firmament that divides the upper waters from the lower waters.

As Raphael Patai has demonstrated, this three-way correspondence among the the Temple, the world, and the human body is well-documented in the midrashic literature. More succinctly, the Midrash Tanhuma states: The temple corresponds to the whole world and to the creation of man, who is a small world.

All of this seems strongly to suggest that the "yordei-merkavah" in making the "ascent" through the levels of the heavenly temple to the highest firmament, could also be conceptualized (at least in some circles) of descending within the temple of his own body to the "Holy of Holies" within, where, as with the outward temple, the divine glory (or the image of God) is believed to dwell. If Segal is right to associate this posture with the downward direction of the Merkavah practice, this would suggest that the "ascent" through the heavens could also be understood to be a "descent" within the temple of the body ...

As Peter Schafer has emphasized, participation in the angelic liturgy was a primary goal of the hekhalot practitioners:

The Merkavah mystic represents in his person the participation of Israel in the heavenly liturgy and simultaneously confirms for the earthly congregation that it stands in direct contact with God in its synagogue liturgy.

The mystical practice of ascent to the heavenly temple thus maintains the connection between God and his people that had formerly been provided by the earthly temple in Jerusalem. The merkabah practitioner in the innermost hekhal, who worships before the throne, performs the mediatorial function of the high priest in the holy of holies.

Recent research has drawn attention to the theme of transformation in the apocalyptic and merkabah traditions. There are numerous references in the apocalypses, the hekhalot writings, and the midrashic traditions of the heavenly ascent, to the metamorphosis of the mystic's body into a purified angelic or supra-angelic form of fire or light that embodies or reflects the Image of the divine Glory and, like that Glory, expands to fill the universe. This is frequently associated with the idea that the mystic "assumes" or "is clothed with" the divine Name. This transformation was held to be extremely dangerous, should the mystic prove unworthy, but it seems to have been a central goal of the mystical endeavor. This motif is found in several gnostic sources and is surely the background of the language of "glorification" that is encountered in the letters of Paul and other early Christian writings. It seems that the vision of the Glory entailed the transformation of the visionary into an angelic likeness of that Divine Image.

As we have seen, the interior of the temple was identified with the garden of Eden or paradise. One who enters this garden, therefore, recovers "the Glory of Adam" and is conformed to the Image of God. According to rabbinic tradition, the intfallen Adam's body was, like the manifest Glory of the Shiur Qomah, so great that it filled the universe. This explains the expansion of the visionary's body when he enters the temple and worships before the throne.

The body of the Glory, which both fills and contains the universe, is therefore greater than the temple in which it dwells:

But will God in truth dwell with mortals on earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain you! How much less this house that I have built! (2 Chronicles 6:18).

It is true that the "descent to the merkabah" was sometimes conceptualized as a journey within or into the "temple" of the practitioner's own body, then the Divine Image or "Glory of Adam" enthroned at the center must likewise be much greater than the outer "house."

The last three chapters of Hehhalot Rabbati, as the climax of the mystical ascent, contain a series of hymns that are said to be uttered by the throne of Glory in the presence of God each day and that the mystic himself is instructed to recite. This implies that he is identifying himself with the merkabah and asking God to be enthroned upon or within him. In other words, he is offering himself as a bodily vehicle for the manifestation of the Divine Image or Glory.

I suggest that the "descent within" and the "ascent without" may best be understood as two aspects or dimensions of a single transformational process, not mutually exclusive conceptual alternatives. The one who enters the holy of holies gains access to the highest heaven, since the courts of the temple are in symbolic reality the levels of the cosmos. Since this same structure obtains within the "temple" of the human body, the process of the heavenly journey may be enacted both "within" and "outside of" the body of the practitioner, who may thus be said both to "descend" and to "ascend." These observations may perhaps help to explain the cryptic utterance of Paul, when he insisted that he ascended into paradise (i.e., the heavenly holy of holies). "whether in the body or outside of the body, I do not know: God knows" (2 Corinthians 12:2-3).

The image of the body as a temple occurs several times in the New Testament. In John 2:19-21 (and, probably, parallels: Matthew 26:61; 27:40; Mark 14:58, 15:29), Jesus' body is compared with the Jerusalem temple. In 1 Corinthians 6:19, Paul calls the body of the individual Christian "a temple of the Holy Spirit." Elsewhere he makes the same statement of the church (1 Corinthians 3:9-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16), which is also very frequently called Christ's body. We recall that at Qumran the community regarded itself as the embodiment of the celestial temple.

The same theme occurs in Ephesians 2:14-16. Here the church is both a new creation and a resurrected body. Christ has abolished the law of the commandments which formerly divided one section of the body of humanity from the rest. This is also expressed in temple imagery ("the middle wall of the partition"). Thus,

the Gentiles are no longer excluded from the worship of the holy community. This metaphor, which is developed in some detail in the following verses, reflects the structural imagery of the merkabah tradition: "body" and "temple" are complementary expressions of the same paradoxical reality. The Glory of the Lord, the Divine Image, is enthroned at the center "within" but at the same time comprehends all things within himself (2:21-22). This interweaving of body and temple imagery appears to be deeply indebted to the traditions that we have been considering.

Finally, consider Ephesians 4:7-13:

But to each one of us was given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ, wherefore it is said: Having ascended to the height, he led captivity captive; he gave gifts to men.

Now what does "ascended" mean, except that he had first descended into the lower regions of the earth? The one who has descended is himself the one who has ascended far above the heavens, so that he might fill all things.

And he gave some to be apostles, and some to be prophets, and some to be evangelists, and some to be shepherds, and some to be teachers, for the equipping of the holy ones for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and the full knowledge of the Son of God, as a man at complete maturity, as the measure of the stature at the fullness of Christ.

Jesus Christ is identified with the Divine Glory that fills the universe (Col 1:3). The members of his church participate in that spiritual-bodily transformation, which is described in terms that are highly reminiscent of the Shi'ur Qomah (vv. 7 and 12). The (misquoted) citation of Ps: 68:19 links this passage in the Shavuot meriabah cycle discussed above and to the traditions about Moses' heavenly ascent. The language of "ascent" and "descent" in verses 6 and 9-10 is ambiguous and puzzling. This is remarkably similar to the characteristic language of the merkabah tradition. Christ, his church, and its individual members have become the body of God's Glory. In this new and "glorified" creation, the former distinction between "sacred" and "profane" is abrogated, and the purity laws associated with the temple cult are therefore rendered meaningless (cf. Hebrews 10:1-13). Since the very structure of the temple, with its ascending degrees of purity and danger, is conceived as both a barrier and a means of approach between the holy and the unholy, it is rendered obsolete by the convergence of heaven and earth in one spiritually transformed "body" made mystically one with the fullness of the everlasting Glory (Revelations 21).

#### **4. Concluding Remarks**

According to the Hebrew Bible, the earthly temple is the embodiment of a celestial archetype: the heavenly palace and throne room of the lord. In Isaiah's vision, the distinction between these two levels of reality seems to disappear. In the literature of the Second Temple period, this symbolic correspondence acquires cosmological significance. The cosmos itself is now conceptualized as a temple, and the earthly icon reflects this structure. Its seven (or three) courts and chambers, centered on the holy of holies, correspond to the celestial levels. In the apocalyptic-merkabah tradition, the visionary ascends to heaven by entering a temple whose interior is greater than its exterior, an image that expresses the opposing dimensional structures of the temple courts and the (three or) seven heavens, which are nonetheless considered to be identical. There he participates in the angelic worship of the "Great Glory," enthroned in the central chamber, and is himself transformed into an angelic likeness of that Glory. There is some evidence in the later sources to suggest that this ascent to heaven may also sometimes have been conceptualized as a "descent" within the "temple" of the visionary's own body. The fourfold correspondence of temple, cosmos, community and body is represented in figure I.

Many of these ideas are encountered in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, a liturgical text the performance of which may be interpreted as the ritual construction by the worshiping community, in association with the angelic hosts, of a seven-tiered temple, which is identified with that of Ezekiel. This temple not merely

reflects but actually embodies the structure of the cosmos, for its seven sanctuaries are the seven heavens. The construction of this imaginary temple is completed on the eleventh Sabbath, which falls on the day before the annual ceremony of the renewal of the sects covenant at Shavuot, partially preserved in .IQBerakhot. On the Sabbaths following this ceremony of rededication, the Divine Glory descends on the Merkabah to indwell the temple that has been constructed and to receive the pure sacrifices that are offered in it (songs 12-13). If this analysis is correct, a unified liturgical framework links the Sabbath Songs to 4Oterakhot. It is perhaps legitimate to suspect that the Songs of the Maskil may also belong within this framework.

Despite repeated references to the recovery of Adam's lost glory, the theme of correspondence between the temple and the body is not developed in the Qumran sources. We find an emphasis on the embodiment of the temple archetype in the structure of the community as a whole. The rabbinic writings, in contrast, posit a three way correspondence between cosmos, temple, and body but make no reference to the correspondence between temple and community. All of these themes, however, are taken up and developed in combination by the Christian writers, who regarded their Savior-Messiah as "a great high priest who has gone through the heavens" (Hebrews 1:14) and for whom the image of the holy community as both body and temple was of central importance in the formulation of their faith.

**200 BC – 100 AD? 1985 Translation by M. A. Knibb**  
**Pseudepigraphical work in name of Isaiah**  
**The Vision Which Isaiah the Son of Amoz Saw**  
**The Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah**

**Part 2: The Vision Which Isaiah the Son of Amoz Saw**

1985 Publication in English: by M. A. Knibb from *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, volume. Edited by James H. Charlesworth. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985

**Isaiah visits Hezekiah and has a vision**

In the twentieth year of the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, Isaiah the son of Amoz and Josab the son of Isaiah came to Hezekiah in Jerusalem from Gilgal. And he sat on the couch of the king, and they brought a seat for him, but he would not sit (on it).

And when Isaiah began to speak with Hezekiah the king the words of faith and righteousness, all the princes of Israel were sitting (there), and the eunuchs and the king's counselors.

And there were there forty prophets and sons of the prophets; they had come from the neighboring districts, and from the mountains, and from the country, when they had heard that Isaiah was coming from Gilgal to Hezekiah.

They came that they might greet him, and that they might hear his words, and that he might lay his hand on them, and that they might prophesy, and that he might hear their prophecy; and they were all in the presence of Isaiah.

And when Isaiah spoke with Hezekiah the words of righteousness and faith, they all heard a door being opened and the voice of the Spirit.

And the king summoned all the prophets and all the people who were to be found there, and they came. And Micah, and the aged Ananias, and Joel, and Josab were sitting on his right.

And when they all heard the voice of the Holy Spirit, they all worshiped on their knees, and they praised the God of righteousness, the Most High, the One who (dwells) in the upper world and who sits on high, the Holy One, the One who rests among the holy ones;

And they ascribed glory to the One who had thus graciously given a door in an alien world, had graciously given it to a man.

And while he was speaking with the Holy Spirit in the hearing of them all, he became silent, and his mind was taken up from him; and he did not see the men who were standing before him.

His eyes indeed were open, but his mouth was silent, and the mind in his body was taken up from him.



But his breath was (still) in him; for he was seeing a vision.

And the angel who was sent to show him (the vision) was not of this firmament, nor was he from the angels of glory of this world, but he came from the seventh heaven.

And the people who were standing by, apart from the circle of prophets, did not think that the holy Isaiah had been taken up.

And the vision which he saw was not from this world, but from the world which is hidden from the flesh.

And after Isaiah had seen this vision he recounted it to Hezekiah, and to Josab his son, and to the other prophets who had come.

But the officials, and the eunuchs, and the people did not hear, apart from Samnas the secretary, and Jehoiakim; and Asaph the recorder, for they (were) doers of righteousness, and the fragrance of the Spirit was in them;

But the people did not hear, for Micah and Josab his son had sent them out when the wisdom of this world was taken from him as if he were dead.

### **Isaiah's Journey through the seven heavens**

The vision which Isaiah saw he told to Hezekiah, and to Josab his son, and to Micah, and to the other prophets; it was as follows.

When I prophesied in accordance with the message which you have heard, I saw a glorious angel; his glory was not like the glory of the angels which I always used to see, but he had great glory, and an office, such that I cannot describe the glory of this angel.

And I saw when he took hold of me by my hand, and I said to him, Who am you? And what is your name? And where are you taking me up?

For strength had been given to me that I might speak with him.

And he said to me, When I have taken you up through (all) the stages and have shown you the vision on account of which I was sent, then you will understand who I am; but my name you will not know, for you have to return into this body.

But where I take you up, you will see, because for this purpose I was sent.

And I rejoiced because he spoke to me with kindness.

And he said to me, Do you rejoice because I have spoken kindly to you?

And he said You will see one greater than me, how he will speak kindly and gently with you; and the Father of the one who is greater you will also see, because for this purpose I was sent from the seventh heaven, that I might make all this clear to you.

### **The firmament**

And we went up into the firmament, I and he, and there I saw Sammael and his hosts; and there was a great struggle in it, and the words of Satan, and they were envying one another.

And as above. so also on earth, for the likeness of what (is) in the firmament is here on earth.

And I said to the angel, What is this envying?

And he said to me, So it has been ever since this world existed until now, and this struggle (will last) until the one comes whom you are to see, and he will destroy him.

### **The first heaven**

And after this he took me up above the firmament; this is the first heaven. There I saw a throne in the middle, and on the right and on the left of it there were angels.

And the angels on the left were not like the angels who stood on the right, but those who stood on the right had more glory, and they all sang praises with one voice.

And the throne was in the middle, and it they praised, and those on the left after them, but their voice was not like the voice of those is on the right, nor their praise like the praise of those on the right.

And I asked the angel who led me and said to him, To whom is this praise directed?

And he said to me, To the praise of [the One who sits in] the seventh heaven, the One who rests in the holy world, and to his Beloved, from where I was sent to you. To there it is directed.

### **The second heaven**

And again, he took me up into the second heaven, and the height of that heaven is like that from heaven to earth and to the firmament.

And I saw there, as in the first heaven, angels on the right and on the left, and a throne in the middle, and the praise of the angels who (were) in the second heaven; and the one who sat on the throne in the second heaven had more glory than all (the rest).

And there was great glory in the second heaven, and their praise was not like the praise of those who (were) in the first heaven.

And I fell on my face to worship him.

And the angel who led me would not let me, but said to me, Worship neither throne, nor angel from the six heavens, from where I was sent to lead you before I tell you in the seventh heaven.

For above all the heavens and their angels is placed your throne, and also your robes and your crown which you are to see.

And I rejoiced very much that those who love the Most High and his Beloved will at their end go up there through the angel of the Holy Spirit.

### **The third heaven**

And he took me up into the third heaven, and in the same way I saw those who (were) on the right and on the left, and there also (there was) a throne in the middle and one who sat on it; but no mention of this world was made there.

And I said to the angel who (was) with me, for the glory of my face, was being transformed as I went up from heaven to heaven; Nothing of the vanity of that world is named here.

And he answered me, saying, Nothing is named because of its weakness, but nothing is hidden which is done there.

And I wished to find out how it is known; and he answered me, saying, When I have taken you up into the seventh heaven, from where I was sent, to the One which (is) above these, then you will know that nothing is hidden from the thrones and those who dwell in the heavens, nor from the angels.

And the praises which they sang and the glory of the one who sat on the throne were great, and the angels who (were) on the right and on the left had more glory than (those in) the heaven which (was) below them.

### **The fourth heaven**

And again he took me up into the fourth heaven, and the height from the third to the fourth heaven was greater than (from) earth to the firmament.

And then I again saw those who (were) on the right and those who (were) on the left, and the one who sat on the throne was in the middle? and there also they were singing praises.

And the praise and glory of the angels on the right was greater than that of those on the left.

And again the glory of the one who sat on the throne was greater than that of the angels who (were) on the right, but their glory (was) greater than that of those below.

### **The fifth heaven**

And he took me up into the fifth heaven. And again I saw those who (were) on the right and the left, and the one who sat on the throne had more glory than those of the fourth heaven.

And the glory of those who (were) on the right was greater than that of those who (were) on the left.

The glory of the one on the throne was greater than that of the angels who (were) on the right, but their praise was more glorious than that of the fourth heaven.

And I praised the One who is not named and is unique, who dwells in the heavens, whose name is unknown to all flesh, the One who has given such glory to the different heavens, who makes the glory of the angels great and the glory of the one who sits on the throne (even) greater.

### **The air of the sixth heaven**

And again, he took me up into the air of the sixth heaven, and I saw a splendor such as I had not seen in the five heavens as I went up; the angels possessed great glory, and the praise there was holy and wonderful.

And I said to the angel who led me, What (is) this which I see, my lord?

And he said to me, I am not your lord, but your companion.

And again I asked him, and I said to him, Why (are there) not corresponding groups of angels?

And he said to me: From the sixth heaven and upwards there are no longer those on the left, nor is there a throne placed in the middle, but they are directed, by the power of the seventh heaven, where the One who is not named dwells, and his Chosen One, whose name is unknown, and no heaven can learn his name;

For he is alone, he whose voice all the heavens and thrones answer. I, therefore, have been empowered and sent to bring you up here that you may see this glory,

And (that) you may see the LORD of all these heavens and of these thrones being transformed until he resembles your appearance and your likeness.

I say to you, Isaiah, that no man who has to return into a body of that world has come up, or seen or understood what you have seen, and what you are to see, for you are destined in the lot and of the air.

And I proclaimed the greatness of my LORD with praise, that through his lot I should come here.

And he said to me! Hear then this also from your companion: [when from the body by the will of God you have come up here]; then you will receive the robe which you will see, and also other numbered robes placed (there) you will see, and then you will be equal to the angels who (are) in the seventh heaven.

### **The sixth heaven**

And he took me up into the sixth heaven, and there were none on the left; nor a throne in the middle, but all (were) of one appearance, and their praise (was) equal.

And (strength) was given to me, and I also sang praises with them, and is that angel also, and our praise was like theirs.

And there they all named the primal Father and his Beloved, Christ, and the Holy Spirit all with one voice, but it was not like the voice of the angels who (were) in the five heavens, nor (was it) like their speech, but there was a different voice there, and there was much light there.

And then, when I was in the sixth heaven, I thought that light which I had seen in the five heavens darkness.

And I rejoiced and praised the One who has graciously given such light to those who await his promise.

And I entreated the angel who led me that from then on I should not return to the world of flesh.

Indeed I say to you, Hezekiah and Josab, my son, and Micah that there is much darkness here.

And the angel who led me knew what I thought and said to me, If you rejoice over this light, how much more (will you rejoice) in the seventh heaven when you see the light where the LORD is and his Beloved- from where I was sent—who is to be called in the world the Son!

He who is to be in the corruptible world has not (yet) been revealed, nor the robes, nor the thrones, nor the crowns which are placed (there) for the righteous, for those who believe in that LORD who will descend in your form. For the light which (is) there (is) great and wonderful.

But as regards your not returning into the body, your days are not yet complete for coming here.

And when I heard (this), I was sad; and he said to me, Do not be sad.

### **The air of the seventh heaven**

And he led me into the air of the seventh heaven, and moreover I heard a voice saying, How far is he who dwells among aliens to go up? And I was afraid and was trembling.

And he said to me when I was trembling. Behold! From there another voice which was sent out has come, and it says, The holy Isaiah is permitted to come up here, for his robe is here.

And I asked the angel who (was) with me and said, Who is the one who prevented me, and who is this one who turned to me that I might go up?

And he said to me, The one who prevented you, this is the one who (is) in charge of the praise of the sixth heaven.

And the one who turned to you; this is your LORD, the LORD, the LORD Christ, who is to be called in the world Jesus. but you cannot hear his names until you have come up from this body.

### **The seventh heaven**

And he took me up into the seventh heaven, and there I saw a wonderful light, and also angels without number.

And there I saw all the righteous from the time of Adam onwards.

And there I saw the holy Abel and all the righteous.

And there I saw Enoch and all who (were) with him, stripped of (their) robes of the flesh; and I saw them in their robes of above) and they were like the angels who is stand there in great glory.

But they were not sitting on their thrones) nor were their crowns of glory on them.

And I asked the angel who (was) with me, How is it that they have received these robes, but are not on (their) thrones nor it in (their) crowns?

And he said to me, They do not receive the crowns and thrones of glory—nevertheless, they do see and know whose (will be) the thrones and whose the crowns—until the Beloved descends in the form in which you will see him descend.

The LORD will indeed descend into the world in the last days, (he) who is to be called Christ after he has descended and become like you in form, and they will think that he is flesh and a man.

And the god of that world will stretch out his hand against the LORD, and they will lay their hands upon him and hang him upon a tree, not knowing who he is.

And thus his descent, as you will see, will be concealed even from the heavens so that it will not be is known who he is.

And when he has plundered the angel of death, he will rise, on the third day and will remain in that world for five hundred and forty-five days.

And then many of the righteous will ascend with him, whose spirits do not receive (their) robes until the LORD Christ ascends and they ascend wit him.

Then indeed they will receive their robes and their thrones and their crowns, when he has ascended into the seventh heaven.

### **The record of men's deeds**

And I said to him what I had asked him in the third heaven, Show me how everything which is done in that world is known here.

And while I was still speaking to him, behold one of the angels who were standing by, more glorious than that angel who had brought me up from the world, showed me (some) books, but not like the books of this world, and he opened them, and the books had writing in them, but not like the books of this world. And they were given to me, and I read them.

And behold the deeds of the children of Israel were written there, their deeds which you know, my son Josab.

And I said, Truly, nothing which is done in this world is hidden in the seventh heaven.

### **The robes and thrones and crowns**

And I saw many robes placed there, and many thrones and many crowns,

And said to the angel who led me, Whose (are) these robes and thrones and crowns?

And he said to me, As for these robes. there are many from that world who will receive (them), through believing in the words of that one who will be named as I have told you.

And they will keep them, and believe in them and believe in his cross; for them (are) these placed (here).

### **The worship of the LORD**

And I saw one standing (acre) whose glory surpassed that of \_\_\_\_\_ and his glory was great and wonderful.

And when they saw him. all the righteous whom I had seen and the angels to me and him. And Adam and Abel and Seth and all the righteous approached first and worshiped him, and they all praised him with one voice, and I also was singing praises with them, and my praise was like theirs.

And then all the angels approached, and worshiped, and sang praises.

And he was transformed and became like an angel.

And then the angel who led me said to me. Worship this one, and I worshiped and sang praises.

And the angel said to me, This is the LORD of all the praise which you have seen.

### **The worship of the angel of the Holy Spirit**

And while I was still speaking? I saw another glorious (person) who was like him, and the righteous approached him. and worshiped, and sang praises, and I also sang praises with them; but his glory was not transformed to accord with their form.

And then the angels approached and worshiped him.

And I saw the Wan and the second angel, and they were standing, and the second one whom I saw (was) on the left of my LORD. And I asked the angel who led me and I said to him. Who is this one?

And he said to me. Worship him, for this is the angel of the Holy Spirit who has spoken. in you and also in the other righteous.

### **The worship of God**

And I saw the Great Glory while the eyes of my spirit were open, but I could not thereafter see nor the angel who (was) with me, nor any of the angels whom I had seen worship my LORD.

But I saw the righteous as they beheld with great power the glory of that one.

And my LORD approached me, and the angel of the Spirit, and said, See how it has been given to you to see the LORD, and (how) because of you power has been given to the angel who (is) with you.

And I saw how my LORD and the angel of the Holy Spirit worshiped and both together praised the LORD.

And then all the righteous approached and worshiped, and the angels approached and worshiped, and all the angels sang praises.

### **The worship of the Father by the six lower heavens**

And then I heard the voices and the hymns of praise- which I had heard in each of the six heavens—which I had heard as I ascended there?

And all (the voices and hymns of praise) were directed to that Glorious One whose glory I could not see.

And I also heard and saw the praise (which was directed to) him, and the LORD and the angel of the Spirit heard everything and saw everything.

And all the praise which was sent (up) from the six heavens was not only heard but seen.

And I heard the angel who led me, and he said to me, This is the Most High of the high ones, who dwells in the holy world, who rests among the holy ones, who will be called by the Holy Spirit in the mouth of the righteous the Father of the LORD.

### **The LORD Christ is commissioned by the Father**

And I heard the voice of the Most High. the Father of my LORD, as he said to my LORD Christ, who will be called Jesus, Go out and descend through all the heavens. You shall descend through the firmament and through that world as far as the angel who (is) in Sheol. but you shall not go as far as Perdition.

And you shall make your likeness like that of all who (are) in the five heavens;

And you shall take care to make your form like that of the angels of the firmament and also (like that) of the angels who (are) in Sheol.

And none of the angels, of that world shall know that you (are) LORD with me of the seven heavens and of their angels. And they shall not know that you (are) with me when with the voice of the heavens I summon you, and their angels and their lights, and when I lift up (my voice) to the sixth heaven, that you may judge and destroy the princes and the angels and the gods of that world, and the world which is ruled by them;

For they have denied me and said, We alone am, and there is no one besides us.

And afterwards you shall ascend from the gods of death to your place, and you shall not be transformed in each of the heavens, but in glory you shall ascend and sit at my right hand, and then the princes and the powers of that world will worship you.

This command I heard the Great Glory giving to my LORD.

### **The descent of the LORD through the seven heavens**

And thus I saw when my LORD went out from the seventh heaven into the sixth heaven.

And the angel who had led me from this world was with me, and he said to me, Understand, Isaiah, and look, that you may see the transformation and descent of the LORD.

And I looked, and when the angels who (were) in the sixth heaven saw him, they praised him and glorified him, for he had not been transformed into the form of the angels there; and they praised him, and I also sang praises with them.

And I saw when he descended into the fifth heaven, that in the fifth heaven he made his form like that of the angels there, and they did not praise him, for his form was like theirs.

And then he descended into the fourth heaven and made his form like that of the angels there; and when they saw him, they did not praise him or glorify him, for his form (was) like their form.

And again I saw when he descended into the third heaven, that he made his form like that of the angels who (were) in the third heaven.

And those who kept the gate of the (third) heaven demanded the password, and the LORD gave (it) to them in order that he should not be recognized, and when they saw him, they did not praise him or glorify him, for his form (was) like their form.

And again I saw when he descended into the second heaven, that there again he gave the password, 16 for those who kept the gates demanded (it), and the LORD gave (it).

And I saw when he made his form like that of the angels who (were) in the second heaven, that they saw him, but did not praise him, for his form (was) like their form.

And again I saw when he descended into the first heaven, that there he gave the password to those who kept the gates. And he made his form like that of the angels who (were) on the left of that throne, and they did not praise him or glorify him, for his form (was) like their form.

And as for me, no one questioned me because of the angel who led me.

And again he descended into the firmament where the prince of this world dwells, and he gave the password to those who (were) on the left, and his form (was) like theirs, and they did not praise him there; but in envy they were fighting one another, for there is there a power of evil and envying about trifles.

And I saw when he descended and made himself like the angels of the air, that he was like one of them.

And he did not give the password, for they were plundering and doing violence to one another.

### **The miraculous birth of the LORD**

And after this I looked, and the angel who spoke to me and led me said to me, Understand, Isaiah son of Amoz, because for this purpose I was sent from the LORD.

And I saw a woman of the family of David the prophet whose name (was) Mary, and she (was) a virgin and was betrothed to a man whose name (was) Joseph, a carpenter, and he also (was) of the seed and family of the righteous David of Bethlehem in Judah.

And he came into his lot; and when she was betrothed, she was found to be pregnant, and Joseph the carpenter wished to divorce her.

But the angel of the Spirit appeared in this world, and after this Joseph did not divorce Mary; but he did not reveal this matter to anyone.

And he did not approach Mary, but kept her as a holy virgin, although she was pregnant.

And he did not live with her for two months.

And after two months of days, while Joseph was in his house, and Mary his wife, but both alone, it came about, when they were alone, that Mary then looked with her eyes and saw a small infant, and she was astounded.

And after her astonishment had worn lo off, her womb was found as (it was) at first, before she had conceived.

And when her husband, Joseph, said to her, What has made you astounded? His eyes were opened, and he saw the infant and praised the LORD, because the LORD had come in his lot:

And a voice came to them, Do not tell this vision to anyone.

But the story about the infant was spread abroad in Bethlehem.

Some said, The virgin Mary has given birth before she has been married two months.

But many said She did not give birth; the midwife did not go up (to her), and we did not hear (any) cries of pain.

And they were all blinded concerning him; they all knew about him, but` they did not know from where he was.

And they took him and went to Nazareth in Galilee.

And I saw, O Hezekiah and Josab my son, and say to the other prophets also who are standing by, that it was hidden from all the heavens and all the princes and every god of this world.

### **The infancy and life of the LORD**

And I saw (that) in Nazareth he sucked the breast like an infant, as was customary, that he might not be recognized.

And when he had grown up. he performed great signs and miracles in the land of Israel and (in) Jerusalem.

### **The crucifixion and resurrection of the LORD**

And after this the adversary envied him and roused the children of Israel, who did not know who he was, against him.

And they handed him to the ruler, and crucified him and he descended- to the angel who (is) in Sheol.

In Jerusalem, I, indeed, saw how they crucified him on a tree;

And likewise (how) after the third day he rose and remained (many) days.

### **The ascension of the LORD through the seven heavens**

And the angel who led me said to me. Understand. Isaiah. And I saw when he sent out the disciples and ascended.

And I saw him; and he was in the firmament; but was not transformed into their form. And all the angels of the firmament, and Satan, saw him and worshiped.

And there was much sorrow in them as they said, How did our LORD. descend upon us, and we did not notice the glory which was upon him, which we (now) see was upon him from the sixth heaven?

And he ascended into the second heaven, and he was not transformed, but all the angels who (were) on the right and on the left, and the throne in the middle, worshiped him, and praised him, and said, How did our LORD remain hidden from us as he descended, and we did not notice?

And in the same way he ascended into the third (heaven), and in the same way they praised him and spoke.

And in the fourth heaven and also in the fifth they spoke in exactly the same way.

But there was one glory, and from it he was not transformed. -And I saw when he ascended into the sixth heaven, that they worshiped him and praised, but in all the heavens the praise grew louder.

And I saw how he ascended into the seventh heaven, and all the righteous and all the angels praised him.

And then I saw that he sat down at the right hand of that Great Glory, whose glory I told you I could not behold.

And also I saw that the angel of the Holy Spirit sat on the left.

### **The conclusion of the vision**

This angel said to me, Isaiah, son of Amoz, it is enough for you, for these (are) great things. for you have observed what no one born of flesh has observed. And you shall return into your robe until your days are complete; then you shall come here. These things I saw.

### **Isaiah's Instructions to Hezekiah**

And Isaiah told them to all those who were standing before him, and they sang praises.

And he spoke to Hezekiah the king and said. These things I have spoken

And the end of this world and all this vision will be brought about in the last generation.

And Isaiah made him swear that he would not tell this to the people of Israel, and that he would not allow any man to copy these words.

And then they shall read them.

But as for you. be in the Holy Spirit that you may receive your robes, and the thrones and crowns of glory, which are placed in the seventh heaven.

Because of these visions and prophecies. Sammael Satan sawed Isaiah the son of Amoz, the prophet, in half by the hand of Manasseh.

And Hezekiah gave all these things to Manasseh in the twenty-sixth year of his 43 reign.

But Manasseh did not remember these things, nor place them in his heart, but he became the servant of Satan and was destroyed.

Here ends (the book) of Isaiah the prophet with his ascension.

## **200 BC - 100 AD?**

### **Pseudepigraphical Work in Name of Levi**

**I Entered First Heaven & Saw There Great Sea Hanging; I Saw Second Heaven Far Brighter & More Brilliant, For There Was Boundless Light Therein; Marvel Not At This, For Thou Shalt See Another Heaven More Brilliant & Incomparable  
Testament of Levi**

(Pseudepigraphical work)

Then there fell upon me a sleep, and I beheld a high mountain, and I was upon it.

And behold the heavens were opened and an angel of God said to me, Levi enter.

And I entered from the first heaven, and I saw there a great sea hanging.

And further I saw a second heaven far brighter and more brilliant, for there was a boundless light also therein.

And I said to the angel, Why is this so? And the angel said to me, Marvel not at this, for thou shalt see another heaven more brilliant and incomparable.

And when thou hast ascended thither, Thou shalt stand near the Lord, And shalt be His minister, And shalt declare His mysteries to men, And shall proclaim concerning Him that shall redeem Israel.

And by thee and Judah shall the Lord appear among men saving every race of men.

And from the Lord's portion shall be thy life, And He shall be thy field and vineyard, And fruits, gold, and silver.

Hear, therefore, regarding the heavens which have been shown to thee.

The lowest is for this cause gloomy unto thee, in that it beholds all the unrighteous deeds of men.

And it has fire, snow, and ice made ready for the day of judgement, in the righteous judgement of God; for in it are all the spirits of the retributions for vengeance on men.

And in the second are the hosts of the armies which are ordained for the day of judgement, to work vengeance on the spirits of deceit and of Beliar.

And above them are the holy ones.

And in the highest of all dwelleth the Great Glory, far above all holiness.

In [the heaven next to] it are the archangels, who minister and make propitiation to the Lord for all the sins of ignorance of the righteous;

Offering to the Lord a sweet-smelling savour, a reasonable and a bloodless offering.

And [in the heaven below this] are the angels who bear answers to the angels of the presence of the Lord.

And in the heaven next to this are thrones and dominions, in which always they offer praise to God.

## **New Testament Period**

### **Emma Disley, Religious Studies Scholar**

#### **Scriptural Basis of Degrees of Glory**

#### **Degrees of Glory: Protestant Doctrine and the Concept of Rewards Hereafter**

**Journal of Theological Studies 1991, 42 (1), p. 77)**

#### **Scriptural Basis of Degrees of Glory**

The large degree of Protestant consensus was due mainly to the abundance of Scriptural references to rewards and punishments hereafter. Rewards and punishments received a prominent place in the Old



Testament; the lists of blessings and cursings at the end of Leviticus and Deuteronomy had been interpreted by Philo, who in turn was read by the Fathers, as rewards and punishments. In the New Testament, the theme recurred, when various rewards were explicitly attached to specific works (cf. Matt. 5). The house of God has 'many mansions' (John 14: 2)—(which may or may not imply a heavenly hierarchy)—and Paul appears to indicate that the elect shall differ from one another—'as one star differeth from another' (1 Cor. 15: 41)—in heavenly glory. Against this concept of degrees it was possible to set the lesson propounded by the parable of the Vineyard (Matt. 20: 1-14)—in which the workers were given equal wages, regardless of the amount of time they had spent labouring — but Christ's retention of the Judaic language of rewards and punishments rendered it very difficult indeed to deny that judgement would be by works.

## **90 AD**

### **Pseudepigraphical Work in name of Ezra**

#### **The Third Vision – Resurrection, Judgement, Rewards & Punishments**

#### **Fourth Book of Ezra / 2 Esdras (RSV)**

#### **Revised Standard Version / B.M. Metzger, OTP, volume 1:535-545**

#### **4Ezra.6**

[35] Now after this I wept again and fasted seven days as before, in order to complete the three weeks as I had been told.

[36] And on the eighth night my heart was troubled within me again, and I began to speak in the presence of the Most High.

[37] For my spirit was greatly aroused, and my soul was in distress.

[38] I said, "O Lord, thou didst speak at the beginning of creation, and didst say on the first day, 'Let heaven and earth be made,' and thy word accomplished the work.

[39] And then the Spirit was hovering, and darkness and silence embraced everything; the sound of man's voice was not yet there.

[40] Then thou didst command that a ray of light be brought forth from thy treasures, so that thy works might then appear.

[41] "Again, on the second day, thou didst create the spirit of the firmament, and didst command him to divide and separate the waters, that one part might move upward and the other part remain beneath.

[42] "On the third day thou didst command the waters to be gathered together in the seventh part of the earth; six parts thou didst dry up and keep so that some of them might be planted and cultivated and be of service before thee.

[43] For thy word went forth, and at once the work was done.

[44] For immediately fruit came forth in endless abundance and of varied appeal to the taste; and flowers of inimitable color; and odors of inexpressible fragrance. These were made on the third day.

[45] "On the fourth day thou didst command the brightness of the sun, the light of the moon, and the arrangement of the stars to come into being;

[46] and thou didst command them to serve man, who was about to be formed.

[47] "On the fifth day thou didst command the seventh part, where the water had been gathered together, to bring forth living creatures, birds, and fishes; and so it was done.

[48] The dumb and lifeless water produced living creatures, as it was commanded, that therefore the nations might declare thy wondrous works.

[49] "Then thou didst keep in existence two living creatures; the name of one thou didst call Behemoth and the name of the other Leviathan.

[50] And thou didst separate one from the other, for the seventh part where the water had been gathered together could not hold them both.

[51] And thou didst give Behemoth one of the parts which had been dried up on the third day, to live in it, where there are a thousand mountains;

[52] but to Leviathan thou didst give the seventh part, the watery part; and thou hast kept them to be eaten by whom thou wilt, and when thou wilt.

[53] "On the sixth day thou didst command the earth to bring forth before thee cattle, beasts, and creeping things;

[54] and over these thou didst place Adam, as ruler over all the works which thou hadst made; and from him we have all come, the people whom thou hast chosen.

[55] "All this I have spoken before thee, O Lord, because thou hast said that it was for us that thou didst create this world.

[56] As for the other nations which have descended from Adam, thou hast said that they are nothing, and that they are like spittle, and thou hast compared their abundance to a drop from a bucket.

[57] And now, O Lord, behold, these nations, which are reputed as nothing, domineer over us and devour us.

[58] But we thy people, whom thou hast called thy first-born, only begotten, zealous for thee, and most dear, have been given into their hands.

[59] If the world has indeed been created for us, why do we not possess our world as an inheritance? How long will this be so?"

#### **4Ezra.7**

[1] When I had finished speaking these words, the angel who had been sent to me on the former nights was sent to me again,

[2] and he said to me, "Rise, Ezra, and listen to the words that I have come to speak to you."

[3] I said, "Speak, my lord." And he said to me, "There is a sea set in a wide expanse so that it is broad and vast,

[4] but it has an entrance set in a narrow place, so that it is like a river.

[5] If any one, then, wishes to reach the sea, to look at it or to navigate it, how can he come to the broad part unless he passes through the narrow part?

[6] Another example: There is a city built and set on a plain, and it is full of all good things;  
[7] but the entrance to it is narrow and set in a precipitous place, so that there is fire on the right hand and deep water on the left;

[8] and there is only one path lying between them, that is, between the fire and the water, so that only one man can walk upon that path.

[9] If now that city is given to a man for an inheritance, how will the heir receive his inheritance unless he passes through the danger set before him?"

[10] I said, "He cannot, lord." And he said to me, "So also is Israel's portion.

[11] For I made the world for their sake, and when Adam transgressed my statutes, what had been made was judged.

[12] And so the entrances of this world were made narrow and sorrowful and toilsome; they are few and evil, full of dangers and involved in great hardships.

[13] But the entrances of the greater world are broad and safe, and really yield the fruit of immortality.  
[14] Therefore unless the living pass through the difficult and vain experiences, they can never receive those things that have been reserved for them.

[15] But now why are you disturbed, seeing that you are to perish? And why are you moved, seeing that you are mortal?

[16] And why have you not considered in your mind what is to come, rather than what is now present?"

[17] Then I answered and said, "O sovereign Lord, behold, thou hast ordained in thy law that the righteous shall inherit these things, but that the ungodly shall perish.

[18] The righteous therefore can endure difficult circumstances while hoping for easier ones; but those who have done wickedly have suffered the difficult circumstances and will not see the easier ones."

[19] And he said to me, "You are not a better judge than God, or wiser than the Most High!

[20] Let many perish who are now living, rather than that the law of God which is set before them be disregarded!

[21] For God strictly commanded those who came into the world, when they came, what they should do to live, and what they should observe to avoid punishment

[22] Nevertheless they were not obedient, and spoke against him; they devised for themselves vain thoughts,  
[23] and proposed to themselves wicked frauds;

they even declared that the Most High does not exist, and they ignored his ways!

[24] They scorned his law, and denied his covenants; they have been unfaithful to his statutes, and have not performed his works.

[25] "Therefore, Ezra, empty things are for the empty, and full things are for the full.

[26] For behold, the time will come, when the signs which I have foretold to you will come to pass, that the city which now is not seen shall appear, and the land which now is hidden shall be disclosed.

[27] And every one who has been delivered from the evils that I have foretold shall see my wonders.

[28] For my son the Messiah shall be revealed with those who are with him, and those who remain shall rejoice four hundred years.

[29] And after these years my son the Messiah shall die, and all who draw human breath.

[30] And the world shall be turned back to primeval silence for seven days, as it was at the first beginnings; so that no one shall be left.

[31] And after seven days the world, which is not yet awake, shall be roused, and that which is corruptible shall perish.

[32] And the earth shall give up those who are asleep in it, and the dust those who dwell silently in it; and the chambers shall give up the souls which have been committed to them.

[33] And the Most High shall be revealed upon the seat of judgment, and compassion shall pass away, and patience shall be withdrawn;

[34] but only judgment shall remain, truth shall stand, and faithfulness shall grow strong.

[35] And recompense shall follow, and the reward shall be manifested; righteous deeds shall awake, and unrighteous deeds shall not sleep.

[36] Then the pit of torment shall appear, and opposite it shall be the place of rest; and the furnace of hell shall be disclosed, and opposite it the paradise of delight.

[37] Then the Most High will say to the nations that have been raised from the dead, `Look now, and understand whom you have denied, whom you have not served, whose commandments you have despised!

[38] Look on this side and on that; here are delight and rest, and there are fire and torments!' Thus he will speak to them on the day of judgment –

[39] a day that has no sun or moon or stars,

[40] or cloud or thunder or lightning or wind or water or air, or darkness or evening or morning,

[41] or summer or spring or heat or winter or frost or cold or hail or rain or dew,

[42] or noon or night, or dawn or shining or brightness or light, but only the splendor of the glory of the Most High, by which all shall see what has been determined for them.

[43] For it will last for about a week of years.

[44] This is my judgment and its prescribed order; and to you alone have I shown these things."

[45] I answered and said, "O sovereign Lord, I said then and I say now: Blessed are those who are alive and keep thy commandments!

[46] But what of those for whom I prayed? For who among the living is there that has not sinned, or who among men that has not transgressed thy covenant?

[47] And now I see that the world to come will bring delight to few, but torments to many.

[48] For an evil heart has grown up in us, which has alienated us from God, and has brought us into corruption and the ways of death, and has shown us the paths of perdition and removed us far from life -- and that not just a few of us but almost all who have been created!"

[49] He answered me and said, "Listen to me, Ezra, and I will instruct you, and will admonish you yet again.

[50] For this reason the Most High has made not one world but two.

[51] For whereas you have said that the righteous are not many but few, while the ungodly abound, hear the explanation for this.

[52] "If you have just a few precious stones, will you add to them lead and clay?"

[53] I said, "Lord, how could that be?"

[54] And he said to me, "Not only that, but ask the earth and she will tell you; defer to her, and she will declare it to you.

[55] Say to her, `You produce gold and silver and brass, and also iron and lead and clay;

[56] but silver is more abundant than gold, and brass than silver, and iron than brass, and lead than iron, and clay than lead.'

[57] Judge therefore which things are precious and desirable, those that are abundant or those that are rare?"

[58] I said, "O sovereign Lord, what is plentiful is of less worth, for what is more rare is more precious."

[59] He answered me and said, "Weigh within yourself what you have thought, for he who has what is hard to get rejoices more than he who has what is plentiful.

[60] So also will be the judgment which I have promised; for I will rejoice over the few who shall be saved, because it is they who have made my glory to prevail now, and through them my name has now been honored.

[61] And I will not grieve over the multitude of those who perish; for it is they who are now like a mist, and are similar to a flame and smoke -- they are set on fire and burn hotly, and are extinguished."

[62] I replied and said, "O earth, what have you brought forth, if the mind is made out of the dust like the other created things!

[63] For it would have been better if the dust itself had not been born, so that the mind might not have been made from it.

[64] But now the mind grows with us, and therefore we are tormented, because we perish and know it.

[65] Let the human race lament, but let the beasts of the field be glad; let all who have been born lament, but let the four-footed beasts and the flocks rejoice!

[66] For it is much better with them than with us; for they do not look for a judgment, nor do they know of any torment or salvation promised to them after death.

[67] For what does it profit us that we shall be preserved alive but cruelly tormented?

[68] For all who have been born are involved in iniquities, and are full of sins and burdened with transgressions.

[69] And if we were not to come into judgment after death, perhaps it would have been better for us."

[70] He answered me and said, "When the Most High made the world and Adam and all who have come from him, he first prepared the judgment and the things that pertain to the judgment.

[71] And now understand from your own words, for you have said that the mind grows with us.

[72] For this reason, therefore, those who dwell on earth shall be tormented, because though they had understanding they committed iniquity, and though they received the commandments they did not keep them, and though they obtained the law they dealt unfaithfully with what they received.

[73] What, then, will they have to say in the judgment, or how will they answer in the last times?

[74] For how long the time is that the Most High has been patient with those who inhabit the world, and not for their sake, but because of the times which he has foreordained!"

[75] I answered and said, "If I have found favor in thy sight, O Lord, show this also to thy servant: whether after death, as soon as every one of us yields up his soul, we shall be kept in rest until those times come when thou wilt renew the creation, or whether we shall be tormented at once?"

[76] He answered me and said, "I will show you that also, but do not be associated with those who have shown scorn, nor number yourself among those who are tormented.

[77] For you have a treasure of works laid up with the Most High; but it will not be shown to you until the last times.

[78] Now, concerning death, the teaching is: When the decisive decree has gone forth from the Most High that a man shall die, as the spirit leaves the body to return again to him who gave it, first of all it adores the glory of the Most High.

[79] And if it is one of those who have shown scorn and have not kept the way of the Most High, and who have despised his law, and who have hated those who fear God –

[80] such spirits shall not enter into habitations, but shall immediately wander about in torments, ever grieving and sad, in seven ways.

[81] The first way, because they have scorned the law of the Most High.

[82] The second way, because they cannot now make a good repentance that they may live.

[83] The third way, they shall see the reward laid up for those who have trusted the covenants of the Most High.

[84] The fourth way, they shall consider the torment laid up for themselves in the last days.

[85] The fifth way, they shall see how the habitations of the others are guarded by angels in profound quiet.

[86] The sixth way, they shall see how some of them will pass over into torments.

[87] The seventh way, which is worse than all the ways that have been mentioned, because they shall utterly waste away in confusion and be consumed with shame, and shall wither with fear at seeing the glory of the Most High before whom they sinned while they were alive, and before whom they are to be judged in the last times.

[88] "Now this is the order of those who have kept the ways of the Most High, when they shall be separated from their mortal body.

[89] During the time that they lived in it, they laboriously served the Most High, and withstood danger every hour, that they might keep the law of the Lawgiver perfectly.

[90] Therefore this is the teaching concerning them:

[91] First of all, they shall see with great joy the glory of him who receives them, for they shall have rest in seven orders.

[92] The first order, because they have striven with great effort to overcome the evil thought which was formed with them, that it might not lead them astray from life into death.

[93] The second order, because they see the perplexity in which the souls of the ungodly wander, and the punishment that awaits them.

[94] The third order, they see the witness which he who formed them bears concerning them, that while they were alive they kept the law which was given them in trust

[95] The fourth order, they understand the rest which they now enjoy, being gathered into their chambers and guarded by angels in profound quiet, and the glory which awaits them in the last days.

[96] The fifth order, they rejoice that they have now escaped what is corruptible, and shall inherit what is to come; and besides they see the straits and toil from which they have been delivered, and the spacious liberty which they are to receive and enjoy in immortality.

[97] The sixth order, when it is shown to them how their face is to shine like the sun, and how they are to be made like the light of the stars, being incorruptible from then on.

[98] The seventh order, which is greater than all that have been mentioned, because they shall rejoice with boldness, and shall be confident without confusion, and shall be glad without fear, for they hasten to behold the face of him whom they served in life and from whom they are to receive their reward when glorified.

[99] This is the order of the souls of the righteous, as henceforth is announced; and the aforesaid are the ways of torment which those who would not give heed shall suffer hereafter."

[100] I answered and said, "Will time therefore be given to the souls, after they have been separated from the bodies, to see what you have described to me?"

[101] He said to me, "They shall have freedom for seven days, so that during these seven days they may see the things of which you have been told, and afterwards they shall be gathered in their habitations."

[102] I answered and said, "If I have found favor in thy sight, show further to me, thy servant, whether on the day of judgment the righteous will be able to intercede for the ungodly or to entreat the Most High for them,

[103] fathers for sons or sons for parents, brothers for brothers, relatives for their kinsmen, or friends for those who are most dear."

[104] He answered me and said, "Since you have found favor in my sight, I will show you this also. The day of judgment is decisive and displays to all the seal of truth. Just as now a father does not send his son, or a son his father, or a master his servant, or a friend his dearest friend, to be ill or sleep or eat or be healed in his stead,

[105] so no one shall ever pray for another on that day, neither shall any one lay a burden on another; for then every one shall bear his own righteousness and unrighteousness."

[36(106)] I answered and said, "How then do we find that first Abraham prayed for the people of Sodom, and Moses for our fathers who sinned in the desert,

[37(107)] and Joshua after him for Israel in the days of Achan,

[38(108)] and Samuel in the days of Saul, and David for the plague, and Solomon for those in the sanctuary,

[39(109)] and Elijah for those who received the rain, and for the one who was dead, that he might live,

[40(110)] and Hezekiah for the people in the days of Sennacherib, and many others prayed for many?

[41(111)] If therefore the righteous have prayed for the ungodly now, when corruption has increased and unrighteousness has multiplied, why will it not be so then as well?"

[42(112)] He answered me and said, "This present world is not the end; the full glory does not abide in it; therefore those who were strong prayed for the weak.

[43(113)] But the day of judgment will be the end of this age and the beginning of the immortal age to come, in which corruption has passed away,

[44(114)] sinful indulgence has come to an end, unbelief has been cut off, and righteousness has increased and truth has appeared

[45(115)] Therefore no one will then be able to have mercy on him who has been condemned in the judgment, or to harm him who is victorious."

[46(116)] I answered and said, "This is my first and last word, that it would have been better if the earth had not produced Adam, or else, when it had produced him, had restrained him from sinning.



[47(117)] For what good is it to all that they live in sorrow now and expect punishment after death?

[48(118)] O Adam, what have you done? For though it was you who sinned, the fall was not yours alone, but ours also who are your descendants.

[49(119)] For what good is it to us, if an eternal age has been promised to us, but we have done deeds that bring death?

[50(120)] And what good is it that an everlasting hope has been promised to us, but we have miserably failed?

[51(121)] Or that safe and healthful habitations have been reserved for us, but we have lived wickedly?

[52(122)] Or that the glory of the Most High will defend those who have led a pure life, but we have walked in the most wicked ways?

[53(123)] Or that a paradise shall be revealed, whose fruit remains unspoiled and in which are abundance and healing, but we shall not enter it,

[54(124)] because we have lived in unseemly places?

[55(125)] Or that the faces of those who practiced self-control shall shine more than the stars, but our faces shall be blacker than darkness?

[56(126)] For while we lived and committed iniquity we did not consider what we should suffer after death."

[57(127)] He answered and said, "This is the meaning of the contest which every man who is born on earth shall wage,

[58(128)] that if he is defeated he shall suffer what you have said, but if he is victorious he shall receive what I have said.

[59(129)] For this is the way of which Moses, while he was alive, spoke to the people, saying, `Choose for yourself life, that you may live!"

[60(130)] But they did not believe him, or the prophets after him, or even myself who have spoken to them.

[61(131)] Therefore there shall not be grief at their destruction, so much as joy over those to whom salvation is assured."

[62(132)] I answered and said, "I know, O Lord, that the Most High is now called merciful, because he has mercy on those who have not yet come into the world;

[63(133)] and gracious, because he is gracious to those who turn in repentance to his law;

[64(134)] and patient, because he shows patience toward those who have sinned, since they are his own works;

[65(135)] and bountiful, because he would rather give than take away;

[66(136)] and abundant in compassion, because he makes his compassions abound more and more to those now living and to those who are gone and to those yet to come,

[67(137)] for if he did not make them abound, the world with those who inhabit it would not have life;

[68(138)] and he is called giver, because if he did not give out of his goodness so that those who have committed iniquities might be relieved of them, not one ten-thousandth of mankind could have life;

[69(139)] and judge, because if he did not pardon those who were created by his word and blot out the multitude of their sins,

[70(140)] there would probably be left only very few of the innumerable multitude."

#### **4Ezra.8**

[1] He answered me and said, "The Most High made this world for the sake of many, but the world to come for the sake of few.

[2] But I tell you a parable, Ezra. Just as, when you ask the earth, it will tell you that it provides very much clay from which earthenware is made, but only a little dust from which gold comes; so is the course of the present world.

[3] Many have been created, but few shall be saved."

[4] I answered and said, "Then drink your fill of understanding, O my soul, and drink wisdom, O my heart!

[5] For not of your own will did you come into the world, and against your will you depart, for you have been given only a short time to live.

[6] O Lord who are over us, grant to thy servant that we may pray before thee, and give us seed for our heart and cultivation of our understanding so that fruit may be produced, by which every mortal who bears the likeness of a human being may be able to live.

[7] For thou alone dost exist, and we are a work of thy hands, as thou hast declared.

[8] And because thou dost give life to the body which is now fashioned in the womb, and dost furnish it with members, what thou hast created is preserved in fire and water, and for nine months the womb which thou has formed endures thy creation which has been created in it.

[9] But that which keeps and that which is kept shall both be kept by thy keeping. And when the womb gives up again what has been created in it,

[10] thou hast commanded that from the members themselves (that is, from the breasts) milk should be supplied which is the fruit of the breasts,

[11] so that what has been fashioned may be nourished for a time; and afterwards thou wilt guide him in thy mercy.

[12] Thou hast brought him up in thy righteousness, and instructed him in thy law, and reproved him in thy wisdom.

[13] Thou wilt take away his life, for he is thy creation; and thou wilt make him live, for he is thy work.

[14] If then thou wilt suddenly and quickly destroy him who with so great labor was fashioned by thy command, to what purpose was he made?

[15] And now I will speak out: About all mankind thou knowest best; but I will speak about thy people, for whom I am grieved,

[16] and about thy inheritance, for whom I lament, and about Israel, for whom I am sad, and about the seed of Jacob, for whom I am troubled.

[17] Therefore I will pray before thee for myself and for them, for I see the failings of us who dwell in the land,

[18] and I have heard of the swiftness of the judgment that is to come.

[19] Therefore hear my voice, and understand my words, and I will speak before thee."

**The beginning of the words of Ezra's prayer, before he was taken up. He said:**

[20] "O Lord who inhabitest eternity, whose eyes are exalted and whose upper chambers are in the air,

[21] whose throne is beyond measure and whose glory is beyond comprehension, before whom the hosts of angels stand trembling

[22] and at whose command they are changed to wind and fire, whose word is sure and whose utterances are certain, whose ordinance is strong and whose command is terrible,

[23] whose look dries up the depths and whose indignation makes the mountains melt away, and whose truth is established for ever –

[24] hear, O Lord, the prayer of thy servant, and give ear to the petition of thy creature; attend to my words.

[25] For as long as I live I will speak, and as long as I have understanding I will answer.

[26] O look not upon the sins of thy people, but at those who have served thee in truth.

[27] Regard not the endeavors of those who act wickedly, but the endeavors of those who have kept thy covenants amid afflictions.

[28] Think not on those who have lived wickedly in thy sight; but remember those who have willingly acknowledged that thou art to be feared.

[29] Let it not be thy will to destroy those who have had the ways of cattle; but regard those who have gloriously taught thy law.

[30] Be not angry with those who are deemed worse than beasts; but love those who have always put their trust in thy glory.

[31] For we and our fathers have passed our lives in ways that bring death, but thou, because of us sinners, are called merciful.

[32] For if thou hast desired to have pity on us, who have no works of righteousness, then thou wilt be called merciful.

[33] For the righteous, who have many works laid up with thee, shall receive their reward in consequence of their own deeds.

[34] But what is man, that thou art angry with him; or what is a corruptible race, that thou art so bitter against it?

[35] For in truth there is no one among those who have been born who has not acted wickedly, and among those who have existed there is no one who has not transgressed.

[36] For in this, O Lord, thy righteousness and goodness will be declared, when thou art merciful to those who have no store of good works."

[37] He answered me and said, "Some things you have spoken rightly, and it will come to pass according to your words.

[38] For indeed I will not concern myself about the fashioning of those who have sinned, or about their death, their judgment, or their destruction;

[39] but I will rejoice over the creation of the righteous, over their pilgrimage also, and their salvation, and their receiving their reward.

[40] As I have spoken, therefore, so it shall be.

[41] "For just as the farmer sows many seeds upon the ground and plants a multitude of seedlings, and yet not all that have been sown will come up in due season, and not all that were planted will take root; so also those who have been sown in the world will not all be saved."

[42] I answered and said, "If I have found favor before thee, let me speak.

[43] For if the farmer's seed does not come up, because it has not received thy rain in due season, or if it has been ruined by too much rain, it perishes.

[44] But man, who has been formed by thy hands and is called thy own image because he is made like thee, and for whose sake thou hast formed all things -- hast thou also made him like the farmer's seed?

[45] No, O Lord who art over us! But spare thy people and have mercy on thy inheritance, for thou hast mercy on thy own creation."

[46] He answered me and said, "Things that are present are for those who live now, and things that are future are for those who will live hereafter.

[47] For you come far short of being able to love my creation more than I love it. But you have often compared yourself to the unrighteous. Never do so!

[48] But even in this respect you will be praiseworthy before the Most High,

[49] because you have humbled yourself, as is becoming for you, and have not deemed yourself to be among the righteous in order to receive the greatest glory.

[50] For many miseries will affect those who inhabit the world in the last times, because they have walked in great pride.

[51] But think of your own case, and inquire concerning the glory of those who are like yourself,

[52] because it is for you that paradise is opened, the tree of life is planted, the age to come is prepared, plenty is provided, a city is built, rest is appointed, goodness is established and wisdom perfected beforehand.

[53] The root of evil is sealed up from you, illness is banished from you, and death is hidden; hell has fled and corruption has been forgotten;

[54] sorrows have passed away, and in the end the treasure of immortality is made manifest.

[55] Therefore do not ask any more questions about the multitude of those who perish.

[56] For they also received freedom, but they despised the Most High, and were contemptuous of his law, and forsook his ways.

[57] Moreover they have even trampled upon his righteous ones,

[58] and said in their hearts that there is not God -- though knowing full well that they must die.

[59] For just as the things which I have predicted await you, so the thirst and torment which are prepared await them. For the Most High did not intend that men should be destroyed;

[60] but they themselves who were created have defiled the name of him who made them, and have been ungrateful to him who prepared life for them.

[61] Therefore my judgment is now drawing near;

[62] I have not shown this to all men, but only to you and a few like you." Then I answered and said,

[63] "Behold, O Lord, thou hast now shown me a multitude of the signs which thou wilt do in the last times, but thou hast not shown me when thou wilt do them."

#### **4Ezra.9**

[1] He answered me and said, "Measure carefully in your mind, and when you see that a certain part of the predicted signs are past,

[2] then you will know that it is the very time when the Most High is about to visit the world which he has made.

[3] So when there shall appear in the world earthquakes, tumult of peoples, intrigues of nations, wavering of leaders, confusion of princes,

[4] then you will know that it was of these that the Most High spoke from the days that were of old, from the beginning.

[5] For just as with everything that has occurred in the world, the beginning is evident, and the end manifest;

[6] so also are the times of the Most High: the beginnings are manifest in wonders and mighty works, and the end in requital and in signs.

[7] And it shall be that every one who will be saved and will be able to escape on account of his works, or on account of the faith by which he has believed,

[8] will survive the dangers that have been predicted, and will see my salvation in my land and within my borders, which I have sanctified for myself from the beginning.

[9] Then those who have now abused my ways shall be amazed, and those who have rejected them with contempt shall dwell in torments.

[10] For as many as did not acknowledge me in their lifetime, although they received my benefits, [11] and as many as scorned my law while they still had freedom, and did not understand but despised it while an opportunity of repentance was still open to them,

[12] these must in torment acknowledge it after death.

[13] Therefore, do not continue to be curious as to how the ungodly will be punished; but inquire how the righteous will be saved, those to whom the age belongs and for whose sake the age was made."

[14] I answered and said,

[15] "I said before, and I say now, and will say it again: there are more who perish than those who will be saved,

[16] as a wave is greater than a drop of water."

[17] He answered me and said, "As is the field, so is the seed; and as are the flowers, so are the colors; and as is the work, so is the product; and as is the farmer, so is the threshing floor.

[18] For there was a time in this age when I was preparing for those who now exist, before the world was made for them to dwell in, and no one opposed me then, for no one existed;

[19] but now those who have been created in this world which is supplied both with an unfailling table and an inexhaustible pasture, have become corrupt in their ways.

[20] So I considered my world, and behold, it was lost, and my earth, and behold, it was in peril because of the devices of those who had come into it.

[21] And I saw and spared some with great difficulty, and saved for myself one grape out of a cluster, and one plant out of a great forest.

[22] So let the multitude perish which has been born in vain, but let my grape and my plant be saved, because with much labor I have perfected them.

[23] But if you will let seven days more pass -- do not fast during them, however;

[24] but go into a field of flowers where no house has been built, and eat only of the flowers of the field, and taste no meat and drink no wine, but eat only flowers,

[25] and pray to the Most High continually -- then I will come and talk with you."

**70 – 155 AD**

**Papias of Hierapolis, Church Father**

**Many Mansions; A share is given to all by Father, according as each one is or shall be worthy  
Fragments of Papias**

**Fragments of Papias**

As the presbyters say, then those are, others shall enjoy the delights of Paradise, and others shall possess the splendour of the city; for everywhere the Saviour will be seen, according as they shall be worthy who see Him. But that there is this distinction between the habitation of those who produce an hundred-fold, and that of those who produce sixty-fold, and that of those who produce thirty-fold; for the first will be taken up into the heavens, the second class will dwell in Paradise, and the last will inhabit the city; and that on this account the Lord said, "In my Father's house are many mansions:" John 14:2 for all things belong to God, who supplies all with a suitable dwelling-place, even as His word says, that a share is given to all by the Father, according as each one is or shall be worthy. And this is the couch Matthew 22:10 in which they shall recline who feast, being invited to the wedding. The presbyters, the disciples of the apostles, say that this is the gradation and arrangement of those who are saved, and that they advance through steps of this nature; and that, moreover, they ascend through the Spirit to the Son, and through the Son to the Father; and that in due time the Son will yield up His work to the Father, even as it is said by the apostle, "For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." 1 Corinthians 15:25-26 For in the times of the kingdom the just man who is on the earth shall forget to die. "But when He says all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. "1 Corinthians 15:27-28

**120 AD; Translation by R.H. Charles, 1896**

**Pseudepigraphical work in name of Baruch**

**Nature Of Resurrection Body; Final Destinies Of Righteous And Wicked**

**2<sup>nd</sup> (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch**

**Chapter 48 (end)**

But now let us dismiss the wicked and inquire about the righteous.

And I will recount their blessedness

And not be silent in celebrating their glory, which is reserved for them.

For assuredly as in a little time in this transitory world in which you live, you have endured much labor,

So in that world to which there is no end, you shall receive great light.

**Chapters 49—52. The Nature of the Resurrection Body: the final Destinies of the Righteous and the Wicked**

**Chapter 49**

Nevertheless, I Will again ask from you,

O Mighty One, yea, I will ask made all things.

In what shape will those live who live in Your day?

Or how will the splendor of those who (are) after that time continue?

Will they then resume this form of the present,

And put on these entrammelling members,

Which are now involved in evils,

And in which evils are consummated,

Or will you perchance change these things

which have been in the world

As also the world?

## **Chapter 50**

And He answered and said unto me:

Hear, Baruch, this word,  
And write in the remembrance of your heart all that you shall learn.  
For the earth shall then assuredly restore the dead,  
Which it now receives, in order to preserve them.  
It shall make no change in their form,  
But as it has received, so shall it restore them,  
And as I delivered them unto it, so also shall it raise them.

For then it will be necessary to show the living that the dead have come to life again, and that those who had departed have returned (again).

And it shall come to pass, when they have severally recognized those whom they now know, then judgment shall grow strong, and those things which before were spoken of shall come.

## **Chapter 51**

And it shall come to pass, when that appointed day has gone by, that then shall the aspect of those who are condemned be afterwards changed, and the glory of those who are justified.

For the aspect of those who now act wickedly shall become worse than it is, as they shall suffer torment.

Also (as for) the glory of those who have now been justified in My law, who have had understanding in their life, and who have planted in their heart the root of wisdom, then their splendor shall be glorified in changes, and the form of their face shall be turned into the light of their beauty, that they may be able to acquire and receive the world which does not die, which is then promised to them.

For over this above all shall those who come then lament, that they rejected My law, and stopped their ears that they might not hear wisdom or receive understanding.

When therefore they see those, over whom they are now exalted, (but) who shall then be exalted and glorified more than they, they shall respectively be transformed, the latter into the splendor of angels, and the former shall yet more waste away in wonder at the visions and in the beholding of the forms.

For they shall first behold and afterwards depart to be tormented.

But those who have been saved by their works,  
And to whom the law has been now a hope,  
And understanding an expectation,  
And wisdom a confidence,  
Shall wonders appear in their time.  
For they shall behold the world which is now invisible to them,  
And they shall behold the time which is now hidden from them:  
And time shall no longer age them.  
For in the heights of that world shall they dwell,  
And they shall be made like unto the angels,  
And be made equal to the stars,  
And they shall be changed into every form they desire,  
From beauty into loveliness,



And from light into the splendor of glory.

For there shall be spread before them the extents of Paradise, and there shall be shown to them the beauty of the majesty of the living creatures which are beneath the throne, and all the armies of the angels, who are now held fast by My word, lest they should appear, and are held fast by a command, that they may stand in their places till their advent comes.

Moreover, there shall then be excellency in the righteous surpassing that in the angels.

For the first shall receive the last, those whom they were expecting, and the last those of whom they used to hear that they had passed away.

For they have been delivered from this world of tribulation,  
And laid down the burthen of anguish.  
For what then have men lost their life,  
And for what have those who were on the earth exchanged their soul?  
For then they chose (not) for themselves this time,  
Which, beyond the reach of anguish, could not pass away:  
But they chose for themselves that time,  
Whose issues are full of lamentations and evils,  
And they denied the world which ages not those who come to it,  
And they rejected the time of glory,  
So that they shall not come to the honor of which I told you before.

## **Chapter 52**

And I answered and said:

How can we forget those for whom woe is then reserved?  
And why therefore do we again mourn for those who die?  
Or why do we weep for those who depart to Sheol?  
Let lamentations be reserved for the beginning of that coming torment,  
And let tears be laid up for the advent of the destruction of that time.  
But even in the face of these things will I speak.  
And as for the righteous, what will they do now?  
N sRejoice you in the suffering which you now suffer:  
For why do you look for the decline of your enemies?  
Make ready your soul for that which is reserved for you,  
And prepare your souls for the reward which is laid up for you.

## **125 – 200 AD**

**St. Irenaeus (125 – 200 AD), Church Father**

**There Shall Be Various Mansions For Saints, According To Rank Allotted To Each Individual Against Heresies 5:36**

Men shall be actually raised: the world shall not be annihilated; but there shall be various mansions for the saints, according to the rank allotted to each individual. All things shall be subject to God the Father, and so shall He be all in all.

1. For since there are real men, so must there also be a real establishment (plantationem), that they vanish not away among non-existent things, but progress among those which have an actual existence. For neither is the substance nor the essence of the creation annihilated (for faithful and true is He who has established it), but

the fashion of the world passes away; 1 Corinthians 7:31 that is, those things among which transgression has occurred, since man has grown old in them. And therefore this [present] fashion has been formed temporary, God foreknowing all things; as I have pointed out in the preceding book, and have also shown, as far as was possible, the cause of the creation of this world of temporal things. But when this [present] fashion [of things] passes away, and man has been renewed, and flourishes in an incorruptible state, so as to preclude the possibility of becoming old, [then] there shall be the new heaven and the new earth, in which the new man shall remain [continually], always holding fresh converse with God. And since (or, that) these things shall ever continue without end, Isaiah declares, For as the new heavens and the new earth which I do make, continue in my sight, says the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. Isaiah 66:22 And as the presbyters say, Then those who are deemed worthy of an abode in heaven shall go there, others shall enjoy the delights of paradise, and others shall possess the splendour of the city; for everywhere the Saviour shall be seen according as they who see Him shall be worthy.

2. They say, moreover, that there is this distinction between the habitation of those who produce an hundred-fold, and that of those who produce sixty-fold, and that of those who produce thirty-fold: for the first will be taken up into the heavens, the second will dwell in paradise, the last will inhabit the city; and that was on this account the Lord declared, In My Father's house are many mansions. John 14:2 For all things belong to God, who supplies all with a suitable dwelling-place; even as His Word says, that a share is allotted to all by the Father, according as each person is or shall be worthy. And this is the couch on which the guests shall recline, having been invited to the wedding. Matthew 22:10 The presbyters, the disciples of the apostles, affirm that this is the gradation and arrangement of those who are saved, and that they advance through steps of this nature; also that they ascend through the Spirit to the Son, and through the Son to the Father, and that in due time the Son will yield up His work to the Father, even as it is said by the apostle, For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 1 Corinthians 15:25-26 For in the times of the kingdom, the righteous man who is upon the earth shall then forget to die. But when He says, All things shall be subdued unto Him, it is manifest that He is excepted who did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. 1 Corinthians 15:27-28

3. John, therefore, did distinctly foresee the first resurrection of the just, Luke 14:14 and the inheritance in the kingdom of the earth; and what the prophets have prophesied concerning it harmonize [with his vision]. For the Lord also taught these things, when He promised that He would have the mixed cup new with His disciples in the kingdom. The apostle, too, has confessed that the creation shall be free from the bondage of corruption, [so as to pass] into the liberty of the sons of God. Romans 8:21 And in all these things, and by them all, the same God the Father is manifested, who fashioned man, and gave promise of the inheritance of the earth to the fathers, who brought it (the creature) forth [from bondage] at the resurrection of the just, and fulfils the promises for the kingdom of His Son; subsequently bestowing in a paternal manner those things which neither the eye has seen, nor the ear has heard, nor has [thought concerning them] arisen within the heart of man, 1 Corinthians 2:9; Isaiah 64:4 For there is the one Son, who accomplished His Father's will; and one human race also in which the mysteries of God are wrought, which the angels desire to look into; 1 Peter 1:12 and they are not able to search out the wisdom of God, by means of which His handiwork, confirmed and incorporated with His Son, is brought to perfection; that His offspring, the First-begotten Word, should descend to the creature (facturam), that is, to what had been moulded (plasma), and that it should be contained by Him; and, on the other hand, the creature should contain the Word, and ascend to Him, passing beyond the angels, and be made after the image and likeness of God.

## **150 – 216 AD**

### **Clement of Alexandria (150 – 216 AD), Church Father**

#### **Degrees Of Glory In Heaven Corresponding With Dignities Of Church Below**

#### **The Miscellanies Chapters 13 & 14**

### **Chapter 13: Degrees of Glory in Heaven corresponding with the dignities of the Church Below**

He, then, who has first moderated his passions and trained himself for impassibility, and developed to the beneficence of gnostic perfection, is here equal to the angels. Luminous already, and like the sun shining in the exercise of beneficence, he speeds by righteous knowledge through the love of God to the sacred abode, like as the apostles. Not that they became apostles through being chosen for some distinguished peculiarity of nature, since also Judas was chosen along with them. But they were capable of becoming apostles on being chosen by Him who foresees even ultimate issues. Matthias, accordingly, who was not chosen along with them, on showing himself worthy of becoming an apostle, is substituted for Judas. Those, then, also now, who have exercised themselves in the Lord's commandments, and lived perfectly and gnostically according to the gospel, may be enrolled in the chosen body of the apostles. Such an one is in reality a presbyter of the church, and a true minister (deacon) of the will of God, if he do and teach what is the Lord's; not as being ordained by men, nor regarded righteous because a presbyter, but enrolled in the presbyterate because righteous.

And although here upon earth he be not honored with the chief seat, he will sit down on the four-and-twenty thrones, judging the people, as John says in the Apocalypse. For, in truth, the covenant of salvation, reaching down to us from the foundation of the world, through different generations and times, is one, though conceived as different in respect of gift. For it follows that there is one unchangeable gift of salvation given by one God, through one Lord, benefiting in many ways. For which cause the middle wall<sup>3</sup> which separated the Greek from the Jew is taken away, in order that there might be a peculiar people. And so both meet in the one unity of faith; and the selection out of both is one. And the chosen of the chosen are those who by reason of perfect knowledge are culled [as the best] from the church itself, and honored with the most august glory—the judges and rulers four-and-twenty (the grace being doubled) equally from Jews and Greeks. Since, according / to my opinion, the grades<sup>4</sup> here in the church, of bishops, presbyters, deacons, are imitations of the angelic glory, and of that economy which, the Scriptures say, awaits those who, following the footsteps of the apostles, have lived in perfection of righteousness according to the gospel. For these taken up in the clouds, the apostle<sup>6</sup> writes, will first minister [as deacons], then be classed in the presbyterate, by promotion in glory (for glory differs<sup>6</sup> from glory) till they grow into “a perfect man.

### **Chapter 14: Degrees of Glory in Heaven**

Such, according to David, “rest in the holy hill of God,” in the church far on high, in which are gathered the philosophers of God, “who are Israelites indeed, who are pure in And other sheep there are also,” saith the Lord, “which are not of this fold”—deemed worthy of another fold and mansion, in proportion to their faith. “But my sheep hear my voice,” understanding gnostically the commandments. And this is to be taken in a magnanimous and worthy acceptance, along with also the recompense and accompaniment of works. So that when we hear, “Thy faith hath saved thee,” we do not understand Him to say absolutely that those who have believed in any way whatever shall be saved, unless also works follow. But it was to the Jews alone that He spoke this utterance, who kept the law and lived blamelessly, who wanted only faith in the Lord. No one, then, can be a believer and at the same time be licentious; but though he quit the flesh, he must put off the passions, so as to be capable of reaching his own mansion. Now to know is more than to believe, as to be dignified with the highest honor after being saved is a greater thing than being saved. Accordingly the believer, through great discipline, divesting himself of the passions, passes to the mansion which is better than the former one, viz. to the greatest torment, taking with him the characteristic of repentance from the sins he has committed after baptism. He is tortured then still more—not yet or not quite attaining what he sees others to have acquired. Besides, he is also ashamed of his transgressions. The greatest torments, indeed, are assigned to the believer. For God's righteousness is good, and His goodness is righteous. And though the punishments cease in the course of the completion of the expiation and purification of each one, yet those have very great and permanent grief who are found worthy of the other fold, on account of not being along with those that have been glorified through righteousness. For instance, Solomon, calling the Gnostic, wise, speaks thus of those who admire the dignity of his mansion: “For they shall see the end of the wise, and to what a degree the Lord has established him.” And of his glory they will say, “This was he whom we once

held up to derision, and made a byword of reproach; fools that we were! We thought his life madness, and his end dishonorable. How is he reckoned among the sons of God, and his inheritance among the saints?"

Not only then the believer, but even the heathen, is judged most righteously. For since God knew in virtue of His prescience that he would not believe, He nevertheless, in order that he might receive his own perfection, gave him philosophy, but gave it him previous to faith. And He gave the sun, and the moon, and the stars to be worshipped; "which God," the Law says, made for the nations, that they might not become altogether atheistical, and so utterly perish. But they, also in the instance of this commandment, having become devoid of sense, and addicting themselves to graven images, are judged unless they repent; some of them because, though able, they would not believe God; and others because, though willing, they did not take the necessary pains to become believers. There were also, however, those who, from the worship of the heavenly bodies, did not return to the Maker of them. For this was the way given to the nations to rise up to God, by means of the worship of the heavenly bodies. But those who would not abide by those heavenly bodies assigned to them, but fell away from them to stocks and stones, "were counted," it is said, "as chaff-dust and as a drop from a jar," beyond salvation, cast away from the body. As, then, to be simply saved is the result of medium actions, but to be saved rightly and becomingly is right action, so also all action of the Gnostic may be called right action; that of the simple believer, intermediate action, not yet perfected according to reason, not yet made right according to knowledge; but that of every heathen again is sinful. For it is not simply doing well, but doing actions with a certain aim, and acting according to reason, that the Scriptures exhibit as requisite.

As, then, lyres ought not to be touched by those who are destitute of skill in playing the lyre, nor flutes by those who are unskilled in flute-playing, neither are those to put their hand to affairs who have not knowledge, and know not how to use them in the whole of life. The struggle for freedom, then, is waged not alone by the athletes of battles in wars, but also in banquets, and in bed, and in the tribunals, by those who are anointed by the word, who are ashamed to become the captives of pleasures.

"I would never part with virtue for unrighteous gain." But plainly, unrighteous gain is pleasure and pain, toil and fear; and, to speak comprehensively, the passions of the soul, the present of which is delightful, the future vexatious. "For what is the profit," it is said, "if you gain the world and lose the soul!" It is clear, then, that those who do not perform good actions, do not know what is for their own advantage. And if so, neither are they capable of praying aright, so as to receive from God good things; nor, should they receive them, will they be sensible of the boon; nor, should they enjoy them, will they enjoy worthily what they know not; both from their want of knowledge how to use the good things given them, and from their excessive stupidity, being ignorant of the way to avail themselves of the divine gifts.

Now stupidity is the cause of ignorance. And it appears to me that it is the vaunt of a boastful soul, though of one with a good conscience, to exclaim against what happens through circumstances: "Therefore let them do what they may; For it shall be well with me; and Right Shall be my ally, and I shall not be caught doing evil."

But such a good conscience preserves sanctity towards God and justice towards men; keeping the soul pure with grave thoughts, and pure words, and just deeds. By thus receiving the Lord's power, the soul studies to be God; regarding nothing bad but ignorance, and action contrary to right reason. And giving thanks always for all things to God, by righteous hearing and divine reading, by true investigation, by holy oblation, by blessed prayer; lauding, hymning, blessing, praising, such a soul is never at any time separated from God. Rightly then is it said, "And they who trust in Him shall understand the truth, and those faithful in love shall abide by Him." You see what statements Wisdom makes about the Gnostics. Conformably, therefore, there are various abodes, according to the worth of those who have believed. To the point Solomon says, "For there shall be given to him the choice grace of faith, and a more pleasant lot in the temple of the Lord." For the comparative shows that there are lower parts in the temple of God, which is the whole church. And the superlative remains to be conceived, where the Lord is. These chosen abodes, which are three, are indicated by the numbers in the Gospel—the thirty, the sixty, the hundred.

And the perfect inheritance belongs to those who attain to "a perfect man," according to the image of the Lord. And the likeness is not, as some imagine, that of the human form; for this consideration is impious. Nor is the likeness to the first cause that which consists in virtue. For this utterance is also impious, being that of those who have imagined that virtue in man and in the sovereign God is the same. "Thou hast supposed iniquity," He says, "[in imagining] that I will be like to thee." But "it is enough for the disciple to become as the Master," saith the Master. To the likeness of God, then, he that is introduced into adoption and the friendship of God, to the just inheritance of the lords and gods is brought; if he be perfected, according to the Gospel, as the Lord Himself taught.

## **150 – 216 AD**

**Clement of Alexandria (150 – 216 AD), Church Father**

**Degrees of Glory in Heaven**

**Stromata Book 6 chapter 14, in ANF 2:506**

### **Chapter XIV.—Degrees of Glory in Heaven**

Such, according to David, "rest in the holy hill of God," Ps. xv. i. in the Church far on high, in which are gathered the philosophers of God, "who are Israelites indeed, who are pure in heart, in whom there is no guile;" John i. 47; Matt v. 8. who do not remain in the seventh seat, the place of rest, but are promoted, through the active beneficence of the divine likeness, to the heritage of beneficence which is the eighth grade; devoting themselves to the pure vision *ἐποπτεία*, the third and highest grade of initiation of the Eleusinian mysteries (Liddell and Scott's Lexicon). of insatiable contemplation.

"And other sheep there are also," saith the Lord, "which are not of this fold" John x. 16.—deemed worthy of another fold and mansion, in proportion to their faith. "But My sheep hear My voice," John x. 27. understanding gnostically the commandments. And this is to be taken in a magnanimous and worthy acceptance, along with also the recompense and accompaniment of works. So that when we hear, "Thy faith hath saved thee," Mark v. 34, etc. we do not understand Him to say absolutely that those who have believed in any way whatever shall be saved, unless also works follow. But it was to the Jews alone that He spoke this utterance, who kept the law and lived blamelessly, who wanted only faith in the Lord. No one, then, can be a believer and at the same time be licentious; but though he quit the flesh, he must put off the passions, so as to be capable of reaching his own mansion.

Now to know is more than to believe, as to be dignified with the highest honour after being saved is a greater thing than being saved. Accordingly the believer, through great discipline, divesting himself of the passions, passes to the mansion which is better than the former one, viz., to the greatest torment, taking with him the characteristic of repentance from the sins he has committed after baptism. He is tortured then still more—not yet or not quite attaining what he sees others to have acquired. Besides, he is also ashamed of his transgressions. The greatest torments, indeed, are assigned to the believer. For God's righteousness is good, and His goodness is righteous. And though the punishments cease in the course of the completion of the expiation and purification of each one, yet those have very great and permanent grief The text here has *ὅτι*, for which has been substituted (Potter and Sylb.) *οί*, as above; *τήν* after *ἀὐλῆς* (fold) requires to be omitted also in rendering the sentence as we have done. are found worthy of the other fold, on account of not being along with those that have been glorified through righteousness.

For instance, Solomon, calling the Gnostic, wise, speaks thus of those who admire the dignity of his mansion: "For they shall see the end of the wise, and to what a degree the Lord has established him." Wisd. iv. 17. And of his glory they will say, "This was he whom we once held up to derision, and made a byword of reproach; fools that we were! We thought his life madness, and his end dishonourable. How is he reckoned among the sons of God, and his inheritance among the saints?" Wisd. v. 3–5.

Not only then the believer, but even the heathen, is judged most righteously. For since God knew in virtue of His prescience that he would not believe, He nevertheless, in order that he might receive his own perfection gave him philosophy, but gave it him previous to faith. And He gave the sun, and the moon, and the stars to be worshipped; “which God,” the Law says, Deut. iv. 19. made for the nations, that they might not become altogether atheistical, and so utterly perish. But they, also in the instance of this commandment, having become devoid of sense, and addicting themselves to graven images, are judged unless they repent; some of them because, though able, they would not believe God; and others because, though willing, they did not take the necessary pains to become believers. There were also, however, those who, from the worship of the heavenly bodies, did not return to the Maker of them. For this was the sway given to the nations to rise up to God, by means of the worship of the heavenly bodies. But those who would not abide by those heavenly bodies assigned to them, but fell away from them to stocks and stones, “were counted,” it is said, “as chaff-dust and as a drop from a jar,” Isa. xl. 15. beyond salvation, cast away from the body.

As, then, to be simply saved is the result of medium The author reckons three kinds of actions, the first of which is *κατόρθωμα*, right or perfect action, which is characteristic of the perfect man and Gnostic alone, and raises him (*εἰς τὴν ἀνωτάτω δόξαν*) to the height of glory. The second is the class of *τῶν μέσων*, medium, or intermediate actions, which are done by less perfect believers, and procure a lower grade of glory. In the third place he reckons sinful actions (*ἁμαρτηκίας*), which are done by those who fall away from salvation (Potter). actions, but to be saved rightly and becomingly [2 Pet. i. 11.] is right action, so also all action of the Gnostic may be called right action; that of the simple believer, intermediate action, not yet perfected according to reason, not yet made right according to knowledge; but that of every heathen again is sinful. For it is not simply doing well, but doing actions with a certain aim, and acting according to reason, that the Scriptures exhibit as requisite. To produce this sense, *καθῆκεν* of the text is by Potter changed into *καθῆκειν*.

As, then, lyres ought not to be touched by those who are destitute of skill in playing the lyre, nor flutes by those who are unskilled in flute-playing, neither are those to put their hand to affairs who have not knowledge, and know not how to use them in the whole. On the authority of one of the ms., Sylburgius reads *ὄλον* instead of *λόγον* in the text. of life.

The struggle for freedom, then, is waged not alone by the athletes of battles in wars, but also in banquets, and in bed, and in the tribunals, by those who are anointed by the word, who are ashamed to become the captives of pleasures.

“I would never part with virtue for unrighteous gain.” But plainly, unrighteous gain is pleasure and pain, toil and fear; and, to speak comprehensively, the passions of the soul, the present of which is delightful, the future vexatious. “For what is the profit,” it is said, “if you gain the world and lose the soul?” Matt. viii. 26; Mark viii. 36; Luke ix. 25. It is clear, then, that those who do not perform good actions, do not know what is for their own advantage. And if so, neither are they capable of praying aright, so as to receive from God good things; nor, should they receive them, will they be sensible of the boon; nor, should they enjoy them, will they enjoy worthily what they know not; both from their want of knowledge how to use the good things given them, and from their excessive stupidity, being ignorant of the way to avail themselves of the divine gifts.

Now stupidity is the cause of ignorance. And it appears to me that it is the vaunt of a boastful soul, though of one with a good conscience, to exclaim against what happens through circumstances:—“Therefore let them do what they may; From the *Acharneis* of Aristophanes, quoted also by Cicero; with various readings in each. Heinsius substitutes *παλαμάσθων* for *παλαμᾶσθαι* of the text. For it shall be well with me; and Right Shall be my ally, and I shall not be caught doing evil.”

But such a good conscience preserves sanctity towards God and justice towards men; keeping the soul pure with grave thoughts, and pure words, and just deeds. By thus receiving the Lord’s power, the soul studies to be God; regarding nothing bad but ignorance, and action contrary to right reason. And giving thanks always

for all things to God, by righteous hearing and divine reading, by true investigation, by holy oblation, by blessed prayer; lauding, hymning, blessing, praising, such a soul is never at any time separated from God. [Bunsen, Hippol., iii. p. 141.] Rightly then is it said, “And they who trust in Him shall understand the truth, and those faithful in love shall abide by Him.” Wisd. iii. 9. You see what statements Wisdom makes about the Gnostics.

Conformably, therefore, there are various abodes, according to the worth of those who have believed. [1 Cor. xv. 41.] To the point Solomon says, “For there shall be given to him the choice grace of faith, and a more pleasant lot in the temple of the Lord.” Wisd. iii. 14. For the comparative shows that there are lower parts in the temple of God, which is the whole Church. And the superlative remains to be conceived, where the Lord is. These chosen abodes, which are three, are indicated by the numbers in the Gospel—the thirty, the sixty, the hundred. Matt. xiii. 8. And the perfect inheritance belongs to those who attain to “a perfect man,” according to the image of the Lord. And the likeness is not, as some imagine, that of the human form; for this consideration is impious. Nor is the likeness to the first cause that which consists in virtue. For this utterance is also impious, being that of those who have imagined that virtue in man and in the sovereign God is the same. “Thou hast supposed iniquity,” He says, “[in imagining] that I will be like to thee.” Ps. l. 21. But “it is enough for the disciple to become as the Master,” Matt. xxv. 10. saith the Master. To the likeness of God, then, he that is introduced into adoption and the friendship of God, to the just inheritance of the lords and gods is brought; if he be perfected, according to the Gospel, as the Lord Himself taught.

## **160 – 230 AD**

### **Tertullian (150 – 216 AD), Church Father**

#### **How Many Mansions In Father's House, If Not Diversity Of Deserts? How Will One Star Differ From Another Unless By Effort, Suffering, Torture, Death?**

##### **Scorpiace**

(Justification of Christian Martyrdoms)

### **Chapter 6**

But if, for the contest's sake, God had appointed martyrdoms for us, that thereby we might make trial with our opponent, in order that He may now keep bruising him by whom man chose to be bruised, here too generosity rather than harshness in God holds sway. For He wished to make man, now plucked from the devil's throat by faith, trample upon him likewise by courage, that he might not merely have escaped from, but also completely vanquished, his enemy. He who had called to salvation has been pleased to summon to glory also, that they who were rejoicing in consequence of their deliverance may be in transports when they are crowned likewise. With what good-will the world celebrates those games, the combative festivals and superstitious contests of the Greeks, involving forms both of worship and of pleasure, has now become clear in Africa also. As yet cities, by sending their congratulations severally, annoy Carthage, which was presented with the Pythian game after the racecourse had attained to an old age. Thus, by the world it has been believed to be a most proper mode of testing proficiency in studies, to put in competition the forms of skill, to elicit the existing condition of bodies and of voices, the reward being the informer, the public exhibition the judge, and pleasure the decision. Where there are mere contests, there are some wounds: fists make reel, heels kick like butting rams, boxing-gloves mangle, whips leave gashes. Yet there will be no one reproaching the superintendent of the contest for exposing men to outrage. Suits for injuries lie outside the racecourse. But to the extent that those persons deal in discoloration, and gore, and swellings, he will design for them crowns, doubtless, and glory, and a present, political privileges, contributions by the citizens, images, statues, and—of such sort as the world can give— an eternity of fame, a resurrection by being kept in remembrance. The pugilist himself does not complain of feeling pain, for he wishes it; the crown closes the wounds, the palm hides the blood: he is excited more by victory than by injury. Will you count this man hurt whom you see happy? But not even the vanquished himself will reproach the superintendent of the contest for his

misfortune. Shall it be unbecoming in God to bring forth kinds of skill and rules of His own into public view, into this open ground of the world, to be seen by men, and angels, and all powers?— to test flesh and spirit as to steadfastness and endurance?— to give to this one the palm, to this one distinction, to that one the privilege of citizenship, to that one pay?— to reject some also, and after punishing to remove them with disgrace? You dictate to God, forsooth, the times, or the ways, or the places in which to institute a trial concerning His own troop (of competitors) as if it were not proper for the Judge to pronounce the preliminary decision also. Well now, if He had put forth faith to suffer martyrdoms not for the contest's sake, but for its own benefit, ought it not to have had some store of hope, for the increase of which it might restrain desire of its own, and check its wish in order that it might strive to mount up, seeing they also who discharge earthly functions are eager for promotion? Or how will there be many mansions in our Father's house, if not to accord with a diversity of deserts? How will one star also differ from another star in glory, unless in virtue of disparity in their rays? 1 Corinthians 15:41 But further, if, on that account, some increase of brightness also was appropriate to loftiness of faith, that gain ought to have been of some such sort as would cost great effort, poignant suffering, torture, death. But consider the requital, when flesh and life are paid away— than which in man there is nought more precious, the one from the hand of God, the other from His breath— that the very things are paid away in obtaining the benefit of which the benefit consists; that the very things are expended which may be acquired; that the same things are the price which are also the commodities. God had foreseen also other weaknesses incident to the condition of man—the stratagems of the enemy, the deceptive aspects of the creatures, the snares of the world; that faith, even after baptism, would be endangered; that the most, after attaining unto salvation, would be lost again, through soiling the wedding-dress, through failing to provide oil for their torchlets— would be such as would have to be sought for over mountains and woodlands, and carried back upon the shoulders. He therefore appointed as second supplies of comfort, and the last means of succour, the fight of martyrdom and the baptism— thereafter free from danger— of blood. And concerning the happiness of the man who has partaken of these, David says: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." For, strictly speaking, there cannot any longer be reckoned ought against the martyrs, by whom in the baptism (of blood) life itself is laid down. Thus, "love covers the multitude of sins;" 1 Peter 4:8 and loving God, to wit, with all its strength (by which in the endurance of martyrdom it maintains the fight), with all its life Matthew 22:37 (which it lays down for God), it makes of man a martyr. Shall you call these cures, counsels, methods of judging, spectacles, (illustrations of) even the barbarity of God? Does God covet man's blood? And yet I might venture to affirm that He does, if man also covets the kingdom of heaven, if man covets a sure salvation, if man also covets a second new birth. The exchange is displeasing to no one, which can plead, in justification of itself, that either benefit or injury is shared by the parties making it.

## **Chapter 12**

Who, now, should know better the marrow of the Scriptures than the school of Christ itself?— the persons whom the Lord both chose for Himself as scholars, certainly to be fully instructed in all points, and appointed to us for masters to instruct us in all points. To whom would He have rather made known the veiled import of His own language, than to him to whom He disclosed the likeness of His own glory— to Peter, John, and James, and afterwards to Paul, to whom He granted participation in (the joys of) paradise too, prior to his martyrdom? Or do they also write differently from what they think— teachers using deceit, not truth? Addressing the Christians of Pontus, Peter, at all events, says, "How great indeed is the glory, if you suffer patiently, without being punished as evildoers! For this is a lovely feature, and even hereunto were you called, since Christ also suffered for us, leaving you Himself as an example, that you should follow His own steps." 1 Peter 2:20 And again: "Beloved, be not alarmed by the fiery trial which is taking place among you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. For, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings, do you rejoice; that, when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you; because glory and the Spirit of God rest upon you: if only none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters; yet (if any man suffer) as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf." 1 Peter 4:12 John, in fact, exhorts us to lay down our lives even for our brethren, 1 John 3:16 affirming that there is no fear in love: "For perfect love casts out fear, since fear has punishment; and he who



fears is not perfect in love." 1 John 4:18 What fear would it be better to understand (as here meant), than that which gives rise to denial? What love does he assert to be perfect, but that which puts fear to flight, and gives courage to confess? What penalty will he appoint as the punishment of fear, but that which he who denies is about to pay, who has to be slain, body and soul, in hell? And if he teaches that we must die for the brethren, how much more for the Lord,— he being sufficiently prepared, by his own Revelation too, for giving such advice! For indeed the Spirit had sent the injunction to the angel of the church in Smyrna: "Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life." Revelation 2:10 Also to the angel of the church in Pergamus (mention was made) of Antipas, Revelation 2:13 the very faithful martyr, who was slain where Satan dwells. Also to the angel of the church in Philadelphia Revelation 3:10 (it was signified) that he who had not denied the name of the Lord was delivered from the last trial. Then to every conqueror the Spirit promises now the tree of life, and exemption from the second death; now the hidden manna with the stone of glistening whiteness, and the name unknown (to every man save him that receives it); now power to rule with a rod of iron, and the brightness of the morning star; now the being clothed in white raiment, and not having the name blotted out of the book of life, and being made in the temple of God a pillar with the inscription on it of the name of God and of the Lord, and of the heavenly Jerusalem; now a sitting with the Lord on His throne—which once was persistently refused to the sons of Zebedee. Matthew 20:20-23 Who, pray, are these so blessed conquerors, but martyrs in the strict sense of the word? For indeed theirs are the victories whose also are the fights; theirs, however, are the fights whose also is the blood. But the souls of the martyrs both peacefully rest in the meantime under the altar, Revelation 6:9 and support their patience by the assured hope of revenge; and, clothed in their robes, wear the dazzling halo of brightness, until others also may fully share in their glory. For yet again a countless throng are revealed, clothed in white and distinguished by palms of victory, celebrating their triumph doubtless over Antichrist, since one of the elders says, "These are they who come out of that great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Revelation 7:14 For the flesh is the clothing of the soul. The uncleanness, indeed, is washed away by baptism, but the stains are changed into dazzling whiteness by martyrdom. For Esaias also promises, that out of red and scarlet there will come forth the whiteness of snow and wool. Isaiah 1:18 When great Babylon likewise is represented as drunk with the blood of the saints, Revelation 17:6 doubtless the supplies needful for her drunkenness are furnished by the cups of martyrdoms; and what suffering the fear of martyrdoms will entail, is in like manner shown. For among all the castaways, nay, taking precedence of them all, are the fearful. "But the fearful," says John— and then come the others— "will have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone." Revelation 21:8 Thus fear, which, as stated in his epistle, love drives out, has punishment.

### **Chapter 13**

But how Paul, an apostle, from being a persecutor, who first of all shed the blood of the church, though afterwards he exchanged the sword for the pen, and turned the dagger into a plough, being first a ravaging wolf of Benjamin, then himself supplying food as did Jacob, — how he, (I say,) speaks in favour of martyrdoms, now to be chosen by himself also, when, rejoicing over the Thessalonians, he says, "So that we glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations, in which you endure a manifestation of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be accounted worthy of His kingdom, for which you also suffer!" 2 Thessalonians 1:4 As also in his Epistle to the Romans: "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, being sure that tribulation works patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope makes not ashamed." Romans 5:3 And again: "And if children, then heirs, heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Romans 8:17 And therefore he afterward says: "Who shall separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (As it is written: For Your sake we are killed all the day long; we have been counted as sheep for the slaughter.) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him who loved us. For we are persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor power, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:35 But further, in recounting his own sufferings to the Corinthians, he certainly decided that suffering must be borne: "In labours, (he says,) more abundant, in

prisons very frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one; thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned," 2 Corinthians 11:23 and the rest. And if these severities will seem to be more grievous than martyrdoms, yet once more he says: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake." 2 Corinthians 12:10 He also says, in verses occurring in a previous part of the epistle: "Our condition is such, that we are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; and are in need, but not in utter want; since we are harassed by persecutions, but not forsaken; it is such that we are cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in our body the dying of Christ." 2 Corinthians 4:8 "But though," says he, "our outward man perishes"— the flesh doubtless, by the violence of persecutions— "yet the inward man is renewed day by day"— the soul, doubtless, by hope in the promises. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal"— he is speaking of troubles; "but the things which are not seen are eternal"— he is promising rewards. But writing in bonds to the Thessalonians, he certainly affirmed that they were blessed, since to them it had been given not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for His sake. "Having," says he, "the same conflict which you both saw in me, and now hear to be in me." Philippians 2:17 "For though I am offered upon the sacrifice, I joy and rejoice with you all; in like manner do you also joy and rejoice with me." You see what he decides the bliss of martyrdom to be, in honour of which he is providing a festival of mutual joy. When at length he had come to be very near the attainment of his desire, greatly rejoicing in what he saw before him, he writes in these terms to Timothy: "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; there is laid up for me the crown which the Lord will give me on that day" 2 Timothy 4:6 — doubtless of his suffering. Admonition enough did he for his part also give in preceding passages: "It is a faithful saying: For if we are dead with Christ, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us; if we believe not, yet He is faithful: He cannot deny Himself." 2 Timothy 2:11 "Be not ashamed, therefore, of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner;" 2 Timothy 1:8 for he had said before: "For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." 2 Timothy 1:7 For we suffer with power from love toward God, and with a sound mind, when we suffer for our blamelessness. But further, if He anywhere enjoins endurance, for what more than for sufferings is He providing it? If anywhere He tears men away from idolatry, what more than martyrdoms takes the lead, in tearing them away to its injury?

## **200 AD**

### **Rabbinic Author**

### **Seven and Thirty and Sixty Degrees in Paradise, Faces like Sun, Moon, Stars, Planets, Lightning**

### **Sifre on Deuteronomy**

#### **Piska 10**

Blessed is the man whom Thou chooseth, and bringest near (Ps. 65:5); the third, Happy are they that dwell in Thy House (Ps. 84:5); the fourth, Lord, who shall dwell in Thy Tabernacle? (Ps. 15:1); the fifth, Who shall dwell upon Thy holy mountain? (Ps. 15:1); the sixth, Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord? (Ps. 24:3); the seventh, and who shall stand in His holy place? (Ps. 24:3)3

R. Simeon ben Yobai said: In the future the faces of the righteous will resemble seven joyous things: the sun, the moon, the firmament, the stars, lightning, lilies, and the lampstand of the Temple. Whence the sun? From the verse, But they that love Him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might (Judg. 5:31). Whence the moon? From the verse, Fair as the moon (Song 6: to). The firmament? And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament (Dan. 12:3). The stars? And they that turn the many to righteousness as the stars (Dan. 12:3). Lightning? They run to and fro like the lightnings (Nah. 2:5). Lilies (sosannim)? For the

leader; upon sosannim (Ps. 45:1). The lampstand of the Temple? And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl and the other upon the left side thereof (Zech. 4:3).<sup>5</sup>

And behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude (1:10): Behold, you are as eternal as the day.' Hence' the Sages have said: There are seven groups of the righteous in Paradise, one higher than the other: the first, Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto Thy name; the upright shall dwell in Thy presence (Ps. 140:14); the second, Happy

#### **Piska 47**

That your days may be multiplied—in this world—and the days of your children . . .—in the days of the Messiah—as the days of the heavens above the earth—in the world to come—(upon the land) which the Lord swore unto your fathers to give them (11:21)—Scripture does not say here "to give you" but rather to give them; hence we find that we can deduce (the doctrine of) the resurrection of the dead from the Torah.'

As the days of the heavens above the earth: The faces of the righteous will (shine as bright) as the day, as it is said, But they that love Him (shall) be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might (Judg. 5:31). R. Simeon ben Yohai says: 'In the future, when the righteous greet the Shekinah, their faces will resemble seven joyous things, to wit, But they that love Him (shall) be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might (Judg. 5:31), Fair as the moon (shall they be), clear as the sun (Song. 6:10), And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn the many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever (Dan. 12:3), They (shall) run to and fro like lightnings (Nah. 2:5), (They shall be as) the leader, upon lilies (Ps. 45:1), and His beauty shall be as the olive tree (Hos. 14:7). Scripture says also, A song of ascents (Ps. 121: 1)—(intended) for the one who in the future shall make ascents for his servants, the righteous. R. 'Akiba says: Scripture does not say "a song of an ascent," but a song of ascents—there are thirty ascents, one above the other; Rabbi (Judah the Prince) says that there are sixty ascents, one above the other. Since there are several ascents, one above the other, am I to think that enmity, hatred, jealousy, or rivalry prevail among them? (No,) for Scripture says, And they that turn the many to righteousness (shall shine) as the stars for ever and ever (Dan. 12:3).—just as there is no enmity, hatred, jealousy, or rivalry among the stars, so is there none among the righteous; just as the brightness of one star is not like that of another, so is this true of the righteous. Another interpretation: They that turn the many to righteousness—this refers to alms collectors.<sup>6</sup> R. Simeon ben Menasya says: This refers to the elders, as it is said, But they that love Him (shall) be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might (Judg. 5:31). Who is greater, those who love or those who cause others to love? Certainly those who cause others to love. Hence, if it is said of those who love But they that love Him (shall) be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might, how much more is this true of those who cause others to love. And they that turn the many to righteousness (shall shine) as the stars for ever: Just as the stars are exalted and placed above all the creatures of the world, so are the righteous; just as the stars rule and govern from one end of the world to the other, so do the righteous; just as the stars are sometimes hidden and sometimes visible, just as the stars are grouped in so many clusters that they cannot be counted, so are the righteous. Or does this mean, regardless of whether they do God's will or not? (No,) for Scripture says, And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth (Gen. 28:14)—if they do God's will, they will be like the stars; if not, they will be like the dust of the earth, for Scripture says, For the king of Aram destroyed them and made them like the dust in threshing (2 Kings 13:7).

Another interpretation: As the days of the heavens above the earth: They will live and endure for all eternity, as it is said, For as the new heavens and the new earth, (which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain) (Isa. 66:22). And is this not a matter of reasoning from the minor to the major? If the heavens and the earth, which were created only for the glory of Israel, shall live and endure for all eternity, how much more so will this be true with the righteous, for whose sake the whole world Was created. R. Simeon ben Yohai says: Scripture says, For as the days of a tree shall be the days of My people (Isa. 65:22)—tree means Torah, as it is said, She (wisdom) is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her (Prov. 3:18). Is this not a matter of reasoning from the minor to the major? If the Torah, which was created only for the glory of Israel, shall endure for all eternity, how much more so shall the righteous, for

whose sake the whole world was created. R. Joshua ben Korhah says: Scripture says, One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, and the earth abideth for ever (Eccl. i:4)—it should have said here, "the earth passeth away, and the earth cometh, and the generation abideth for ever," but since Israel changed their deeds, God changed the order of the world.

One Scriptural verse begins by saying, Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be, and then goes on to say, as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered (Hos. 2: r)—when Israel does God's will, they are as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; when they do not, yet the number of the children of Israel shall be. Similarly, one verse says, (One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one, at the rebuke of five shall ye flee,) till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain (Isa. 30:17), while another verse says, For thus saith the Lord God: The city that went forth a thousand shall have a hundred left (Amos 5:3). Another interpretation: Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be—as numbered by heaven—as the sand of the sea—as numbered by man."

**160-200 AD (Greek Original); English translation by M.R. James in 1924**  
**Pseudepigraphical work in name of Peter**  
**Punishment of Hell, Glories of Paradise**  
**Apocalypse of Peter**

**Ethiopian Text**

First published by the Abbe Sylvain Grebaut in *Revue de l'Orient Chretien*, 1910: a fresh translation from his Ethiopic text by H. Duensing appeared in *Zeitschr. f. ntl. Wiss.*, 1913. English translation by M.R. James in 1924

The Second Coming of Christ and Resurrection of the Dead (which Christ revealed unto Peter) who died because of their sins, for that they kept not the commandment of God their creator.

And he (Peter) pondered thereon, that he might perceive the mystery of the Son of God, the merciful and lover of mercy.

And when the Lord was seated upon the Mount of Olives, his disciples came unto him.

And we besought and entreated him severally and prayed him, saying unto him: Declare unto us what are the signs of thy coming and of the end of the world, that we may perceive and mark the time of thy coming and instruct them that come after us, unto whom we preach the word of thy gospel, and whom we set over (in) thy church, that they when they hear it may take heed to themselves and mark the time of thy coming.

And our Lord answered us, saying: Take heed that no man deceive you, and that ye be not doubters and serve other gods. Many shall come in my name, saying: I am the Christ. Believe them not, neither draw near unto them. For the coming of the Son of God shall not be plain (i.e. foreseen); but as the lightning that shineth from the east unto the west, so will I come upon the clouds of heaven with a great host in my majesty; with my cross going before my face will I come in my majesty, shining sevenfold more than the sun will I come in my majesty with all my saints, mine angels (mine holy angels). And my Father shall set a crown upon mine head, that I may judge the quick and the dead and recompense every man according to his works.

And ye, take ye the likeness thereof (learn a parable) from the fig-tree: so soon as the shoot thereof is come forth and the twigs grown, the end of the world shall come.

And I, Peter, answered and said unto him: Interpret unto me concerning the fig-tree, whereby we shall perceive it; for throughout all its days doth the fig-tree send forth shoots, and every year it bringeth forth its fruit for its master. What then meaneth the parable of the fig-tree? We know it not.

And the Master (Lord) answered and said unto me: Understandest thou not that the fig-tree is the house of Israel? Even as a man that planted a fig-tree in his garden, and it brought forth no fruit. And he sought the fruit thereof many years and when he found it not, he said to the keeper of his garden: Root up this fig-tree that it make not our ground to be unfruitful. And the gardener said unto God: (Suffer us) to rid it of weeds and dig the ground round about it and water it. If then it bear not fruit, we will straightway remove its roots out of the garden and plant another in place of it. Hast thou not understood that the fig-tree is the house of Israel? Verily I say unto thee, when the twigs thereof have sprouted forth in the last days, then shall feigned Christs come and awake expectation saying: I am the Christ, that am now come into the world. And when they (Israel) shall perceive the wickedness of their deeds they shall turn away after them and deny him whom our fathers did praise, even the first Christ whom they crucified and therein sinned a great sin. But this deceiver is not the Christ. And when they reject him he shall slay with the sword, and there shall be many martyrs. Then shall the twigs of the fig-tree, that is, the house of Israel, shoot forth: many shall become martyrs at his hand. Enoch and Elias shall be sent to teach them that this is the deceiver which must come into the world and do signs and wonders to deceive. And therefore shall they that die by his hand be martyrs, and shall be reckoned among the good and righteous martyrs who have pleased God in their life.

And he showed me in his right hand the souls of all men, And on the palm of his right hand the image of that which shall be accomplished at the last day: and how the righteous and the sinners shall be separated, and how they do that are upright in heart, and how the evil-doers shall be rooted out unto all eternity. We beheld how the sinners wept (weep) in great affliction and sorrow, until all that saw it with their eyes wept, whether righteous or angels, and he himself also.

And I asked him and said unto him: Lord, suffer me to speak thy word concerning the sinners: It were better for them if they had not been created. And the Saviour answered and said unto me: Peter, wherefore speakest thou thus, that not to have been created were better for them? Thou resistest God. Thou wouldest not have more compassion than he for his image: for he hath created them and brought them forth out of not being. Now because thou hast seen the lamentation which shall come upon the sinners in the last days, therefore is thine heart troubled; but I will show thee their works, whereby they have sinned against the Most High.

Behold now what shall come upon them in the last days, when the day of God and the day of the decision of the judgement of God cometh. From the east unto the west shall all the children of men be gathered together before my Father that liveth for ever. And he shall command hell to open its bars of adamant and give up all that is therein.

And the wild beasts and the fowls shall he command to restore all the flesh that they have devoured, because he willeth that men should appear; for nothing perisheth before God, and nothing is impossible with him, because all things are his.

For all things come to pass on the day of decision, on the day of judgement, at the word of God: and as all things were done when he created the world and commanded all that is therein and it was done -even so shall it be in the last days; for all things are possible with God. And therefore saith he in the scripture: [Ezek. xxxvii.] Son of man, prophesy upon the several bones and say unto the bones: bone unto bone in joints, sinew. nerves, flesh and skin and hair thereon and soul and spirit.

And soul and spirit shall the great Uriel give them at the commandment of God; for him hath God set over the rising again of the dead at the day of judgement.

Behold and consider the corns of wheat that are sown in the earth. As things dry and without soul do men sow them in the earth: and they live again and bear fruit, and the earth restoreth them as a pledge entrusted unto it.

And this that dieth, that is sown as seed in the earth, and shall become alive and be restored unto life, is man.

How much more shall God raise up on the day of decision them that believe in him and are chosen of him, for whose sake he made the world? And all things shall the earth restore on the day of decision, for it also shall be judged with them, and the heaven with it.

And this shall come at the day of judgement upon them that have fallen away from faith in God and that have committed sin: Floods (cataracts) of fire shall be let loose; and darkness and obscurity shall come up and clothe and veil the whole world and the waters shall be changed and turned into coals of fire and all that is in them shall burn, and the sea shall become fire. Under the heaven shall be a sharp fire that cannot be quenched and floweth to fulfil the judgement of wrath.

And the stars shall fly in pieces by flames of fire, as if they had not been created and the powers (firmaments) of the heaven shall pass away for lack of water and shall be as though they had not been. And the lightnings of heaven shall be no more, and by their enchantment they shall affright the world. The spirits also of the dead bodies shall be like unto them (the lightnings?) and shall become fire at the commandment of God.

And so soon as the whole creation dissolveth, the men that are in the east shall flee unto the west, unto the east; they that are in the south shall flee to the north, and they that are in the south. And in all places shall the wrath of a fearful fire overtake them and an unquenchable flame driving them shall bring them unto the judgement of wrath, unto the stream of unquenchable fire that floweth, flaming with fire, and when the waves thereof part themselves one from another, burning, there shall be a great gnashing of teeth among the children of men.

Then shall they all behold me coming upon an eternal cloud of brightness: and the angels of God that are with me shall sit (prob. And I shall sit) upon the throne of my glory at the right hand of my Heavenly Father; and he shall set a crown upon mine head. And when the nations behold it, they shall weep, every nation apart.

Then shall he command them to enter into the river of fire while the works of every one of them shall stand before them (something is wanting) to every man according to his deeds. As for the elect that have done good, they shall come unto me and not see death by the devouring fire. But the unrighteous the sinners, and the hypocrites shall stand in the depths of darkness that shall not pass away, and their chastisement is the fire, and angels bring forward their sins and prepare for them a place wherein they shall be punished for ever, every one according to his transgression.

Uriel the angel of God shall bring forth the souls of those sinners (every one according to his transgression, who perished in the flood, and of all that dwelt in all idols, in every molten image, in every object of love, and in pictures, and of those that dwelt on all hills and in stones and by the wayside, whom men called gods: they shall burn them with them (the objects in which they dwelt, or their worshippers) in everlasting fire; and after that all of them with their dwelling places are destroyed, they shall be punished eternally.

(Here begins the description of torments which we have, in another text, in the Akhmim fragment.)

Then shall men and women come unto the place prepared for them. By their tongues wherewith they have blasphemed the way of righteousness shall they be hanged up. There is spread under them unquenchable fire, that they escape it not.

Behold, another place: therein is a pit, great and full. In it are they that have denied righteousness: and angels of punishment chastise them and there do they kindle upon them the fire of their torment.

And again behold two women: they hang them up by their neck and by their hair; they shall cast them into the pit. These are they which plaited their hair, not for good (or, not to make them beautiful) but to turn them to fornication, that they might ensnare the souls of men unto perdition. And the men that lay with them in fornication shall be hung by their loins in that place of fire; and they shall say one to another: We knew not that we should come unto everlasting punishment.

And the murderers and them that have made common cause with them shall they cast into the fire, in a place full of venomous beasts, and they shall be tormented without rest, feeling their pains; and their worms shall be as many in number as a dark cloud. And the angel Ezrael shall bring forth the souls of them that have been slain, and they shall behold the torment of them that slew them, and say one to another: Righteousness and justice is the judgement of God. For we heard, but we believed not, that we should come into this place of eternal judgement.

And near by this flame shall be a pit, great and very deep, and into it floweth from above all manner of torment, foulness, and issue. And women are swallowed up therein up to their necks and tormented with great pain. These are they that have caused their children to be born untimely, and have corrupted the work of God that created them.

Over against them shall be another place where sit their children both alive, and they cry unto God. And flashes (lightnings) go forth from those children and pierce the eyes of them that for fornication's sake have caused their destruction.

Other men and women shall stand above them, naked; and their children stand over against them in a place of delight, and sigh and cry unto God because of their parents, saying: These are they that have despised and cursed and transgressed thy commandments and delivered us unto death: they have cursed the angel that formed us, and have hanged us up, and withheld from us (or, begrudged us) the light which thou hast given unto all creatures.

And the milk of their mothers flowing from their breasts shall congeal, and from it shall come beasts devouring flesh, which shall come forth and turn and torment them for ever with their husbands, because they forsook the commandments of God and slew their children. As for their children, they shall be delivered unto the angel Temlakos (a care-taking angel). And they that slew them shall be tormented eternally, for God willeth it so.

Ezrael the angel of wrath shall bring men and women, the half of their bodies burning, and cast them into a place of darkness, even the hell of men; and a spirit of wrath shall chastise them with all manner of torment, and a worm that sleepeth not shall devour their entrails: and these are the persecutors and betrayers of my righteous ones.

And beside them that are there, shall be other men and women, gnawing their tongues; and they shall torment them with red-hot iron and burn their eyes. These are they that slander and doubt of my righteousness. Other men and women whose works were done in deceitfulness shall have their lips cut off, and fire entereth into their mouth and their entrails. These are the false witnesses (al. these are they that caused the martyrs to die by their lying).

And beside them, in a place near at hand, upon the stone shall be a pillar of fire, and the pillar is sharper than swords. And there shall be men and women clad in rags and filthy garments, and they shall be cast thereon, to suffer the judgement of a torment that ceaseth not: these are they that trusted in their riches and despised the widows and the woman with fatherless children . . . before God.

And into another place hard by, full of filth, do they cast men and women up to the knees. These are they that lent money and took usury.

And other men and women cast themselves down from an high place and return again and run, and devils drive them. These are the worshippers of idols, and they put them to the end of their wist (drive them up to the top of the height) and they cast themselves down. And thus do they continually, and are tormented for ever. These are they which have cut their flesh as apostles of a man: and the women that were with them . . . and these are the men that defiled themselves together as women.

And beside them shall be a brazier? . . . and beneath them shall the angel Ezrael prepare a place of much fire: and all the idols of gold and silver, all idols, the work of men's hands, and the semblances of images of cats and lions, of creeping things and wild beasts, and the men and women that have prepared the images thereof, shall beat each other in chains of fire and shall be chastised because of their error before the idols, and this is their judgement for ever.

And beside them shall be other men and women, burning in the fire of the judgement, and their torment is everlasting. These are they that have forsaken the commandment of God and followed the persuasions of devils.

(Parts of these two sections are in the Bodleian Fragment. At this point the Akhmim fragment ends. The Ethiopic continues:)

And there shall be another place, very high; there shall be a furnace and a brazier wherein shall burn fire. The fire that shall burn shall come from one end of the brazier. The men and women whose feet slip, shall go rolling down into a place where is fear. And again while the fire that is prepared floweth, they mount up and fall down again and continue to roll down. Thus shall they be tormented for ever. These are they that honoured not their father and mother and of their own accord withdrew themselves from them. Therefore shall they be chastised eternally.

Furthermore the angel Ezrael shall bring children and maidens to show them those that are tormented. They shall be chastised with pains, with hanging up and with a multitude of wounds which flesh-devouring birds shall inflict upon them. These are they that boast themselves (trust) in their sins, and obey not their parents and follow not the instruction of their fathers, and honour not them that are more aged than they.

Beside them shall be girls clad in darkness for a garment and they shall be sore chastised and their flesh shall be torn in pieces. These are they that kept not their virginity until they were given in marriage, and with these torments shall they be punished, and shall feel them.

And again, other men and women, gnawing their tongues without ceasing, and being tormented with everlasting fire. These are the servants (slaves) which were not obedient unto their masters; and this then is their judgement for ever.

And hard by this place of torment shall be men and women dumb and blind, whose raiment is white. They shall crowd one upon another, and fall upon coals of unquenchable fire. These are they that give alms and say: We are righteous before God: whereas they have not sought after righteousness.

Ezrael the angel of God shall bring them forth out of this fire and establish a judgement of decision. This then is their judgement. A river of fire shall flow and all judgement (they that are judged) shall be drawn down into the middle of the river. And Uriel shall set them there.

And there are wheels of fire and men and women hung thereon by the strength of the whirling thereof. And they that are in the pit shall burn: now these are the sorcerers and sorceresses. Those wheels shall be in all decision, judgement, and punishment by fire without number.



Thereafter shall the angels bring mine elect and righteous which are perfect in all uprightness, and bear them in their hands, and clothe them with the raiment of the life that is above. They shall see their desire on them that hated them, when he punisheth them, and the torment of every one shall be for ever according to his works.

And all they that are in torment shall say with one voice: have mercy upon us, for now know we the judgement of God, which he declared unto us aforetime, and we believed not. And the angel Tartaruchus, keeper of hell, shall come and chastise them with yet greater torment, and say unto them: Now do ye repent, when it is no longer the time for repentance, and nought of life remaineth. And they shall say: Righteous is the judgement of God, for we have heard and perceived that his judgement is good; for we are recompensed according to our deeds.

Then will I give unto mine elect and righteous the washing (baptism) and the salvation for which they have besought me, in the field of Acherousia, a lake where the soul of Adam was washed, which is called Aneslasleja (Elysium). They shall adorn with flowers the portion of the righteous, and I shall go . . . I shall rejoice with them. I will cause the peoples to enter in to mine everlasting kingdom, and show them that eternal thing whereon I have made them to set their hope, even I and my Father which is in heaven.

I have spoken this unto thee, Peter, and declared it unto thee. Go forth therefore and go unto the land (or city) of the west; and enter into the vineyard which I shall tell thee of, in order that by the sickness (sufferings) of the Son who is without sin the deeds of corruption may be sanctified. As for thee, thou art chosen according to the promise which I have given thee. Spread thou therefore my gospel throughout all the world in peace. Verily men shall rejoice: my words shall be the source of hope and of life, and suddenly shall the world be ravished.

(We now have the section descriptive of paradise, which in the Akhmim text precedes that about hell.)

And my Lord Jesus Christ our King said unto me: Let us go unto the holy mountain. And his disciples went with him, praying. And behold there were two men there, and we could not look upon their faces, for a light came from them, shining more than the sun, and their raiment also was shining, and cannot be described, and nothing is sufficient to be compared unto them in this world. And the sweetness of them . . . that no mouth is able to utter the beauty of their appearance (or, the mouth hath not sweetness to express), for their aspect was astonishing and wonderful. And the other, great, I say, shineth in their aspect above crystal. Like the flower of roses is the appearance of the colour of his aspect and of his body . . . and their head was a marvel, And upon their shoulders and on their foreheads was a crown of nard woven of fair flowers. As the rainbow in the water, in the time of rain, so was their hair. And such was the comeliness of their countenance, adorned with all manner of ornament. And when we saw them on a sudden, we marvelled. And I drew near unto the Lord (God) Jesus Christ and said unto him: O my Lord, who are these? And he said unto me: They are Moses and Elias. And I said unto him: Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the rest of the righteous fathers? And he showed us a great garden, open, full of fair trees and blessed fruits, and of the odour of perfumes. The fragrance thereof was pleasant and came even unto us. And of that tree saw I much fruit. And my Lord and God Jesus Christ said unto me: Hast thou seen the companies of the fathers?

As is their rest, such also is the honour and the glory of them that are persecuted for my righteousness' sake. And I rejoiced and believed and believed and understood that which is written in the book of my Lord Jesus Christ. And I said unto him: O my Lord, wilt thou that I make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias? And he said unto me in wrath: Satan maketh war against thee, and hath veiled thine understanding; and the good things of this world prevail against thee. Thine eyes therefore must be opened and thine ears unstopped that a tabernacle, not made with men's hands, which my heavenly Father hath made for me and for the elect. And we beheld it and were full of gladness.

And behold, suddenly there came a voice from heaven, saying: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: my commandments. And then came a great and exceeding white cloud over our heads and bare away our Lord and Moses and Elias. And I trembled and was afraid: and we looked up and the heaven opened and we beheld men in the flesh, and they came and greeted our Lord and Moses and Elias and went into another heaven. And the word of the scripture was fulfilled: This is the generation that seeketh him and seeketh the face of the God of Jacob. And great fear and commotion was there in heaven and the angels pressed one upon another that the word of the scripture might be fulfilled which saith: Open the gates, ye princes.

Thereafter was the heaven shut, that had been open.

And we prayed and went down from the mountain, glorifying God, which hath written the names of the righteous in heaven in the book of life.

There is a great deal more of the Ethiopic text, but it is very evidently of later date; the next words are:

Peter opened his mouth and said to me: Hearken, my son Clement, God created all things for his glory,' and this proposition is dwelt upon. The glory of those who duly praise God is described in terms borrowed from the Apocalypse: 'The Son at his coming will raise the dead . . . and will make my righteous ones shine seven times more than the sun, and will make their crowns shine like crystal and like the rainbow in the time of rain (crowns) which are perfumed with nard and cannot be contemplated (adorned) with rubies, with the colour of emeralds shining brightly, with topazes, gems, and yellow pearls that shine like the stars of heaven, and like the rays of the sun, sparkling which cannot be gazed upon.' Again, of the angels: ' Their faces shine more than the sun; their crowns are as the rainbow in the time of rain. (They are perfumed) with nard. Their eyes shine like the morning star. The beauty of their appearance cannot be expressed.... Their raiment is not woven, but white as that of the fuller, according as I saw on the mountain where Moses and Elias were. Our Lord showed at the transfiguration the apparel of the last days, of the day of resurrection, unto Peter, James and John the sons of Zebedee, and a bright cloud overshadowed us, and we heard the voice of the Father saying unto us: This is my Son whom I love and in whom I am well pleased: hear him. And being afraid we forgot all the things of this life and of the flesh, and knew not what we said because of the greatness of the wonder of that day, and of the mountain whereon he showed us the second coming in the kingdom that passeth not away.

The Father hath committed all judgement unto the Son. [The destiny of sinners -their eternal doom- is more than Peter can endure: he appeals to Christ to have pity on them.]

And my Lord answered me and said to me: Hast thou understood that which I said unto thee before? It is permitted unto thee to know that concerning which thou askest: but thou must not tell that which thou hearest unto the sinners lest they transgress the more, and sin. [Peter weeps many hours, and is at last consoled by an answer which, though exceedingly diffuse and vague does seem to promise ultimate pardon for all]: My Father will give unto them all the life, the glory, and the kingdom that passeth not away . . . It is because of them that have believed in me that I am come. It is also because of them that have believed in me, that, at their word, I shall have pity on men.

## **100 BC—250 AD (Dates of Texts); English translation by Moses Gaster in 1893**

### **Rabbinic Authors**

### **Hebrew Visions of Hell and Paradise (1893)**

### **Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society**

(English Translation 1893)

### **Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society**

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**Hebrew Visions of Hell and Paradise. By M. Gaster, Ph.D.**

THE recent recovery of the Revelation of St. Peter has again attracted attention to this branch of apocalyptic literature. Speculation has been rife as to the sources of that Revelation.

I intend publishing now, for the first time in English garb, the oldest extant Revelations which must have served as source to that of Peter, then to that of Paul, Ezra, Abraham, Isaiah, Virgin Mary, St. Macarius, and the host of others down to Dante and St. Patrick.

It is not here the place to enter into a more minute disquisition of the history of these visions. We find parallels in the old Ægyptian literature, in the Assyrian we have the well-known "Descensus ad inferos" of Izdubar (Nimrud). The Buddhist literature knows the Suh.rllekha, the letter of Nâgârjuna to King Udayana. In the Avesta literature we have the Nameh of Arda-viraf; in the Mahommedan we have the vision of Mahommed. All these Christian Revelations and of the others, at any rate the last two, are based directly upon those Hebrew visions, a fact which has hitherto not been noticed.

I reserve for a book, which I am writing, the fuller discussion of these points, and the study of the internal connection between these apocalyptic visions.

It would be bold to speculate on the relative age of each of the visions which I publish here. They all go back to the pre-Christian age, as is shown by the existence of those Christian visions almost verbally identical with the Hebrew. On the other hand one cannot doubt that they underwent some changes in the course of the ages. The substance remained intact, but many passages were interpolated or omitted. The different texts complement thus each other to assist us to arrive at a probable common source. The tendency of all these popular writings is to grow in the course of time, to attract and to assimilate various elements. We can see this process very clearly in the Revelation of Moses, which has been hitherto almost unknown. It has nothing in common with those known under that title. We have two recensions of it. A shorter one, and a longer which is more amplified and contains interpolations taken from the Zohar and the Talmud. Whether the biblical passages belonged originally to these visions is still a matter of doubt. They may have been tacked on to the narrative as a kind of scriptural proof, or they may stand as the beginning of a series of details and pictures which have been evolved out of them, by a rather fantastical exegesis, but by no means uncommon in the Oriental literature.

To each text I have added a full bibliography, and parallels from most of the extant apocryphal revelations. I have striven to be as literal as possible. The attempt to obliterate the Oriental touch by a polished translation, robs the text of its originality and local colour, which ought to be preserved.

**I. The Revelation Of Moses (A)**

**Heaven, Hell, and Paradise.**

(Gedulath Mosheh, Amsterdam, 1854, v. Jellinek, Beth-hamidrash, II. pp. x., xiv. ff., and xix-xx.)

1. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons (Song of Songs, ii. 3). This applies to Moses, upon whom be peace.

2. In that hour when God said unto him: "Go and bring out the children of Israel from Egypt, for I have heard their groaning, and I remembered the covenant, and the oath I swore to Abraham my servant." Moses said: "O Lord of the Universe, who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Ex. iii. 11). God said: "Thou hast humbled thyself in saying 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?' but I will honour thee [as it is said: 'He that is of lowly spirit shall obtain honour' (Prov. xxix. 23)], and I will give the whole of Egypt into thy hands, and I will bring thee up even near to my throne of glory; and I will shew thee the angels of the Heaven." Thereupon God commanded Metatron, the angel of his

presence (of the face), and said unto him: "Go and bring Moses with harps, and pipes, and drums, and dances, with joy, and songs, and praises."

3. And Metatron answered and said: "O Lord of the Universe, Moses is not able to come up and see the angels, for there are angels who are of fire and he is only of flesh and blood."

4. God said: "Go and change his flesh (body) into fire." And Metatron went to Moses.

5. When Moses beheld Metatron he trembled with fear, and said to him: "Who art thou?"

6. And he answered: "I am Enoch the son of Jared, thy father's father. The Almighty hath sent me to bring thee up to his throne of glory." [Ascensio Isaiae, ed. Dillmann, Leipzig, 1877. ix. 9; Apoc. Virg. Mary]

7. Moses said: "I am only flesh and blood, and cannot look upon the angels." And Metatron changed Moses' tongue into a tongue of fire, and his eyes he made like the wheels of the heavenly chariot, and his power like unto that of the angels, and his tongue like a flame, and brought him up to heaven. 15,000 angels were on the right hand, and 15,000 on the left, Metatron and Moses in the middle. In this way was Moses carried up to heaven. [Testament of Abraham, ch. 9 and 10, Rec. A. ed. M. R. James, Cambridge, 1892]

8. The first heaven to which Moses ascended corresponds to the first day of the week; there he saw the waters standing in lines. This heaven was full of windows, and at each window stood an angel. And Moses asked Metatron: "What are these windows?" and Metatron answered: "These windows are the window of prayer, the window of request, the window of supplication, the window of crying (tears), the window of joy, the window of satiation, the window of famine, the window of poverty, the window of riches, the window of war, the window of peace, the window of pregnancy, the window of birth, the window of the treasures of rain, the window of dew, the window of sin, the window of repentance, the window of smallness, the window of greatness, the window of death, the window of life, the window of disease among men, the window of disease among animals, the window of healing, the window of sickness, the window of health." And Moses saw great things past finding out, "yea marvellous things without number" (Job ix. 10). [Enoch, ch. 60, v. 12 ff. translated by Charles, ff., B. of Jubilees, ch. 1, v. Roensch, d. Buch d. Jubilaen, p. 259; cf. Sefer Raziel, Amsterdam, 1701; f. 34b ff]

9. Moses ascended then the second heaven, which corresponds to the second day of the week. There he saw an angel whose name is X. [In this recension the names of the angels are omitted. They are to be found, however, in the shorter] His length is 300 parasangs and 50 myriads of angels stand before him; they are of fire and water, and their faces are directed towards the Shekina above; and all sing hymns, saying: "Great is the Lord and highly to be praised" (cxlv. 3).

10. And Moses asked Metatron and said: "Who are those?" He answered: "These are the angels who are placed over the clouds, the wind, and the rain; they go and fulfil the will of their Creator and return to their places and praise the Almighty." And Moses asked: "Why have they their faces turned towards the Shekina?" And Metatron answered: "From that day when God created them until to-day they have not been moved from their position." [Enoch, l.c.; Jubilees, l.c.]

11. Moses went up to the third heaven, which corresponds to the third day of the week. There he saw an angel whose name is X. His length is a journey of 500 years. He has 70,000 heads, in each head 70,000 mouths, in each mouth 70,000 tongues, and in each tongue 70,000 dictions; before him stand 70,000 myriads of angels, all of white fire; they all praise and sing to God and say: "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and power," etc. (1 Chr. xxix. 11).

12. Moses asked Metatron: "Who are these? and what is their name?" And he answered: "Their name is Erelim; they are placed over the grass (herbs), and over the trees, and over the fruits, and over the corn; and they all go and fulfil the will of their Creator and return to their places."

13. Moses went up to the fourth heaven. There he saw the temple built; the columns of red fire, the sides of green fire, the thresholds of white fire, the hooks and the planks of blazing fire; the portals of carbuncle and the halls of sparkling gems. And he saw angels going therein praising (and saying) [as King David, upon whom may peace rest, said: "Bless the Lord, ye angels of His, ye mighty in strength, that fulfil his word" (Ps. ciii. 20)]. [Testament Levi, ch. 5]

14. Moses asked Metatron and said: "Who are these angels?" And Metatron answered: "These are the angels, who are placed over the earth, and over the sun, and over the moon, and over the stars, and over the planets, and over the spheres, and ever sing they hymns unto Him." And he saw two big stars, each of them as big as the whole earth; the name of one was Nogah, and the name of the other Maadim, one standing above the sun, and the other above the moon. Moses asked Metatron: "Why do these stand above those others?" And he said: "The one stands above the sun in summer in order to cool the world from the heat of the sun, and that is the star Nogah; whilst the other stands near the moon in order to warm the world from the cold of the moon (and this is the star Maadim)." [Cf. Pirke de R. Eliezer, ch. 6]

15. Moses went to the fifth heaven and he saw there troops of angels half of fire and half of snow, and the snow is above the fire without extinguishing it, for God makes peace between them [as it is said: "He maketh peace in his high places," Job xxv. 2], and all praise the Almighty.

16. And Moses asked Metatron: "What are these doing?" He said: "Since the day when God created them are they so." Moses asked: "What is their name?" and he answered: "These are the Erelim who are called Ishim [as it is said: 'Unto you, O Ishim (men), I call,' Prov. viii. 4; i.e.: I call you Ishim!]."

17. Moses went up to the sixth heaven, there he saw an angel whose length was 500 years' journey; his name was X., and he was wholly of hail (ice), and by him stood thousands and myriads of angels, without number, and all sung praises to the One who said and the world was created [as it is said: the heaven proclaim the glory of God (Ps. xix. 2)]. [Ch. 8-17, cf. Othioth de R. Akiba (Jellinek, Bet-hamm. III. 20-21)]

18. Moses asked Metatron: "Who are these?" and he answered: "These are the Irin Kadishin, the holy watchers," (Daniel iv. 10-14).

19. Moses went up to the seventh heaven, and he saw an angel wholly of fire; and two angels, whose names were X. These were fastened with two chains of red and dark fire; and each of them had the length of 500 parasangs.

20. Moses asked Metatron: "Who are these?" And he answered: "These are wrath and anger, and God created them during the six days of creation, that they should fulfil his will." [Cf. Rev. of Paul, ch. 11 (Tischendorf, Apoc. Apocryphae, Leipzig, 1866, pp. 34-69)]

21. Moses replied: "I am afraid of these angels, and I cannot look on them." Thereupon Metatron embraced Moses, placed him in his bosom and said: "O Moses, beloved of God, be not frightened nor dread thou aught." And Moses was immediately calmed.

22. After this Moses saw another angel, whose countenance was totally different from those of the other angels, for he was ugly and his height of 540 years' journey, and he was girded forty times around his waist. From the sole of the foot unto the head he was full of fiery eyes, and whosoever looked at him, fell down in dread.

23. And Moses asked Metatron: "Who is this?" He answered: "This is the angel of death, who takes the souls of men." [Cf. Test. of Abraham, ch. 17] And he asked him: "Where is he now going?" And Metatron answered: "He goes to take the soul of Job the pious."

24. And Moses said before God: "May it be thy will, O Lord, my God and God of my fathers, that thou shouldst not deliver me into the hands of this angel!"

25. Then saw he angels standing before God; each of them having six wings. With twain wings they covered their faces, so that they might not look upon the Shekina. With the other twain wings they cover their feet, for they have the feet of a calf, and with the other twain wings they fly and praise God. The length of each wing is 500 years' journey, and the width from one end of the world to the other. And Moses asked: "Who are these?" and Metatron answered: "These are the holy Creatures." [Cf. P. d. R. Eliezer ch. 4]

26. Our sages tell [Talmud B., Tractate Pesachim, f. 94a-b; Yalkut, II. f. 44c, § 286; cf. Tract. Hagiga, f. 12b] that at the time when Nebuchadnezzar the impious said: "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High" (Isaiah xv. 14 {sic. Isaiah xiv. 14}), the Holy Spirit came forth and said: "O impious man! How many are the days of the years of thy life? Threescore and ten, or even by reason of strength, fourscore years" (Ps. xc. 10), and the distance from earth to heaven alone is 500 years, the thickness of the heaven again 500 years, and from the heaven Rakia to the heaven Shehakim 500 years, and its thickness 500 years, and from Shehakim to Zebul again 500 years, and its thickness 500 years, and from Zebul to Meon 500 years, and its thickness 500 years, and from Meon to Araboth 500 years, and its thickness 500 years, and the feet of the holy Creatures are equal to the whole; and their ankles are equal to the whole; and the wings of the creatures are like the whole, and their necks are like the whole, and their heads like the whole, and their horns like unto the whole, and upon them is the throne of glory which is equal to the whole. [It is like the terrible ice, Ezek. i. 22.] And there sits the King of Kings, the Holy, blessed be He exalted and high, and thou sayest: "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High! Woe unto thee, O impious man and woe unto thy soul, for thou shalt be brought down to the uttermost parts of the pit (cf. Isaiah xiv. 15) to the seven regions of hell to be punished for ever and ever."

27. And after that Moses saw an angel in the heaven called Araboth, i.e. the seventh heaven, and this angel was teaching the souls which were created by God at the time of the Creation and have been placed in paradise. The name of the angel was X. He teaches them in seventy languages in the college on high, and they answer: "Thus is the law of Moses given by tradition from Mount Sinai [as it is said Dina was set and the books were opened (Daniel vii. 10), and Dina is none other than this angel, who is the guardian angel of the Law and of wisdom." He has also another name, they call him Jefefiyah, for the name of the guardian angel of the Law is Iofiel]. [About seven heavens v. Ascensio Isaiae and Test. Levi, ch. 3]

28. (From the Zohar) R. Simeon, son of Johai, said: "At that time when Moses went up to heaven an angel sat before him and taught him 370 mysteries of the Law, Moses then said to God, 'I will not depart from here unless Thou wilt give me good gifts.'" God answered: "Moses, my servant, faithful in my house, I will give thee my Law wherein are good gifts, as it is written: 'For I gave thee a good gift' (Prov. iv. 2). Therein are also the commandments, positive and negative, and not only this (I grant thee) but also that the Law shall be recorded in thy name, as it is written: 'Remember ye the Law of Moses, my servant' (Malachi iii. 22)."  
Whence do we know that Moses did actually ascend seven heavens? We learn it from the verse, "And Moses ascended to God." (It is further written, "God went up amidst the sounds of trumpets") (Ps. xlvi. 6). Moses is therefore called Elohim like unto his Master, for it is said: "See I have made thee as Elohim unto Pharaoh," therefore it is written: "Like an apple-tree in the wood is my beloved among the sons." This is Moses, master of the Prophets and servant of God; he is like an apple in odour and taste.

29. At that time a Bath-Kol came forth from underneath the throne of glory and said: "Moses, my servant! Art thou afraid of them?" [It is written: "A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty and bringeth down the

strength of the confidence thereof" (Prov. xxi. 22). Strength means the Law as it is said: "God will give strength to his people" (Ps. xxix. 11).]

30. God said then to Moses: "Moses, my servant! Thou camest up here and hast been worthy of the privilege of seeing all with thy (earthly) power; and I have made thee ascend seven heavens, and have shown thee my treasures and I have given thee my law. Now thou shalt be worthy of seeing the two parks I have created in this world, one for the righteous and one for the sinners, viz. Paradise and Hell."

31. At that hour God sent Gabriel and said unto him: "Go with my beloved servant Moses and show him Hell!"

32. And Moses said to him: "I cannot enter Hell, that blazing fire." He said to him: "Moses, there is a fire which burns more than all the seven Hells, and yet when thou wilt tread it with thy feet, it shall not burn thee."

33. At an hour when Moses entered Hell, the fire of Hell withdrew for 500 parasangs. The master of Hell said to him: "Who art thou?" He answered: "I am the son of Amram." The Lord of Hell answered: "Not here is thy place." And Moses said: "I came to see the powerful works of God, blessed be He." And God said to the Lord of Hell: "Go and show him how men are in Hell." [I draw attention here to two more apocalyptic visions which do not seem to have been noticed hitherto. (1) The apocalypse of the Virgin Mary (v. Tischendorf, *Apoc. Apocryphae*, p. xxvii.; Gaster, *Literatura populara român<sup>o</sup>a*, Bucharest, 1883, p. 362-366; B. P. Hasdeu, *Cuvente d. B<sup>-</sup>atr<sup>-</sup>an<sup>i</sup>*, II. Bucharest, 1879, p. 301-367) extant in Slavonic texts of the twelfth century. Greek, Roumanian, etc.; Æthiopic and Syriac? In this text the tortures of Hell are very fully described. (2) Questions of St. Macarius, of which I possess 6, Roumanian MSS.; A Syriac Fragment of the twelfth century I found in the British Museum, Add. 17,262 (Wright, II. p. 867-8, No. 837), and a Greek text of the fifteenth century I discovered in Cod. Baroccianus (Bodleian), No. 147. f. 294b sqq.]

34. Immediately he went with Moses, like a pupil before his master, and entered Hell together with him.

35. Moses saw there men tortured by the angels of destruction. Some of the sinners were hanged by their eyelids, some by their ears, some by their hands, and others by their tongues, and they cried bitterly. And he saw women hanging by their hair and by their breasts and in such like ways, all were hanging by chains of fire. [Cf. V. 7. 15-19. Peter, ch. 9 (H. 24); Robinson and James, *The Gospel according to Peter*, etc., London, 1892, p. 37 sqq.; cf. A. Harnack (H.) *Bruchstücke d. Evgl. u. der Apocalypse d. Petrus*, Leipzig, 1893, p. 16 sqq]

36. And Moses asked the Lord of Hell, and said "Why are these hanged by their eyes and by their tongues and are so fearfully tortured and so sorely punished?" And the master of Hell answered: "Because they looked with an evil eye at fair women, and at married women, and at the money of their friends and neighbours, and gave false witness against their neighbours." [Cf. V. 15, 17. Peter, ch. 7 (H. 22); Paul, ch. 37, 38]

37. Also saw he in Hell men hanging by their sexual organs and their hands were tied, and he asked: "Why do these hang?" The Lord answered: "Because they committed adultery, and stole, and killed, and murdered." [Cf. Peter. ch. 9, 10 (H. 24-26); Paul, 32; Virg. Mary]

38. He saw other men hanging by their ears and their tongues, and he asked: "Why are these hanging by their ears and tongues?" And he answered: "Because they neglected the study of the law, and talked slander and vain words and empty words. [V. 16] The women are hanging by their hair and breasts, because they used to uncover their breasts and their hair before the young men and desired them, and came thus to sin." [V. 17; Peter, ch. 9 (H. 22); cf. Paul, ch. 40]

39. Hell cried then with a bitter and loud voice, and said to the Master of Hell: "Give me the sinners, that I may destroy them." For Hell is always hungry and never satisfied, and crieth always for the sinners to devour them, but hath no power over the righteous. [Cf. Ev. Nicodemi, Greek form, ch. 20 ff.: "O all devouring and insatiable Hades"]

40. Moses went further and saw two sinners hanged by their feet with their heads downwards, and they cried by reason of the torture of Hell, and their bodies were covered with black worms, each worm 500 parasangs long. And these sinners cry and lament, saying: "Woe unto us, for the terrible punishment of Hell; would we could die." But they cannot die [as it is said: "They long for death but it cometh not" (Job iii. 21)]. [Peter, ch. 9, 13 (H. 24, 28)]

41. Moses asked the master of Hell: "What acts have these committed?" And he answered: "These are those who swore falsely, and profaned the Sabbath, and despised the learned, and persecuted the orphans; and gave bad names to their neighbours, and bare false witness. Therefore hath God delivered them to these worms to take vengeance on these sinners." And Moses asked: "What is the name of this place?" And he answered: "Aluka [as it is said; Aluka hath two daughters" (Prov. xxx. 15)]. [Cf. V. 16; Paul, ch. 39]

42. Moses went then to another place. There the sinners were lying on their faces; and he saw two thousand scorpions swarming over them and stinging them and torturing them, and the sinners cried bitterly. Each scorpion has 70,000 mouths, and each mouth 70,000 stings, and each sting has 70,000 vesicles filled with poison and venom, and with these are the sinners imbued and thus are they tortured; and their eyes are sunk in their sockets for fear and dread, and their cry: "Woe unto us, for our sins, and for the day of judgment." [V. 24; VII. 4; Peter, ch. 13 (R. 21)]

43. And Moses asked: "What have these committed?" And he answered: "These have wasted the money of others; they have taken bribery, and elevated themselves above others; they have put their neighbours publicly to shame; they have delivered up their brother Israelite to the gentile; [Peter, ch. 12 (H. 27)] they denied the oral Law and maintained that God did not create the world. Therefore God has handed them over to the scorpions to be avenged on them." [Paul, ch. 42; cf. Virg. Mary]

44. He saw there another place where the sinners stood up to their knees; the name of that place is Tit hayaven ("miry clay," Ps. xl. 3). Angels of destruction tie them up with chains of iron and lash them with fiery whips, and they take fiery stones and break with them the teeth of the sinners, from morning until evening, and during the night they prolong their teeth again to the length of a parasang in order to break them anew next morning; [as it is said: "Thou hast broken the teeth of the wicked" (Ps. iii. 8)]. And the sinners cry: "Woe unto us, woe unto us!" but nobody takes pity on them. [Cf. Talmud, Tr. Berachoth, f. 54b]

45. Moses asked the master of Hell: "What have these committed?" He answered: "They ate all kinds of forbidden fruit and gave them to Israelites to eat; they were usurers, and apostates and blasphemers; they wrote the ineffable name of God for Gentiles; [Probably on amulets] they had false weights; they stole money, and ate on the fast day of Kippur [for whosoever eats blood, or reptiles, or worms, and does not keep away from them is punished by being cut off], these are for ever punished in Hell, and therefore God hath delivered them to the angels of destruction to chastise them. [Cf. Paul, 36; Macarius, 40]

46. [He saw there further how they punish the wicked with fire and snow; and torture them terribly.] The Lord of Hell said then to Moses: "Come and see how the wicked are punished in Hell with fire." Moses answered: "I dread to go." But the Lord of Hell answered: "Go and dread naught," [as it is said: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil" (Ps. xxiii. 4)].

47. And Moses stood up to go, and he saw the Shekina moving before him, so that he should not be in dread of the angels of destruction. Each of these is full of eyes, and hath fiery chains in his hands, and his length is 500 years' journey.



48. Moses went and saw how the wicked were punished by fire, being half in fire and half in snow, with worms crawling up and down their bodies and a fiery collar round their necks, and having no rest, [V. Bahya, comment. to Pentateuch, Venice, 1544, f. 181b] except on Sabbath days and Festival days. [Paul, ch. 44; cf. Pesikta rabbati, ed. Friedman, ch. 23, f. 112a] All (the other) days they are tortured in Hell. Of these speaks the verse: "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me, for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched" (Isaiah cxvi. 28 {sic lxvi. 24}).

49. And Moses asked the angel of Hell: "What have these committed?" And the angel answered: "This is the punishment for those who have committed adultery, sodomy, idolatry, and murder, and who have cursed their parents. Therefore hath God delivered them to the angels of destruction to be avenged on them." [Peter, ch. 9 (H. 24); cf. Macarius, 22, 27, 39, V. Mary] And Moses asked: "What is the name of this place?" And he answered: "The name of it is Abadon."

50. Thereupon Moses went up (to heaven) and said: "May it be Thy will, O Lord, my God, and God of my fathers, that Thou mayest save me and Thy people Israel from those places which I have seen in Hell."

51. God said to Moses: "Moses, my servant? I have created two parks: Paradise and Hell. Whosoever committeth evil deeds goeth down to Hell, and whosoever doth good deeds cometh into Paradise" [as it is said: "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer. xvii. 10)].

52. Then Moses lifted up his eyes and beheld the angel Gabriel; and he fell down and bowed himself before him. And the angel said: "Hast thou seen Hell?" He answered: "Yea." And the angel said: "Come then, I will show thee Paradise, by the will of God." So Moses went with him to Paradise.

53. When they came there, the angels said: "Thy time is not yet arrived to leave the world." Moses answered: "I came to see the mighty deeds of God, and the reward of the pious in Paradise, what is their condition there."

54. The angels began then to praise Moses and they said: "Hail, O Moses, servant of the Lord; Hail, O Moses, born of woman, who hast been found worthy to ascend seven heavens, hail the nation to whom such belongs." [{Hebrew: AKhKhS} such in arithmetical calculation is equal to {Hebrew: ASM}.]

55. When Moses went into Paradise he saw an angel sitting under the tree of life. Moses asked the angel Gabriel: "Who is this angel?" He answered: "This is the Lord (guardian) of Paradise and his name is X."

56. This angel then asked Moses: "Who art thou?" He answered: "I am the son of Amram." He said to him: "Why didst thou come hither?" And Moses answered: "To see the reward of the pious in Paradise have I come hither."

57. The angel took Moses by the hand, and they went both together. Moses looked up and saw seventy thrones fixed, one next to another; all made of precious stones, of emerald, sapphire and diamond and precious pearls, and the foot of each was of gold and fine gold. Around each throne stood seventy angels. Amongst the thrones was one greater than the others, and twenty of the ministering angels kept ward thereover.

58. Moses enquired of the angel and said: "Whose is that throne?" He answered: "It is the throne of Abraham the Patriarch."

59. Thereupon Moses went immediately up to Abraham. Abraham asked him: "Who art thou?" He answered: "I am the son of Amram." And Abraham asked: "Is perchance already thy time come to leave the world?"

Moses answered: "My time is not yet come, but with the permission of God I came to see the reward of the pious." [Cf. Ascensio Isaiae, viii. 27, 28] Abraham then said: "Praise ye the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever" (Ps. cvi. 1).

60. Then went Moses to the throne of Isaac, and he spake with him in a similar manner, and Moses answered in like wise.

61. Then asked Moses, the guardian angel of Paradise: "What is the length and width of Paradise?" The angel answered: "There is none who could measure it; no angel or Seraph can ever know the length and width of Paradise, for it is unlimited and boundless and immeasurable. The angels guard only the thrones and these are unlike to one another, for some of them are of silver, others of gold, others of bdellium, others of ruby, topaz, and carbuncle, others of emerald, sapphire and diamond, others of precious stones and pearls, others of rubies and carbuncles."

62. Moses asked the angel: "For whom is the throne of pearls?" He answered: "It is for the scholars who study the Law day and night for the sake of heaven." "And those of precious stones?" "For the pious men." "And those of rubies?" "For the just." "And those of gold?" "For the men who repent;" "but the greatest throne is for thy forefather Abraham, the other thrones are for Isaac and Jacob, and for the prophets and righteous, and the holy and wise pious men, each after his worth and position and the good works he hath performed in the world."

63. Moses then said to the angel: "For whom is that throne of copper?" He answered: "For the wicked man, whose son is pious; because through the merits of his son he obtains a portion of heavenly bliss; as thou seest in the case of Terah, who had worshipped all the idols in the world, but who through the merits of his son Abraham obtained that throne of copper as it is said: "Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace" (Gen. xv. 15), thus announcing to him (Abraham) that God would give (his father also) a place in Paradise."

64. Afterwards Moses looked and beheld a spring of living water welling forth from underneath the tree of life and dividing itself into four streams, [and it comes from under the throne of glory] and they encompass the Paradise from one end to the other. And under each throne there flow four rivers, one of honey, the second of milk, the third of wine, and the fourth of pure balsam. [Paul, ch. 23] These all pass beneath the feet of the just, who are seated upon thrones.

65. It is said in the Zohar. King Messias said to R. Simeon, son of Johai: "Worthy art thou of thy portion in heaven, for thy teaching is divided (spread) through 670 heavens, each heaven is divided into 670 lights, each light is divided in 670 arguments, each argument is divided in (among) 670 worlds, each world is divided in 670 streams of pure balsam.

66. And all these streams flow round Paradise and beneath all the thrones. All these were created by God for the just, and whoso becometh equal to them in merit, sees and enjoys, as they enjoy, the splendour of the Shekina.

67. When Moses saw all these godly and pleasant things he felt great joy, and exclaimed: "Oh! how great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee, which Thou hast wrought for them that put their trust in Thee, before the sons of men" (Ps. xxxi. 19 {sic xxxi. 20}).

68. And Moses retired from there and went away. At that same moment a voice from Heaven (Bath-Kol) was heard saying: "Moses, servant of the Lord, faithful in His house; even as thou hast seen the reward which is preserved for the just in the future world, so also in the days to come shalt thou see the rebuilding of the Temple and the advent of the Messiah, and behold the beauty of the Lord, and meditate in His Temple" (Ps. xxvii. 4). (May it now be Thy will, O Lord, my God and the God of my fathers, that I and the whole nation of

Israel may be deemed worthy of sharing in good and the great consolation, and the days of the Messiah, and the rebuilding of the Temple, and the everlasting life. Amen.)

## **II. The Revelation Of Moses. (B.)**

### **Heaven.**

[Ziyuni, fol. 93 c-d, cf. Yalkut Reubeni, fol. 100d-101a; Jellinek, Beth-hammidrash, I. 58-64; Pesikta Rabbati, ed. Friedmann, sec. 20, fol. 96a-98b; MS. Oxford, No. 1466, 14 (Cat. Neubauer)].

1. Moses, our teacher, upon whom may rest peace, said to Israel: "Hear, O Israel, you the whole nation! I went up on high, and I saw all the Heavenly rulers. I saw the angel Kemuel, the Janitor, who is placed over 12,000 angels of destruction, and who stands at the gates of heaven.

2. I saw further the angel Hadarniel, who is higher by 60 myriads of parasangs than Kemuel, and with every diction that comes out of his mouth go forth 12,000 flashes of lightning.

3. I saw further Sandalfon, the prince, greater than Hadarniel by 500 years' journey. Of him said Ezekiel: "One wheel upon the earth besides the living Creatures, for each of the four faces thereof" (Ezek. i. 15).

4. This is the Sandalfon who weaves crowns for his master. When this crown appears before the heavenly hosts, they all shake and tremble and the holy Creatures are struck dumb, and the holy Seraphim roar like lions, and they say: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory" (Is. vi. 2). And when the crown approaches the throne the wheels of the throne of glory move, and the thresholds of brilliancy quake, and all the heavens are seized with terror. And when the crown passes on to the throne of glory to its right place all the heavenly hosts open their mouths, turn to the Seraphim and say: "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place." They say: "From his place" (Ezek. iii. 12), because they do not know His actual place. When the crown comes near to God's head He accepts it graciously from His servants. And the heavenly Creatures and the Seraphim, and the wheels of the throne of glory, and the heavenly hosts, and the Hashmalim and Cherubim praise the Creator, acknowledge him as their king, and exclaim unanimously: "The Lord reigneth, the Lord reigned, the Lord will reign for evermore." [Talmud B., Hagigah, f. 13b; Longfellow, Sandalfon

5. I saw further the fiery river Rigyon, which comes out before God, from under the throne of glory, and is formed from the perspiration of the holy Creatures who support the throne of glory; and out of dread of God's majesty perspire fire. [Cf. Pirke de R. Eliezer, ch. 4] This river is meant by the saying "a fiery stream issued and came forth before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set and the books were opened" (Dan. vii. 10). For the Almighty sits and judges the ministering angels, and after the judgment they bathe in that river of fire and are renewed. Afterwards the river flows on and carries with it fiery coals, and falls on the heads of the sinners in Hell, as it is said: "Behold the tempest of the Lord, even His fury is gone forth, yea, a whirling tempest; it shall burst on the head of the wicked" (Jer. xxiii. 19). [V. 23; cf. Peter, 8 (H. 23); Paul, 32; V. Mary]

6. I saw further the angel Galitzur, surnamed also Raziel, who stands behind the curtain and listens to all that is decreed in heaven and proclaims it. This proclamation is then handed over to the prophet Elijah and he proclaims it to the world from the Mount Horeb.

7. The wings of Galitzur are spread and keep off the breath of the holy Creatures, for otherwise all the ministering angels would be burned by the breath of the holy Creatures.

8. I saw further Michael, the great prince, standing at the right side of the throne, and Gabriel at the left; and Iefefiyah, the guardian of the law, standing before it; and Metatron, the angel of the presence, standing at the door of the palace of God. And he sits and judges all the heavenly hosts before his master. And God pronounces judgment and he executes it.

9. I saw then a troop of the terrible angels who surround the throne of glory, they were more powerful and mightier than all the other angels. All these whom I saw wished to scorch me with the breath of their mouths, but out of dread of the presence of the Almighty, the king of kings, they had no power to injure me, for they all were full of fear and agony and dread before Him.

### **III. The Revelation Of R. Joshua Ben Levi. (A.) (250 C.E.)**

#### **Paradise, Hell.**

(Orhot Hayim II. Cod. 52, Montefiore College, f. 281b-282b; Cod. 28, Jews' College, London, f. 145b-147a; Jellinek, Beth-hamidrash, II. 48-51; with Agadath Bereshit, Warsaw, 1867, fol. 51a-b; Kolbo, § 120; Zunz, Gottesdienstl. Vortraege, p. 141, No. e.)

1. R. Joshua, son of Levi, was a pious man. When the time approached that he should leave this world, the Lord said to the angel of death, "Go and fulfil whatever his wish may be." He went to him and said unto him: "The time is nigh when thou shalt leave this world, but now tell me what thou wishest, that I may fulfil it." [Cf. Test. Abraham, ch. 9]

2. As soon as R. Joshua heard this, he said: "I pray thee, show me my place in Paradise." He answered and said: "Come and I will show thee it." R. Joshua answered and said, "Give me thy sword, so that thou shouldst not frighten me." And he gave him his sword. So they went together till they reached the wall of Paradise. There being outside the wall, the angel of death lifted R. Joshua from the ground and placed him upon the crest of the wall, and said unto him: "Behold thy place in Paradise."

3. At that moment R. Joshua jumped down from the wall and fell into Paradise. The angel of death caught him by his mantle and said to him, "Get thee out thence." But R. Joshua swore by the name of God that he would not do so. The angel of death had no power to enter therein. The ministering angels seeing this, said to the Almighty: "Lord of the Universe, behold what R. Joshua hath done! By force hath he taken possession of his portion in Paradise." God answered: "Go and see if he has ever broken his oath, then shall this oath of his be likewise void and null." They searched and could not find any such case. So they came and said: "He hath never broken his oaths in his lifetime." And God answered: "If it be so, let him remain there."

4. When the angel of death saw this, he said to R. Joshua: "Give me now my sword back." But R. Joshua did not fulfil his request till a voice came forth and said: "Give him the knife, for it is of necessity for His creatures."

5. R. Joshua then said to him: "Swear unto me that thou wilt not show it any more to the creatures at the moment when thou takest their souls." [For up to that time the angel of death used to kill men openly, as one slaughters animals, and he showed it even to the suckling in the bosom of their mother.] At that hour he swore unto him, and R. Joshua returned the knife to him.

6. After that began the prophet Elijah to proclaim and to cry out aloud to the just: "Clear the way for the son of Levi."

7. [He went and saw R. Joshua sitting in the compartment of the just, and he asked him: "Art thou the son of Levi?" And he answered: "Yes." He asked again: "Hast thou seen a rainbow in thy lifetime?" Again R. Joshua answered: "Yes." And he replied: "Then if this is so, thou art not the son of Levi."--In fact it had not been the case. Now as Joshua had not seen a rainbow, but he did not wish to boast of it and to ascribe it to his own merits. He had asked him about the rainbow, for it is the sign of the covenant between God and the world; and when the rainbow appears then God (remembers) and pitieth his creatures; but when there liveth a just man, there is no longer any necessity for a rainbow, as through his merits the world is saved. As it is

said: "And the just is the foundation of the world" (Prov. x. 25). Therefore did he ask him about the rainbow.]

8. The angel of death went to R. Gamaliel and told him: "So and so hath R. Joshua done unto me." R. G. answered and said: "He served thee right. But now please go and tell him I request him to search through heaven and hell their mysteries and to write them down and send it to me [also if there are idolators in hell]."

9. The angel went, and R. Joshua answered: "I will do so."

10. Thereupon R. Joshua went and searched through Paradise and he found therein seven compartments, [Cf. Midrash Kônen in Arze Lebanon, Venice, 1601, f. 3a-b; Yalkut Reubeni, Amsterdam, 1700, f. 13d-14a] each of twelve myriads of miles in width, and twelve myriads of miles in length; the measure of their width being the same as that of their length.

11. The first compartment corresponds to the first door of Paradise. Here dwell the proselytes who had embraced Judaism of their own free will, not from compulsion. The walls are of glass and the wainscoting of cedar. As I tried to measure it the inhabitants rose to prevent me from doing it. Obadiah the just, who presides over them, rebuked them and said: "What are your merits that this man should dwell here with you?" (for they wished to retain him there). Thereupon they allowed him to measure it.

12. The second compartment corresponds to the facing of the door of Paradise. It is built of silver and the wainscoting thereof of cedar. Here dwell those who repent, and Manasseh, son of Ezekiah, presides over them.

13. The third compartment, facing the third door, is built of silver and gold. Here dwell Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the Israelites who came out of Egypt, and the whole generation who had lived in the desert, and all the kings (princes), with the exception of Absalom. There is also David, and Solomon, and Kilab, son of David, still alive, and all the kings of the house of Judah, with the exception of Manasseh, who presides over those who repent. Over these here preside Moses and Aaron. Here are the precious vessels of silver and gold, and jewels, and canopies, and beds, and thrones, and lamps of gold, and precious stones and pearls. And I asked: "For whom are all these prepared?" And David answered and said: "They are for those who still dwell in the world whence thou comest." And I asked: "Is here perhaps one also from the Gentiles, at least from my brother Esau?" And he answered and said: "No; because the Almighty gives the reward of every good deed they do in their lifetime in that world, but after death they go down to Hell; whilst the sinners in Israel get their punishment in their lifetime in that world, but after death they obtain the merit of their good deed here." As it is said: "And he payeth." [Cf. Othioth de R. Akiba (Jellinek l.c. p. 23)]

14. The fourth compartment, facing the fourth door of Paradise, is beautifully built, like to the first compartment, but its wainscoting is of olive-wood. Here dwell the perfect, and faithful, and just men. Why is the wainscoting of olive-wood? Because their life has been bitter to them as olives.

15. The fifth compartment is of silver, and gold, and refined gold, and of crystal, and bdellium; and through its midst flows the river Gihon. The walls are of silver and gold, and a perfume breathes through it more exquisite than the perfume of Lebanon. And beds of silver and gold are there prepared, covered with violet and purple covers, woven by Eve, and mixed with scarlet and made of hair of goats, woven by angels. Here dwell the Messiah and Elijah in a palanquin of the wood of Lebanon; the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the seat of it of purple. Herein lieth the Messiah, the son of David, who is the love of the daughters of Jerusalem, the midst thereof is love. The prophet Elijah takes the head of the Messiah and places it in his bosom and says to him: "Be quiet and wait, for the end draweth nigh." On every Monday and Thursday and Saturday and Holiday the Patriarchs come to him and the fathers of the Tribes and Moses and Aaron and David and Solomon and every king of Israel and of the house of Judah, and they weep with him and comfort him, and say unto him: "Be quiet and wait and rely upon thy Creator, for the end draweth nigh."

Also Korah and his company and Dathan and Abiram and Absalom come to him on every Wednesday, and ask him: "When will the end of our misery come? When wilt thou reveal thyself?"

16. He answereth them and says: "Go to your fathers and ask them." And when they hear of their fathers they feel ashamed and do not ask any further.

17. When I came to the Messiah he asked me: "What is Israel doing in the world from which thou comest?" And I answered and said: "Every day they await Thee." He immediately raised His voice and wept.

18. In the sixth compartment dwell those who died through performing a pious act.

19. In the seventh compartment dwell those who died from illnesses caused through the sins of Israel.

20. R. Joshua, son of Levi, tells further: "I asked the Messiah to allow me to look into Hell, but he did not allow me, as the righteous should never behold Hell." So I sent to the angel called Komm that he might describe Hell for me. But it was impossible, for at that moment R. Ismael, the high priest, and R. Simeon, son of Gamaliel, and ten just men were killed, and the news reached us, so I could not go with the angel. I went afterwards with the angel Kipod and the light went with me up to the gates of Hell, and the Messiah came with me, and they were open. The sinners who were there saw the light of the Messiah, and rejoiced, and said to one another: "This will bring us out from here." [Ev. Nicodem]

21. I saw compartments of ten miles length and of five width, full of pits of fire, and these consume the sinners, and after their destruction they are again made whole and fall again into the fire. In that compartment are ten nations from the Gentiles, and Absalom presides over them. These nations say one to another: "Our sin is that we have not accepted the Law; but what is your sin?" And the other answers: "That is also our sin, we are like you." They say then to Absalom: "Why art thou punished, seeing that thou as well as thy parents hast accepted the Law?" And he answers them and says: "Because I did not hearken to the commandments of my father." Angels stand close by and with their staves drive them back into the fire and burn them. Then they hurry to Absalom to beat him also, and to burn him; but a voice calls out to them: "Do not beat him and do not burn him, for he is from the seed of Israel, who said 'We will do and hearken,' and he is the son of my servant David." So they leave him upon his seat and honour him with the honour of a king. They bring out afterwards the sinners from the fire just as if they had not been burnt and the fire had never touched them; and they burn them again. This they repeat seven times, three times at day and four times at night. Absalom alone is saved because he is the son of David.

22. After having seen this I returned to Paradise, wrote description of Hell and sent it to R. Gamaliel and the ten elders of the Jews, and I told them all what I had seen in Paradise and Hell.

#### **IV. The Revelation Of R. Joshua Ben Levi. (B.) (250 C.E.?)**

##### **Paradise.**

(Jellinek, Beth-hamidrash II. p. 52-53; Yalkut I. § 20, f. 7a; Elia ha-Cohen: Shebet Mussar, Constantinople, 720, ch. 25, f. 80-81a.)

1. R. Joshua, son of Levi, tells: "Paradise has two gates of carbuncle, and sixty myriads of ministering angels keep watch over them. Each of these angels shine with the lustre of the heavens. When the just man approaches them they divest him of the clothes in which he had been buried and clothe him with eight clothes, woven out of clouds of glory, and place upon his head two crowns, one of precious stones and pearls and the other of gold, [Cf. Ascensio Isaiae, viii. 14, ix. 9, 24] and they place eight myrtles in his hand and praise him and say to him: "Go and eat thy bread with joy." And they lead him to a place full of rivers (waters) surrounded by roses and myrtles. Each one has a canopy according to his merits, as it is said: "For over all the glory shall be spread a canopy" (Is. iv. 5).

2. And through it flow four rivers, one of oil, the other of balsam, the third of wine, and the fourth of honey. Every canopy is overgrown by a vine of gold, and thirty pearls hang down from it, each of them shining like the morning star. In every canopy there is a table of precious stones and pearls, and sixty angels stand at the head of every just man, saying unto him: "Go and eat with joy of the honey, for thou hast worked assiduously in the Law," of which it is said: "And it is sweeter than honey," and drink of the wine preserved from the six days of Creation, for thou hast worked in the Law which is compared with the wine," as it is said: "I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine" (Song viii. 2). The least fair of them is beautiful as Joseph and Johanan and the grains of the pomegranate upon which fall the rays of the sun. There is no night, as it is said: "And the light of the righteous is as the shining light" (Prov. iv. 18).

3. And they undergo three transformations passing through three wards. In the first ward the just is changed into a child, and he enters the compartment of children and tastes the joys of childhood. In the second ward he is changed into a youth, there he enjoys the delights of youth. In the third ward he is changed into an old man, he enters the compartment of the old and enjoys the pleasures of mature age. [Paul, ch. 22, 23, 45; Peter, ch. 5 (H. 19-20)]

4. In Paradise there are eighty myriads of trees in every corner; the meanest among them choicer than a garden of spices. In every corner there are sixty myriads of angels singing with sweet voices, and the tree of life stands in the middle and over-shadoweth the whole Paradise; and it has 500 tastes, each different from the others, and the perfumes thereof vary likewise. [Peter, ch. 5 (H. 15-16)] Over it hang seven clouds of glory, and the winds blow from all the four corners and waft its many odours from one end of the world to the other. Underneath sit the scholars and explain the Law. These have each two canopies, one of stars and the other of sun and moon, and clouds of glory separate one from the other.

5. Within this is the Eden containing 310 worlds, as it is said: "That I may cause those that love me to inherit Substance" (Prov. viii. 21) [the numerical value of the Hebrew word for Substance is equivalent to 310]. [Cf. Yalkut Reubeni, f. 14a-b]

6. Here are the seven compartments of the just. In the first are the martyrs, as, for instance, R. Akiba and his companions. In the second, those who were drowned. In the third, R. Johanan and his disciples. [In what consisted his great merit? He said: "If all the skies were skins and all men scribes and all the forests pens, these scribes would not be able to write down all that I have learned from my teachers, and still am I no more than a dog liking the sea."] The fourth group is of those who were covered by the cloud of glory. The fifth group is that of the penitents [for the place occupied by a penitent not even a perfectly just man can occupy]. The sixth group is that of children who have not yet tasted sin in their lives. [Cf. Paul, ch. 26] The seventh group is that of the poor, who, notwithstanding that, studied the Law and the Talmud, and had acquired moral life. Of these speaks the verse: "For all that put their trust in Thee rejoice, and they shout for ever for joy" (Ps. v. 11 {sic v. 12}). And God Almighty sitteth in their midst, and expounds to them the Law, as it is said: "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me" (Ps. xci. 6 {sic xci. 6}). And God hath not yet fully unveiled the glory which awaiteth them in the world to come, as it is said: "The eye hath not seen, O God, beside Thee, that which Thou workest for him that waiteth for Him" (Isaiah lxiv. 4 {sic lxiv. 3b}). Amen.

## V.

### Hell.

(Orhot Hayim, Vol. II. Cod. 52, Montefiore College, Ramsgate, f. 279a-b (= §§ 1-18). Elia de Vidas: Reshit Hochma, Constantinople, 1736, f. 40 a-b (= §§ 1-9, 19-21); cf. *ibid.* f. 40b, 41a. Jellinek, Beth-hamidrasch V. 50-51 (= §§ 10-18).)

1. R. Johanan began his homily with the verse "Passing through the valley of weeping they make it a valley of springs." This means to say that the sinner confesses, just as the leprous confesses, and he says: "I have

committed such and such a transgression in that place, on that day, in the presence of so-and-so, in that society."

2. Hell has three gates: one at the sea, the other in the wilderness, and the third in the inhabited part of the world. That at the sea is alluded to in Jonah (ii. 3): "Out of the belly of Sheol cried I, and thou heardest my voice." That of the wilderness is alluded to (Numbers xvi. 33). "So they and all that appertained to them, went down alive unto Sheol." And that in the inhabited portion of the world (Isaiah xxxi. 9) "Saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion and his furnace in Jerusalem."

3. Nine different kind of fires are in Hell, one devours and absorbs, another absorbs and does not devour, while another again neither devours nor absorbs. There is further fire devouring fire. There are coals big as mountains and coals big as hills, and coals huge like unto the Dead Sea and coals like huge stones.

4. There are rivers of pitch and sulphur flowing and fuming and seething.

5. The punishment of the sinner is thus: The angels of destruction throw him to the flame of hell; this opens its mouth wide and swallows him [as it is said: "Therefore Sheol hath enlarged her desire and opened her mouth without measure and their glory and their multitude and their pomp and he that rejoices among them descends into it" (Isaiah v. 14.)] This all happens to him who has not done one single pious act which would make the balance incline towards mercy; whilst that man who possesses many virtues and good actions and learning and who has suffered much he is saved from hell [as it is said: "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff shall comfort me" (Ps. xxiii. 4). "Thy rod" means the suffering and "thy staff" means the law [Cf. Test. Abraham, ch. 12-14]].

6. R. Johanan began: "The eyes of the wicked shall fail and refuge is perished from them and their hope shall be the giving up of the ghost" (Job ii. 20 {sic xi. 20}). That means: a body which is never destroyed and whose soul enters a fire which is never extinguished; of these speaks the verse: "For their worm shall not die neither shall their fire be quenched" (Isaiah lxvi. 24).

7. R. Joshua, son of Levi, said: Once upon a time I was walking on my way when I met the prophet Elijah. He said to me: "Would you like to be brought to the gate of hell?" I answered: "Yes!" So he showed me men hanging by their hair; and he said to him, these were they that let their hair grow to adorn themselves for sin. Others were hanging by their eyes; these were they that followed their eyes to sin, and did not place God before their face. Others were hanging by their noses; these were they that perfumed themselves to sin. Others were hanging by their tongues; these were they that had slandered. Others were hanging by their hands; these were they that had stolen and robbed. Others were hanging by their sexual organs; these were they that had committed adultery. Others were hanging by their feet; these were they that had run to sin. He showed me women hanging by their breasts; these were they that uncovered their breasts before men, to make them sin. He showed me further men that were fed on fiery coals; these were they that blasphemed. Others were forced to eat bitter gall; these were they that ate on fast-days. He showed me further men eating fine sand, they are forced to eat it and their teeth are broken; and the Almighty says to them: "O ye sinners! when you used to eat that which you stole and robbed it was sweet in your mouth now you are not able to eat even this." [As it is said: "Thou hast broken the teeth of the wicked" (Ps. iii. 8).] And he showed me men wallowing in the mire and worms were set upon them; these are they of whom it is said: "For their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh" (Is. lxvi. 24). He showed me further men who are thrown from fire to snow and from snow to fire; these were they that abused the poor who came to them for assistance; therefore are they thus punished [as it is said: "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water" (Ps. lxvi. 12)]. He showed me others who were driven from mountain to mountain, as a shepherd leads the flock from one mountain to another. [Of these speaks the verse: "They are appointed as a flock for Sheol. Death shall be their shepherd and the upright shall have the dominion over them in the morning, and their form shall be for Sheol to consume that there be no habitation for it" (Ps. xlix. 15).] [I. 34-49]



8. R. Johanan said: "For every sin there is an angel appointed to obtain the expiation thereof; one comes first and obtains his expiation, then follows another and so on until all the sins are expiated, as with a debtor who has many creditors and they come before the king and claim their debts, and the king delivers him to them and says: "Take him and divide him between yourself." So also is the soul delivered in hell to cruel angels, and they divide it among themselves.

9. Three descend to hell for ever and do not ascend any more--the man who commits adultery, who blames his neighbour in public, and who is guilty of perjury. Others say: "Those who honour themselves by slandering their neighbours, those who make intrigues between man and wife in order to create disputes among them."

10. Seven descend to Hell: the judge, the butcher, the scribe, the physician, the barber and the teacher of very young children. These, if they have fulfilled their mission conscientiously for the sake of heaven, ascend afterwards again. Three, however, descend never to ascend: the man who blames his neighbour in public, the man who slanders his neighbour, and the man who commits adultery.

11. Hell has seven names: Sheol, Abaddon, Beer Shaon, Beer Shahat, Hatzar Maveth, Beer Tahtiyah, and Tit Hayaven. [VII. 2] The length of Sheol is a three years' journey, and so are its width and height. Similarly are the others also. Hell is thus a 2100 years' journey. If a man deserves punishment he is handed over to the angels of destruction. These seize him and lead him to the court of death, darkness and gloom, [as it is said: "Let their way be dark and slippery" (Ps. xxxv. 6)]. But this is not all, for they thrust him into Hell, [as it is said: "And the angel of the Lord pursuing them" (Ps. xxxv. 6)].

12. When a man dies and is carried along upon his bier ministering angels walk before him and people walk behind the bier following him. If they say: "Happy the man, for he was good and praiseworthy in his lifetime;" the angels say unto him: "Write it down," and he writes it down. [Cf. Macarius, 10-11] And this is not all, but two angels watch over the man at the moment of his death, and they know whether he has stolen or robbed during his lifetime; for even the stones and the beams of his house witness against him; [as it is said: "For the stones shall cry out of the wall and the beam out of the timber shall answer it" (Habak. ii. 11)]. [Macarius, 12-16]

13. When a man dies he is brought before Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They say unto him: "My son! what hast thou done in that world from which thou comest?" When he answereth: "I have bought fields and vineyards; and I have tilled them all my life." They answer: "O fool, that thou hast been! Hast thou not learned the words of King David, who said: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" (Ps. xxiv. 1)." Angels then take him away and bring another man before them, and they ask him in likewise. If he answereth: "I gathered gold and silver," they retort: "Fool that thou art! Hast thou not read in the books of the prophets: "The silver is mine and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts" (Haggai ii. 8).

14. When scholars are brought before them, they say: "My son! What hast thou done in the world from which thou comest?" He answers: "I have devoted my life to the study of the law." And the patriarchs answer: "He entereth into peace; they rest in their beds, each one that walketh in his uprightness" (Is. lvii. 2). And the Almighty receives them with grace.

15. There are five kinds of punishment in Hell, and Isaiah saw them all. He entered the first compartment and saw there two men carrying pails full of water on their shoulders, and they pour that water into a pit which, however, never fills. Isaiah said to God: "O thou who unveilest all that is hidden, unveil to me the secret of this!" And the Spirit of the Lord answered: "These are the men who coveted the property of their neighbours, and thus is their punishment." [Cf I. 36]

16. He entered the second compartment and he saw two men hanging by their tongues, and he said: "O thou, who unveilest the hidden, reveal to me the secret of this!" He answered: "These are the men who slandered, therefore they are thus punished!" [I. 38, 41]

17. He entered the third compartment and he saw there men hanging by the sexual organs. He said: "O thou who unveilest the hidden, reveal to me the secret of this!" And He answered: "These are the men who neglected their own wives and committed adultery with the daughters of Israel! [I. 36. 2. I. 38. 3. I. 48]

18. He entered the fourth compartment and saw there women hanging by their breasts, and he said: "O thou who unveilest the hidden, reveal to me the secret of these!" And He answered: "These are the women who uncover their hair and rend their veil, and sit in the open market place to suckle their children in order to attract the gaze of men and to make them sin; therefore they are punished thus!"

19. He entered the fifth compartment and found it full of smoke. There were all the princes, chiefs, and great men, and Pharaoh, the wicked, presides over them and watches at the gate of hell, and he saith unto them: "Why did you not learn from me when I was in Egypt?" So he sits there still and watches at the gates of hell.

20. On the eve of the Sabbath the sinners are led to two mountains of snow, where they are left until the end of the Sabbath, when they are taken back from there and brought again to their former places. An angel comes and thrusts them back to their former place in hell.[3] Some of them take, however, snow and hide it in their secret parts to cool them during the six days of the week, but the Almighty says unto them: "Woe unto you who steal even in hell!" [As it is said: "Draught and heat consume the snow waters, in Sheol they sin." {Job xxiv. 19} That means to say: "They sin even in Sheol."]

21. Every twelvemonth the sinners are burned to ashes and the wind disperses them and carries those ashes under the feet of the just [as it is said: "And ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the sole of your feet" (Malachi iii. 29 {sic iii. 21})].

22. Afterwards the soul is returned to them and they come out black as the blackness of a pot, and they acknowledge the justice of their punishment and say: "Thou hast rightly sentenced us and rightly judged us. With Thee is righteousness and with us shame, as it is with us to-day." [Paul, i. 8]

23. The other nations, however, and the idolators are punished in the seven compartments of hell, in each compartment for a twelvemonth. And the river Dinor floweth from beneath the throne of glory and falleth over the heads of the sinners, and it floweth from one end of the world to the other.[Cf. II. 5. Test. of Isaac, James and Barnes, Test. of Abraham, p. 147]

24. There are seven compartments in hell, and in each of them are 6000 rooms, in each room 6000 windows, in each window (recess) there are 6000 vessels filled with venom, all destined for slanderous writers and iniquitous judges. [It is to that, that Solomon alludes when he says: "And thou mourn at thy latter end when thy flesh and thy body are consumed" (Prov. v. 2 {sic v. 11}).] [I. 42, VII. 4] None of these will be saved unless they acquire learning and pious deeds. But at the end the Almighty will have pity on all his creatures, as it is said: "For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth, for the spirit shall pass before Me and the souls which I have made" (Is. lvii. 16).

## **VI. Hell.**

(Nachmanides, Shaar ha-gemul, Ed. Warsaw, 1878, p. 10 (= §§ 2-7); cf. Orhot Hayim, II. f. 282b-283a; Midrash Kônen, l.c. f. 4a).

1. R. Joshua, son of Levi, says: "When I measured the first compartment of Hell, I found it to be 100 miles long and 60 miles wide. Therein are pits with lions; all fall into those pits and are devoured by the lions, and

the bones are thrown into burning fire.[ Cf. Test. of Isaac; James and Barnes, Test of Abraham, p. 147] I entered the second compartment and found it of the same size as the first. [Here follows in the text of Orhot Hayim, III. 21]

2. In the second compartment, in the second division, there are ten nations, and their punishment is like unto that of the first compartment. Doeg presides over them and the angel who punishes them is Lahatiel; but Doeg is freed from chastisement because he is a descendant from those who said: "We will do and hearken" (Israel).

3. In the third compartment there are other ten nations, their punishment is the same. The angel who punishes them is Shaftiel. Korah who presides over them and his companions are free from punishment, for they also said: "We will do and hearken."

4. In the fourth compartment the punishment is the same. There are also ten nations and Jeroboam presides over them. The angel who punishes them is Maktiel (Matniel). Jeroboam, however, has immunity for he himself had studied the Law, and he cometh from those who had said: "We will do and hearken."

5. In the fifth compartment the punishment is the same. Ahab presides over them. The angel who punishes them is Hutriel (Oniel). Ahab has immunity because he is one of the children of Israel who said on Mount Sinai: "We will do and hearken."

6. In the sixth compartment the punishment is the same. Micha presides over them. The angel who punishes them is Pusiell (Hadriel). Micha is free from chastisement for he is from those who said on Mount Sinai: "We will do and hearken."

7. In the seventh compartment the punishment is the same. Elisha ben Abuya presides over them. The angel who punishes them is Dalkiel (Rugziel). Elisha, however, has immunity for he is a descendant from those who said on Mount Sinai: "We will do and hearken." This is the punishment of the tens of thousand who are in each compartment, and they do not see each other, for it is dark, and this darkness is that deep darkness which existed before the world was created. [Peter, ch. 6 (H. 21); Macarius, 19; Virg. Mary.]

## **VII. Hell.**

(Baraita de Massechet Gehinom: in Hesed le-Abraham of Abr. Azulai in: Yalkut-ha-roim, Warsaw, 1858, f. 85, sqq. Cf. Midrash Kônen, l.c. f. 3b-4a. Shebet Mussar, ch. 26, f. 84a.)

1. We read in the Baraita of the Creation: "Beneath the earth is the (abyss) Tehom under Tehom is Bohu, under Bohu is Yam, under Yam is Mayim, under Mayim is Arka, and there is, Sheol, Abadon, Beer Shahat, Tit-hayaven, Shaare Mavet, Shaare Tzalmavet, and Gehinom. Here are the sinners and the angels of destruction presiding over them. There is darkness thick as the wall of a city, and there the heavy and bitter punishments of the sinners are enacted, as it is said: 'The wicked shall be put to silence in darkness' (1 Sam. ii. 9)."

2. The uppermost compartment is Sheol. The height thereof is 300 years' journey; the width 300 years' journey; and its length 300 years' journey. The second compartment is Beer Shahat, of the same height, width, and length. The third is Tit-Hayaven of equal size. The fourth is Shaare Mavet of the same size. The fifth Abadon of the same size. The sixth Shaare Tzalmavet of the same size. The seventh Gehinom of the same size. That makes altogether the length of hell 6300 years' journey." [V. 11.]

We read further: the fire of Gehinom is one-sixtieth of the fire of Shaare Tzalmavet, and so of every consecutive compartment till the fire of Sheol, and in Sheol is half fire and half hail (ice), and the sinners therein when they come out from the fire are tortured by the hail (ice), and when they come out from the hail

(ice) the fire burns them, and the angels who preside over them keep their souls within their bodies [as it is said, "for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched" (Isaiah lxvi. 24)].

3. We read further, "God created seven hells, in each hell are seven compartments, in each compartment there are seven rivers of fire and seven of hail (ice), the width of each is 100 cubits, its depth 1000 cubits, and its length 300 cubits, and they flow one after the other, and all the sinners pass through them and are burned, but the 40,000 angels of destruction who preside over them revive them and raise them on their feet and announce to them their deeds which were evil, and their ways which were crooked," and they say to them, "Pass now through the rivers of fire and hail and snow, just as you passed over and transgressed the law and the commandments which were given unto you on Mount Sinai, for you feared not the fire of hell and the punishment of Abaddon. Now render account of your deeds!"

4. There are besides in every compartment 7000 holes (crevices), in every hole there are 7000 scorpions. Every scorpion has 300 slits (cavities), in every slit 70,000 pouches of venom, from these flow six rivers of deadly poison. When a man touches it he immediately bursts, every limb is torn from him, his body is cleft asunder, and he falls dead upon his face. The angels of destruction collect his limbs and set them, and revive the man and place him upon his feet and take their revenge upon him anew. [I. 42, V. 24.]

### VIII.

#### **Paradise.**

(In Massechet Atziluth, ed. Warsaw, 1876, f. 54 a-b; Siddur Amram, Warsaw, 1865, I. f. 12b-13a).

R. Ismael tells: "Sagansagel addressed me and said to me: 'My beloved! sit in my bosom and I will tell thee what will happen to Israel.' So I sat in his bosom and he looked at me and wept; and tears flowed from his eyes and dropped on my face. And I said: 'Glorious heavenly light! Why dost thou weep?' And he answered: 'Come and I will show unto thee what is awaiting my holy people Israel.' He took me and brought me into the innermost place, to the treasure-house of treasures and he took down the books and showed me the decrees of many misfortunes written therein. I asked him: 'For whom are these destined?' And he answered: 'For Israel!' Again I asked: 'Will they be able to endure them?' And he answered: 'Come to-morrow and I will show thee more calamities still.' The next day he showed me still more calamities, for some it being decreed to die by the sword, for others to die of hunger, others again destined for slavery. And I said: 'O glorious heavenly light! have they indeed sinned so heavily?' He answered: 'Every day new calamities are decreed, but when Israel gathers in his prayer-house and repeats: "May His exalted name be praised" we retain those calamities and do not let them come out from these rooms.' When I left him I heard a voice speaking in Aramaic and saying: 'The holy temple is destined to be ruined and the temple to be a burning light, and the kingly palace delivered over to the owls and the young to slavery, and the princes to death and the pure altar to be profaned, and the table for the shewbread will be carried off by enemies, and Jerusalem will be a desert, and the land of Israel a desolation.' When I heard these words I was terrified and trembled and I fell down. Then came the angel Hadarniel and breathed into me a new soul and lifted me upon my feet and said to me: 'My beloved! what hath happened unto thee?' And I answered: 'O glorious heavenly light! is there indeed no salvation for Israel?' And he answered and said: 'Come and I will show thee the treasures of comfort and help stored up for Israel.' He brought me up and I saw groups of angels weaving raiments of salvation and making crowns of life and fixing in them precious stones and pearls, and anointing them with all kinds of spices and delights. [IV. 1] I asked: 'For whom are these all destined?' He answered: 'For David, king of Israel.' And I said: 'Show me the glory of David.' And he said: 'Wait three hours until David will come hither in his glory.' So he took me and placed me in his bosom, and he asked me: 'What dost thou see?' I answered: 'I see seven lightnings running into one another.' He said: 'Shut thine eyes that thou mayest not be dazzled by the light which precedes King David.' At that moment the wheels and Ophanim and holy Creatures and the treasures of rain and snow, and the clouds of glory and the planets and the ministering angels moved and shook and said: 'The heavens declare the glory of God' (Ps. xix. 1 {sic xix. 2}). I heard then a loud voice proceeding from Eden crying: 'The Lord reigneth for ever and ever,' and lo! David was in front and all the kings of his house after him, each one with his crown upon his head; but the crown of David surpassed them all, its lustre

shineth from one end of the world unto the other. And David went up to the heavenly Temple, where a throne of fire stood ready for him, whose height is of 40 parasangs, its length and its width double the same. When David took his seat upon the throne prepared for him, facing that of his Creator, all the kings of Judah ranged themselves before him, and the kings of Israel stood behind him. Then he began to utter hymns and praises, such as no human ear has heard. (Paul, ch. 29.) And when he said: 'The Lord will reign for ever and ever.' Metraton and his company responded: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts,' and the holy Creatures praised and said: 'Blessed be the glory of the Lord in its place.' The heavens say: 'The Lord will reign for ever and ever.' The earth says: 'The Lord hath reigned, does reign, and will reign for ever,' and all the kings respond and say: 'And the Lord will be king over the whole earth.'"

**185 – 254 AD**

**Origen (185 – 254 AD), Church Father**

**One Is Glory Of Sun, Another Glory Of Moon, Another Glory Of Stars; One Star Differeth From Another Star In Glory; According To That Gradation, Which Exists Among Heavenly Bodies, Let Them Show Differences In Glory Of Those Who Rise Again**

**De Principiis Book 2**

**Chapter 10: On the Resurrection, and the Judgment, the Fire of Hell, and Punishments.**

2. Since the heretics, however, think themselves persons of great learning and wisdom, we shall ask them if every body has a form of some kind, i.e., is fashioned according to some shape. And if they shall say that a body is that which is fashioned according to no shape, they will show themselves to be the most ignorant and foolish of mankind. For no one will deny this, save him who is altogether without any learning. But if, as a matter of course, they say that every body is certainly fashioned according to some definite shape, we shall ask them if they can point out and describe to us the shape of a spiritual body; a thing which they can by no means do. We shall ask them, moreover, about the differences of those who rise again. How will they show that statement to be true, that there is "one flesh of birds, another of fishes; bodies celestial, and bodies terrestrial; that the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial another; that one is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, another the glory of the stars; that one star differeth from another star in glory; and that so is the resurrection of the dead?" 1 Cor. xv. 39–42. According to that gradation, then, which exists among heavenly bodies, let them show to us the differences in the glory of those who rise again; and if they have endeavoured by any means to devise a principle that may be in accordance with the differences in heavenly bodies, we shall ask them to assign the differences in the resurrection by a comparison of earthly bodies. Our understanding of the passage indeed is, that the apostle, wishing to describe the great difference among those who rise again in glory, i.e., of the saints, borrowed a comparison from the heavenly bodies, saying, "One is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, another the glory of the stars." And wishing again to teach us the differences among those who shall come to the resurrection, without having purged themselves in this life, i.e., sinners, he borrowed an illustration from earthly things, saying, "There is one flesh of birds, another of fishes." For heavenly things are worthily compared to the saints, and earthly things to sinners. These statements are made in reply to those who deny the resurrection of the dead, i.e., the resurrection of bodies

**185 – 254 AD**

**Origen (185 – 254 AD), Church Father**

**Many Mansions**

**Commentary on John**

**Book 2:3, in ANF 10:324-325**

Now it is possible that some may dislike what we have said representing the Father as the one true God, but admitting other beings besides the true God, who have become gods by having a share of God. They may

fear that the glory of Him who surpasses all creation may be lowered to the level of those other beings called gods. We drew this distinction between Him and them that we showed God the Word to be to all the other gods the minister of their divinity. To this we must add, in order to obviate objections, that the reason which is in every reasonable creature occupied the same relation to the reason who was in the beginning with God, and is God the Word, as God the Word occupies to God. As the Father who is Very God and the True God is to His image and to the images of His image-men are said to be according to the image, not to be images of God-so He, the Word, is to the reason (word) in every man. Each fills the place of a fountain-the Father is the fountain of divinity, the Son of reason. As, then, there are many gods, but to us there is but one God the Father, and many Lords, but to us there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, so there are many Lo/goi, but we, for our part, pray that that one Lo/goj may be with us who was in the beginning and was with God, God the Logos. For whoever does not receive this Logos who was in the beginning with God, or attach himself to Him as He appeared in flesh, or take part in some of those who had part in this Logos, or whoever having had part in Him falls away from Him again, he will have his portion in what is called most opposite to reason. What we have drawn out from the truths with which we started will now be clear enough. First, we spoke about God and the Word of God, and of Gods, either, that is, beings who partake in deity or beings who are called Gods and are not. And again of the Logos of God and of the Logos of God made flesh, and of logoi, or beings which partake in some way of the Logos, of second logoi or of third, thought to be logoi, in addition to that Logos that was before them all, but not really so. Irrational Reasons these may be styled; beings are spoken of who are said to be Gods but are not, and one might place beside these Gods who are no Gods, Reasons which are no Reasons. Now the God of the universe is the God of the elect, and in a much greater degree of the Saviours of the elect; then He is the God of these beings who are truly Gods, and then He is the God, in a word, of the living and not of the dead. But God the Logos is the God, perhaps, of those who attribute everything to Him and who consider Him to be their Father. Now the sun and the moon and the stars were connected, according to the accounts of men of old times, with beings who were not worthy to have the God of gods counted their God. To this opinion they were led by a passage in Deuteronomy which is somewhat on this wise:9 "Lest when thou liftest up thine eyes to heaven, and seest the sun and the moon and the whole host of heaven, thou wander away and worship them and serve them which the Lord thy God hath appointed to all the peoples. But to you the Lord thy God hath not so given them." But how did God appoint the sun and the moon and all the host of heaven to all the nations, if He did not give them in the same way to Israel also, to the end that those who could not rise to the realm of intellect, might be inclined by gods of sense to consider about the Godhead, and might of their own free will connect themselves with these and so be kept from falling away to idols and demons? Is it not the case that some have for their God the God of the universe, while a second class, after these, attach themselves to the Son of God, His Christ, and a third class worship the sun and the moon and all the host of heaven, wandering, it is true, from God, but with a far different and a better wandering than that of those who invoke as gods the works of men's hands, silver and gold, -works of human skill. Last of all are those who devote themselves to the beings which are called gods but are no gods. In the same way, now, some have faith in that Reason which was in the beginning and was with God and was God; so did Hosea and Isaiah and Jeremiah and others who declared that the Word of the Lord, or the Logos, had come to them. A second class are those who know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, considering that the Word made flesh is the whole Word, and knowing only Christ after the flesh. Such is the great multitude of those who are counted believers. A third class give themselves to logoi (discourses) having some part in the Logos which they consider superior to all other reason: these are they who follow the honourable and distinguished philosophical schools among the Greeks. A fourth class besides these are they who put their trust in corrupt and godless discourses, doing away with Providence, which is so manifest and almost visible, and who recognize another end for man to follow than the good. It may appear to some that we have wandered from our theme, but to my thinking the view we have reached of four things connected with the name of God and four things connected with the Logos comes in very well at this point. There was God with the article and God without the article, then there were gods in two orders, at the summit of the higher order of whom is God the Word, transcended Himself by the God of the universe. And, again, there was the Logos with the article and the Logos without the article, corresponding to God absolutely and a god; and the Logoi in two ranks. And some men are connected with the Father, being part of Him, and next to these, those whom our argument now brings into clearer light, those who have come to the Saviour and

take their stand entirely in Him. And third are those of whom we spoke before, who reckon the sun and the moon and the stars to be gods, and take their stand by them. And in the fourth and last place those who submit to soulless and dead idols. To all this we find analogies in what concerns the Logos. Some are adorned with the Word Himself; some with what is next to Him and appears to be the very original Logos Himself, those, namely, who know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and who behold the Word as flesh. And the third class, as we described them a little before. Why should I speak of those who are thought to be in the Logos, but have fallen away, not only from the good itself, but from the very traces of it and from those who have a part in it?

## **270 – 345 AD**

**Aphrahat of Persia (270 – 345 AD), Syriac Church Father**

**From All That I Have Explained To You, Receive & Believe That In Day Of Resurrection Your Body Shall Arise In Its Entirety, You Shall Receive From Our Lord Reward Of Your Faith, & In All That You Have Believed, You Shall Rejoice & Be Made Glad**

### **Demonstration 8 (Of the Resurrection of the Dead)**

1. At all times controversies arise on this matter, how the dead shall rise and with what body they shall come? 1 Corinthians 15:35 For lo! The body wears out and is corrupted; and the bones also, no doubt, as time lengthens out over them, waste away and are not to be recognised. And when you enter a tomb in which a hundred dead men are buried, you find not there an handful of dust. And thus say those that reflect on these things:— "We know of course that the dead shall rise; but they will be clothed in a heavenly body and spiritual forms. And if it is not so, these hundred dead that were buried in one tomb, of whom after a long time elapses there remains nothing at all there, when the dead shall be quickened, and shall be clothed in a body and rise, unless they shall be clothed in a heavenly body, from whence shall their body come? For lo! There is nothing in the tomb."

2. Whosoever reflects thus is foolish, and without knowledge. When the dead were brought in, they were something; and when they were there for a long time, they became nothing. And, when the time shall have come that the dead shall rise, that nothing shall become something according to its former nature, and a change shall be added to its nature. O you unwise who reflectest thus, hear that which the blessed Apostle said when he was instructing a foolish man like you; for he said:— You fool, the seed which you sow unless it die is not quickened; and that which you sow is not like that which grows up into blade, but one bare grain of wheat or barley or some other seedling. And to each one of the seeds is given its own body. But God clothes your seed with its body as He wills. 1 Corinthians 15:36-38

3. Therefore, O fool, be instructed by this, that each of the seeds is clothed in its own body. Never do you sow wheat and yet reap barley, and never do you plant a vine and yet it produced figs; but everything grows according to its nature. Thus also the body that was laid in the earth is that which shall rise again. And as to this, that the body is corrupted and wastes away, you ought to be instructed by the parable of the seed; that as the seed, when it is cast into the earth, decays and is corrupted, and from its decay it produces and buds and bears fruit. For the land that is ploughed, into which seed is not cast, produces not fruit, even if that land drinks in all the rain. So the grave in which the dead are not buried, from it men shall not issue forth in the quickening of the dead, though the full voice of the trumpet should sound within it. And if, as they say, the spirit of the just shall ascend into heaven and put on a heavenly body, they are in heaven. And He Who raises the dead dwells in heaven. Then when our Saviour shall come, whom shall He raise up from the earth? And why did He write for us:— The hour shall come, and now is, that the dead also shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and they shall live and come forth from their tombs? For the heavenly body will not come and enter into the tomb, and again go forth from it.

4. For thus say those who are stubborn in folly:— Why did the Apostle say— Different is the body which is in heaven from that which is on earth? 1 Corinthians 15:40 But he that hears this, let him hear also the other thing that the Apostle said:— There is an animal body, and there is a spiritual body. 1 Corinthians 15:44 And again he said:— We shall all sleep, but we shall not all be changed. And again he said:— This that shall die must clothe itself with that that shall not die, and this which is corruptible must clothe itself with that which is incorruptible. Again he said:— We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every man may be rewarded in his body for everything that before time was done by him, whether good or evil. 2 Corinthians 5:10 Again he said:— What shall those do that are baptized for the dead? For if the dead rise not, why are they baptized for them? 1 Corinthians 15:29 Again he said:— If there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen, and if Christ is not risen then your faith is vain, and our preaching. And if so we are found false witnesses in that we testified of God, that He raised up Christ, Whom He raised not up. Therefore, if the dead rise not, there is no judgment. And if there is no judgment, then let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die. Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good purposes. Now as to this that the Apostle said:— The body that is in heaven is different from that which is on the earth, let this word be thus understood by you. When the body of the just shall arise and be changed, it is called heavenly. And that which is not changed is called earthly, according to its earthly nature.

5. But hear, my beloved, another word like this, which the Apostle has spoken. For he said:— The spiritual man judges everything, and he is judged by no one. 1 Corinthians 2:15 And again he said:— They that are spiritual are spiritually minded, and they that are carnal are carnally minded. Romans 8:5 And again he said:— When we were in the flesh, the weaknesses of sins were working in our members that we might become fruit for death. Romans 7:5 Again he said:— If the Spirit of Christ is in you, you are spiritual. Romans 8:9 All these things the Apostle said, while he was clothed in the flesh but was doing the works of the Spirit. Thus also in the Resurrection of the dead, the righteous shall be changed, and the earthly form shall be swallowed up in the heavenly, and it shall be called a heavenly body. And that which shall not be changed, shall be called earthly.

6. Concerning then this Resurrection of the dead, my beloved, according to my power I will instruct you. For from the beginning God created Adam; moulded him from the dust of the earth, and raised him up. For if, while Adam was not, He made him from nothing, how much easier now is it for Him to raise him up; for lo! As a seed he is sown in the earth. For if God should do those things that are easy for us, His works would not appear mighty to us. For lo! There are among men artificers who make wonderful things, and those who are not artificers of the works stand and wonder how they were done; and the work of their fellows is difficult in their eyes. How much more should not the works of God be as a marvel! But for God this was no great thing, that the dead should be quickened. Before seed was sown in the earth, the earth produced that which had not been cast into it. Before it had conceived, it bore in its virginity. How then is this difficult, that the earth should cause to spring up again what had been cast into it, and after conception should bear? And lo! Her travail-pains are near; as Isaiah said, Who has seen anything like this and who has heard such things as these? That the earth should travail in one day, and a people should be born in one hour? Isaiah 66:8 For Adam unsown sprang up; unconceived he was born. But lo! now his offspring are sown, and wait for the rain, and shall spring up. And lo! The earth teems with many, and the time of her bringing forth is at hand.

7. For all our fathers, in hope of the Resurrection and the quickening of the dead, were looking forward and hastening; as the blessed Apostle said, If the righteous had been looking forward to that city from which Abraham went forth, they would have had an opportunity of again turning back and to it; but they showed that they were looking forward to one better than it, namely that which is in heaven. Hebrews 9:15-16 They were looking forward to be released and to go speedily there. And from that which I am writing unto you, understand and observe that they were looking forward to the Resurrection. For Jacob our father, when he was dying, bound Joseph his son with an oath, and said to him, Bury me in the tomb of my fathers, with Abraham and Sarah and Isaac and Rebecca. And why, my beloved, did Jacob not wish to be buried in Egypt, but with his fathers? He showed beforehand, that he was looking forward to the quickening of the dead; that, when the Resurrection shout should be raised and the sound of the trumpet (heard), he might rise up near to



his fathers, and might not at the time of the Resurrection be mingled with the wicked who shall return to Sheol and to punishment.

8. Thus also Joseph bound his brethren by an oath, Genesis 50:24 and said to them:— When God shall remember you, take up my bones from hence with you. And according to the word of Joseph his brethren did, and kept the oath a hundred and twenty-five years. At that time when the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt, then Moses took up the bones of Joseph when he went forth. Exodus 13:19 And the bones of the righteous man were more precious and better in his estimation than the gold and the silver that the children of Israel took from Egypt when they spoiled them. And the bones of Joseph were forty years in the wilderness; and at that time when Moses fell asleep, he gave them in inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun. The bones of Joseph his father were better in his estimation than all the spoil of that land which he subdued. And why did Moses give the bones of Joseph to Joshua? Clearly, because he was of the tribe of Ephraim the son of Joseph. And he buried them in the land of promise, that there might be in that land a treasure, (even) that of the bones of Joseph (that were) buried therein. And also at the time that Jacob was dying, he blessed his tribes, and showed them what would happen to them in the latter days, and said to Reuben:— Reuben, you are my firstborn, might and the beginning of my strength. You have gone astray; as water, you shall not abide, because you went up to your father's bed. Truly you defile my couch and went up. Genesis 49:3-4 From the time that Jacob fell asleep until the time that Moses fell asleep two hundred and thirty-three years elapsed. Then Moses wished by his priestly power to absolve Reuben from his transgression and sin, in that he had lain with Bilhah, his father's concubine; that when his brethren should rise, he might not be cut off from their number. So he said in the beginning of his blessing:— Reuben shall live and not die, and shall be in the number. Deuteronomy 33:6

9. And also when the time came that Moses should sleep with his fathers, he was grieved and distressed, and he sought of his Lord and entreated that he might pass over to the land of promise. And why, my beloved, was the righteous Moses grieved because he did not enter into the land of promise? Clearly, because he wished to go and be buried with his fathers, and not be buried in the land of his adversaries, in the land of Moab. For the Moabites hired Balaam the son of Beor to curse Israel. Therefore Moses wished not to be buried in that land, lest the Moabites should come and take vengeance on him by taking up and casting forth the bones of that righteous man. And the Lord performed an act of grace towards Moses. For He brought him forth to Mount Nebo, and showed him all the land, making it pass before him. And as Moses gazed upon all the land, and gazed upon the mountain of the Jebusites where the Tabernacle was to dwell, he was grieved and wept when he saw the tomb in Hebron where his fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were buried, that he should not be buried with them, nor his bones cast upon their bones, that he might rise along with them in the Resurrection. But when he had seen all the land, his Lord encouraged him and said to him, "I myself will bury you and hide you, and none shall know your tomb." So Moses died according to the word of the mouth of the Lord, and He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-Peor, where Israel had sinned, and no man has known his sepulchre unto this day. Deuteronomy 34:5-6 Two goodly benefits did his Lord accomplish for Moses in not making known his tomb to the children of Israel. He rejoiced that his adversaries should not know it, and cast forth his bones from his tomb; and in the second place, that the children of his people should not know it, and make his tomb a place of worship, for he was accounted as God in the eyes of the children of his people. And understand this, my beloved, from hence, that when he left them and went up to the mountain, they said: Exodus 32:1 — As for this Moses who brought us up from the land of Egypt we know not what has become of him. So they made them a calf and worshipped it, and they remembered not God Who brought them up from Egypt by means of Moses with a mighty hand and an uplifted arm. Deuteronomy 5:15 Because of this, God had respect unto Moses, and did not make known his tomb; lest, if He should make known his tomb, the children of his people might go astray, and make them an image, and worship it and sacrifice to it, and so by their sins disquiet the bones of the righteous man.

10. And Moses again proclaimed clearly the Resurrection of the dead, for he said as from the mouth of his God:— It is I that cause to die and it is I that make alive. Deuteronomy 32:39 Again also Hannah said thus in her prayer:— The Lord causes to die and quickens; He brings down to Sheol and brings up (therefrom). 1

Samuel 2:6 The Prophet Isaiah also said thus:— Your dead shall live, O Lord, and their bodies shall rise, and they that sleep in the dust shall awake and praise you. Isaiah 26:19 David also proclaimed, saying:— For lo! For the dead You work wonderful things, and the mighty ones shall rise and make confession unto You, and those that are in the tombs shall recount Your grace. And how in the tombs shall they recount the grace of God? Clearly, when they shall hear the sound of trumpet summoning them, and the cornet sounding forth from on high, and the earthquake that shall be, and the tombs that shall be opened, then the mighty ones shall arise in glory, and recount one to another in the tombs, saying, "Great is the grace that is performed towards us. For our hope was cut off; yet (another) hope has arisen for us. We were imprisoned in darkness, and have come forth to the light. We were sown in corruption, and have risen in glory. We were buried naturally, and we have risen spiritually. Again we were sown in weakness, and have risen in power." This is the grace that they shall tell of in the tombs.

11. And it was not only in words, my beloved, that God said:— "I quicken the dead," but also in deeds He showed it to us by many testimonies; that we might have no hesitation (concerning it). He showed it beforehand plainly; for through Elijah a wonder was manifested, (in proof) that the dead shall live and that they that sleep in the dust shall arise. For when the son of the widow died, Elijah raised him up and gave him to his mother. And Elisha again, his disciple, raised up the son of the Shunamite; that the testimony of two might be established and confirmed for us. And also again when the children of Israel cast a dead man on the bones of Elisha, that dead man revived and arose. And the witness of three is certain.

12. And also through the Prophet Ezekiel, the Resurrection of the dead was manifestly shown, when God brought him forth to the valley and showed him many bones, and made him pass by them round about them, and said to him:— Son of Man, will these bones live? And Ezekiel said to Him: Ezekiel 37:1-10 — You know, O Lord of lords. And the Lord said to him:— Prophecy, O Son Man, over these bones; prophecy and say to the dry bones, Hear the word of the Lord of lords. And when he had caused them to hear those words, there was a shaking and a noise, and the bones were gathered together, even those that were crushed into pieces and broken. And when the Prophet saw them, he was astonished, for they came together from all sides, and each bone received its fellow, and each joint approached its fellow-joint, and they ordered themselves, one on another. And their dryness was made moist, and the joints were united by the ligatures, and the blood grew warm in the arteries, and skin was stretched over the flesh, and hair grew up according to its nature. But they lay prostrate and there was no breath in them. Then again He commanded the Prophet, and said to him:— Prophecy unto the spirit and say to it, Come, O spirit, from the four winds, and breathe upon these slain men that they may live. And when he caused them to hear this second word, the spirit entered into them, and they revived and stood up upon their feet, a very great host.

13. But why, my beloved, was it that those dead did not rise because of the one word (spoken) through Ezekiel, and why was not their resurrection, both of bones and spirit, accomplished (through that one word)? For lo! By one word the bones were fitted together, and by another the spirit came. It was in order that full perfection might be left for our Lord Jesus Christ, Who with one utterance and one word will raise up at the last day every body of man. For it was not the word that was insufficient, but its bearer was inferior. And with regard to this, understand and observe that when Elijah also, and Elisha his disciple, raised the dead, it was not with one word that they raised them up, but after they had prayed and made intercession and delayed no little time, then they arose.

14. And our Lord Himself, in that His first Coming raised up three that were dead, that the testimony of three might be made sure. And He raised up each one of them with two words each. For when He raised up the widow's son, He called him twice, saying to him, Young man, young man, arise. Luke 7:14 And he revived and arose. And again, He twice called the daughter of the chief of the synagogue, saying to her, Damsel, damsel, arise. Mark 5:47 And her spirit returned and she arose. And after Lazarus died, when He came to the place of burial. He prayed earnestly and cried with a loud voice and said, Lazarus, come forth. John 11:43 And he revived and came out of his tomb.

15. And concerning all this that I have explained to you, that those dead persons were raised with two words each, it was because for them two resurrections take place; that former one, and the second, that which is to come. For in that resurrection in which all men shall rise, none shall fall again; and by one word of God, sent forth through Christ, all the dead shall rise in the twinkling of an eye, speedily. For He Who brings it to pass is not feeble or insufficient. For with one word of summons He will cause all the ends (of the world) to hear, and all that are laid (in the grave) shall leap forth and rise up; and no word shall return void to Him that sent it forth, but as it is written in the Prophet Isaiah, Isaiah 55:10-11 who compares the word to rain and snow; for he said:— As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and return not there, but fertilize the earth and cause it to bring forth and give seed to the sower and bread for food, so shall the word be that goes forth from My mouth, and it shall not return to Me void, but shall accomplish whatsoever I desire and shall accomplish that for which I shall have sent it. For the rain and the snow do not return to heaven, but accomplish in the earth the will of Him that sends them. So the word that He shall send through His Christ, Who is Himself the Word and the Message, shall return to Him with great power. For when He shall come and bring it, He shall come down like rain and snow, and through Him all that is sown shall spring up and bear righteous fruit, and the word shall return to His sender; but not in vain shall His going have been, but thus shall He say in the presence of His sender:— Behold, I and the children that the Lord has given Me. Isaiah 8:18 And this is the voice through which the dead shall live. Concerning it our Redeemer testifies, saying:— The hour shall come when even the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth from their tombs; John 5:25 as it is written, In the beginning was the voice, that is the Word. John 1:1 Again He said, The Word became a body and dwelt among us. John 1:14 And this is that voice of God which shall sound from on high and raise up all the dead.

16. Again, our Lord explained to the Sadducees with regard to the resurrection of the dead, when they brought forth to Him the parable of the woman who was married to seven husbands, and said to Him:— Lo! The woman was wife of them all; in the Resurrection of the dead, to which of them shall she be wife? Matthew 22:28 Then our Lord said to them:— You do greatly err, and you know not the Scriptures nor the power of God. For they who are worthy of that world and of that Resurrection from the dead, they that are men do not take wives, nor are the women married to husbands, for they cannot die, for they are as the angels of God and children of the Resurrection. But concerning the Resurrection, that the dead shall rise, have you not read in the Scripture that God said to Moses out of the bush, "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob." And lo! He is not God of the dead, for they all are alive unto Him. Matthew 23:29-32

17. And there are those who even while they live are dead unto God. For He laid a commandment on Adam and said to him, In the day that you shall eat of the tree, you shall surely die. Genesis 2:17 And after he had transgressed the commandment, and had eaten, he lived nine hundred and thirty years; but he was accounted dead unto God because of his sins. But that it may be made certain for you that a sinner is called dead even when he lives, I will make it clear to you. For thus it is written in Ezekiel the Prophet, As I live, says the Lord of lords, I desire not the death of the dead sinner.

18. Moreover our Lord said to that man who said to Him:— Let me go and bury my father, and I will come to You. Luke 9:59-60 And our Lord said to him, Let the dead bury their dead, but go, preach the Kingdom of God. But how is this word understood by you, my beloved? Did you ever see the dead burying their dead? Or how shall a dead man arise to bury another dead man? But receive this explanation from me, that a sinner, while he is living, is dead unto God; and a righteous man, though dead, is alive unto God. For such death is a sleep, as David said, I lay down and slept, and awoke. Again Isaiah said, They that sleep in the dust shall awake. Isaiah 26:19 And our Lord said concerning the daughter of the chief of the synagogue, The damsel is not dead, but sleeping a slumber. Matthew 9:26 And concerning Lazarus, He said to His disciples:— Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go to waken him. John 11:11 And the Apostle said:— We shall all sleep, but we shall not all be changed. 1 Corinthians 15:51 And again he said:— Concerning those that sleep, be not grieved. 1 Thessalonians 4:13

19. But it is right for us to be afraid of the second death, that which is full of weeping and gnashing of teeth, and of groanings and miseries, that which is situated in outer darkness. But blessed shall be the faithful and the righteous in that Resurrection, in which they expect to be awakened and to receive the good promises made them. But as for the wicked who are not faithful, in the Resurrection woe to them, because of that which is laid up for them! It would be better for them according to the faith which they possess, were they not to arise. For the servant, for whom his Lord is preparing stripes and bonds, while he is sleeping desires not to awake, for he knows that when the dawn shall have come and he shall awake, his Lord will scourge and bind him. But the good servant, to whom his Lord has promised gifts, looks expectantly for the time when dawn shall come and he shall receive presents from his Lord. And even though he is soundly sleeping, in his dream he sees something like what his Lord is about to give him, whatsoever He has promised him, and he rejoices in his dream, and exults, and is gladdened. As for the wicked, his sleep is not pleasant to him, for he imagines that lo! The dawn has come for him, and his heart is broken in his dream. But the righteous sleep, and their slumber is pleasant to them, in the day-time and the night-time, and they take no thought of all that long night, and like one hour is it accounted in their eyes. Then in the watch of the dawn they awake with joy. But as for the wicked, their sleep lies heavy upon them, and they are like a man who is laid low by a great and deep fever, and tosses on his couch hither and there, and he is terrified the whole night long, which lengthens itself out for him, and he fears the dawn when his Lord will condemn him.

20. But our faith thus teaches, that when men fall asleep, they sleep this slumber without knowing good from evil. And the righteous look not forward to their promises, nor do the wicked look forward to their sentence of punishment, until the Judge come and separate those whose place is at His right hand from those whose place is at His left. And be instructed by that which is written, that when the Judge shall sit, and the books be opened before Him and the good and evil deeds recited, then they that have wrought good works shall receive good rewards from Him Who is good; and they that have done evil deeds shall receive evil penalties from the just Judge. For towards the good, He changes not His nature; and He proves Himself just because He justly condemns many. But towards the evil He changes His nature, in that world where grace is lost in justice; and He proves Himself just to all. And grace will not be joined with justice towards them. Like as grace avails not (to remedy) detriment, so justice (avails not to assist) grace. For grace is far from the judge, but justice urges the judge. If grace be near to any one, let him turn himself towards it, and not deliver himself into the hands of justice, lest it condemn him, exacting for his shortcomings the penalty at his hands. And if grace be far from any one, justice will bring him to the trial, and by it he will be condemned, and go away to the torment.

21. But hear, my beloved, this proof that retribution shall take place at the end. For when the Shepherd divides His flock and sets some on His right hand and some on His left, until He shall have acknowledged the service of the good, then He will cause them to inherit the kingdom; and until He shall have rebuked the evil and they are condemned, then He will send them to the torment. And as to them that sent messengers after the King, saying, This man shall not be king over us, when He shall receive the kingdom and return, then His adversaries shall be slain before Him. And the labourers who hastened and were wearied in the vineyard, shall not receive the reward till the labour shall cease. And the traders who received the money, when the Lord of the money shall come, then shall He exact the usury. And the virgins who, while waiting for the bridegroom, slumbered and slept because He delayed to come, when they shall hear the cry, then they shall awake and trim their lamps; and they that are wise shall enter in; and the foolish shall be shut out. And they who were before us in entering the faith, without us shall not be made perfect. Hebrews 11:40

22. From all these things, understand, my beloved, as it has been made certain for you, that as yet no one has received his reward. For the righteous have not inherited the kingdom, nor have the wicked gone into torment. The Shepherd has not as yet divided His flock. And lo! The workmen enter into the vineyard, and as yet have not received the reward. And lo! The merchants are trading with the money. And as yet their Lord has not come to take the account. And the King has gone to receive the Kingdom, but as yet He has not returned the second time. And those virgins that are waiting the bridegroom are sleeping up to the present

time, and are awaiting the cry when they will awake. And the former men who toiled in the faith until the last men shall come, shall not be made perfect.

23. But they who are babes in understanding say:— "If no one has received his reward, why did the Apostle say, When we shall depart from the body, we shall be present with the Lord?" 2 Corinthians 5:8 But recollect, my beloved, that I instructed you concerning this matter in the Demonstration concerning Solitaries, that the spirit which the righteous receive, according to its heavenly nature, goes to our Lord until the time of the Resurrection, when it shall come to put on the body in which it dwelt. And at every time it has the memory of this in the presence of God, and looks eagerly for the Resurrection of that body in which it dwelt, as the Prophet Isaiah said about the Church of the Gentiles:— They that make mention of you shall be faithful and stand before the Lord, and you shall not give them rest. But as to the wicked, they have none to make mention of them before the Lord, because the Holy Spirit is far removed from them, because they are animal, and are buried after the manner of animals.

24. And again, (the followers of) doctrines, which are instruments of the Evil One, are offended by the word which our Lord spoke, No one has ascended up to heaven but He Who came down from heaven, the Son of Man, Who was in heaven. John 3:13 And they say, "Lo! Our Lord testified that no earthly body has ascended to heaven." In their ignorance they cannot apprehend the force of this. For when our Lord instructed Nicodemus, he did not apprehend the force of the saying. Then our Lord said to him:— No one has ascended into heaven, so as to come down and relate to you whatsoever is there. For if I have spoken unto you of those things that are in the earth, and you believe not, how shall you believe if I shall speak unto you of those things which are in heaven? John 3:12 For lo! no other witness besides Me has come down from thence, to bear witness concerning those things which are in heaven, so that you should believe. For Elijah went up there, but he came not down along with Me to bear witness, that the testimony of two might be sure.

25. But as for you, my beloved, have no doubt as to the Resurrection of the dead. For the living mouth (of God) testifies:— I cause to die and I make alive. Deuteronomy 32:39 And both of them proceeded out of one mouth. And as we are sure that He causes to die, and we see it; so also it is sure and worthy of belief, that He makes alive. And from all that I have explained to you, receive and believe that in the day of the Resurrection your body shall arise in its entirety, and you shall receive from our Lord the reward of your faith, and in all that you have believed, you shall rejoice and be made glad.

## **270 – 345 AD**

### **Aphrahat of Persia (270 – 345 AD), Syriac Church Father**

**Even When Men Shall Enter Into Life, Yet Reward Shall Excel Reward, Glory Shall Excel Glory, Recompense Shall Excel Recompense. Degree Is Higher Than Degree, Light Is More Goodly Than Light In Aspect; Sun Excels Moon, Moon Is Greater Than Stars That Are With Her**

### **Demonstration 22 (Of Death And The Latter Times)**

1. The upright and righteous and good and wise fear not nor tremble at death, because of the great hope that is before them. And they at every time are mindful of death, their exodus, and of the last day in which the children of Adam shall be judged. They know that by the sentence of judgment death has held sway, because Adam transgressed the commandment; as the Apostle said:--Death ruled from Adam unto Moses even over those who sinned not, so that also upon all the children of Adam it passed,(3) even as it passed upon Adam. And how did death rule from Adam unto Moses? Clearly, when God laid down the commandment for Adam, He warned him, and said:--On the day that thou shalt eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt die the death.(4) So when he transgressed the commandment and ate of the tree, death ruled over him and over all his progeny. Even over those who had not sinned, even over them did death rule through Adam's transgression of the commandment.

2. And why did he say:--From Adam unto Moses did Death rule? And who is so ill-furnished with knowledge as to imagine that only from Adam to Moses has death had dominion? Yet let him understand from this that he said:--Upon all men it passed. Thus, upon all men it passed from Moses until the world shall end. Yet Moses preached that its kingdom is made void. For when Adam transgressed the commandment whereby the sentence of death was passed upon his progeny, Death hoped that he would bind fast all the sons of man and would be king over them for ever. But when Moses came, he proclaimed the resurrection, and Death knew that his kingdom is to be made void. For Moses said:--Reuben shall live and not die, and shall be in number.(5) And when the Holy One called Moses from the bush he said thus to him:--I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.(6) When Death heard this utterance, he trembled and feared and was terrified and was perturbed, and knew that he had not become king for ever over the children of Adam. From the hour that he heard God saying to Moses:--I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, Death smote his hands together, for he learned that God is King of the dead and of the living, and that it is appointed to the children of Adam to come forth from his darkness, and arise with their bodies. And observe that our Redeemer Jesus also, when He repeated this utterance to the Sadducees, when they were disputing with Him about the Resurrection of the dead, thus said:--God is not(God) of the dead, for all are alive unto Him.(7)

3. And that God might make known to Death that his authority is not for ever over all the progeny of the world, He translated Enoch to Himself, because he was well-pleasing, and made him deathless. And again He took up Elijah to heaven, and Death had no dominion over him. And Hannah said:--The Lord maketh to die and causeth to live; He bringeth down to Sheol and raiseth up.(8) Furthermore Moses said as from the mouth of God:--I make to die and I cause to live.(9) Again the Prophet Isaiah also said:--Thy dead shall live, and their dead bodies shall rise again; and the sleepers of the dust shall be awakened, and shall glorify Thee.(1) When Death heard all these things, amazement seized him, and he sat him down in mourning.

4. And when Jesus, the slayer of Death, came, and clothed Himself in a Body from the seed of Adam, and was crucified in His Body, and tasted death; and when (Death) perceived thereby that He had come down unto him, he was shaken from his place and was agitated when he saw Jesus; and he closed his gates and was not willing to receive Him. Then He burst his gates, and entered into him, and began to despoil all his possessions. But when the dead saw light in the darkness, they lifted up their heads from the bondage of death, and looked forth, and saw the splendour of the King Messiah. Then the powers of the darkness of Death sat in mourning, for he was degraded from his authority. Death tasted the medicine that was deadly to him, and his hands dropped down, and he learned that the dead shall live and escape from his sway. And when He had afflicted Death by the despoiling of his possessions, he wailed and cried aloud in bitterness and said, "Go forth from my realm and enter it not. Who then is this that comes in alive into my realm?" And while Death was crying out in terror (for he saw that his darkness was beginning to be done away, and some of the righteous who were sleeping arose to ascend with Him), then He made known to him that when He shall come in the fulness of time, He will bring forth all the prisoners from his power, and they shall go forth to see the light. Then when Jesus had fulfilled His ministry amongst the dead, Death sent Him forth from his realm, and suffered Him not to remain there. And to devour Him like all the dead, he counted it not pleasure. He had no power over the Holy One, nor was He given over to corruption.

5. And when he had eagerly sent Him forth and He had come forth from his realm, He left with him, as a poison, the promise of life; that by little and little his power should be done away. Even as when a man has taken a poison in the food which is given for (the support of) life, when he perceives in himself that he has received poison in the food, then he casts up again from his belly the food in which poison was mingled; but the drug leaves its power in his limbs, so that by little and little the structure of his body is dissolved and corrupted. So Jesus dead was the bringer to nought of Death; for through Him life is made to reign, and through Him Death is abolished, to whom it is said:--O Death, where is thy victory?(1)

6. Therefore, ye children of Adam, all ye over whom Death has ruled, be mindful of Death and remember life; and transgress not the commandment as your first father did. O Kings, crowned with the diadem,

remember Death, which will take away the diadems that are set upon your heads, and he shall be king over you till the time, when ye shall rise again for the judgment. O ye haughty and uplifted and proud, remember Death, which shall destroy your haughtiness, and dissolve the limbs, and separate the joints, and the body and its forms shall be given over to corruption. The lofty ones shall be brought low by Death, and the fierce and stern ones shall be buried away in his darkness. He shall take away all the pride, and they shall corrupt away and become dust, until the judgment. O ye rich, remember Death; for when the time shall come and ye shall draw nigh to him there, ye shall not use your wealth and possessions. He will not place dainty viands before you, nor will he prepare for you a rich banquet. There the body of the gluttons who used to live delicately shall be corrupted. They shall cease from their luxury and shall not remember it. There the worm shall consume their bodies, and they shall clothe themselves in darkness over their fair apparel. They remember not the ending of this world, that Death shall confound them when they descend to him. So they shall sit in oppression and in the shadow of death, and shall not remember this world, until the end shall be and they shall rise again for the judgment. O ye rapacious and extortioners and plunderers of your fellows, remember Death, and multiply not your sins; for in that place sinners repent not; and he who has plundered his fellows' goods shall not possess his own, but shall go to the place where man shall make no use of wealth. And he shall come to nought and pass away from his honour, but his sins shall be laid up against the day of judgment.

7. O ye that trust in this world, let this world be despised in your eyes; for ye are sojourners and aliens in the midst of it, and ye know not the day that ye shall be taken out of it. For suddenly shall Death come, and separate and lead away the loved children from their parents, and the parents from their darling children. He leads away for himself the precious only-begotten children, and their parents shall be deprived of them and shall come into contempt. He separates precious friends unto himself, and their beloved weep for them lamentably. He leads away and takes prisoners unto himself them that are desired for their beauty, that he may put to shame their forms and corrupt them. And those that are glorious in aspect he leads away to himself, and they become dust until the judgment. He leads away betrothed maidens from their spouses, and binds them captive in his bridal-chamber, in his place of gloom. He leads away and separates betrothed husbands from the virgins who were designed for them and betrothed in their name; and these shall sit in bitter mourning over them. He leads away and separates unto himself all the beautiful youths who supposed that even unto old age they would not see death. He leads away and gathers unto himself the loved infants of days, with whom their parents were not satiated. He leads away to himself the wealthy, the sons of luxury; And they leave their possessions as the waves of the sea.<sup>(1)</sup> He leads away to himself the skilful artificers, who were raising up the world by their wonderful works. He leads away to himself the subtle and the wise, and they become simple, not distinguishing good from evil. He leads away to himself the richly endowed of this world, and their endowments are destroyed and shall not be established for ever. He leads away to himself the mighty and the great ones, and their might is brought low and weakened, and comes to an end. Them that were confident that their might would not be brought lower, in the day of death, men that are of lower degree than theirs gather together their bodies. They that trust that in their death they shall be buried with honour, it befalls them that the dogs devour them. And they that trust that they shall be buried in the place wherein they were born, know not but that in the land of their captivity they shall even be gathered (to the grave) with insult. They that trusted in their possessions, that they should give them in inheritance to their children, from them it is hidden that they shall be plundered by their enemies. Death leads away to himself the brave and the warriors. who thought to lay waste the great world. Death leads away them that adorn themselves with all pleasant things, and the burial of an ass befalls them when they are buried. Death rules over the unborn, and takes them captive to himself before they are born. Death leads away to himself them that are honoured with pomps, and they come into contempt when they descend to him, to the realm of darkness, where there is no light. He is not ashamed before Kings (that are) crowned with the diadem. He is not abashed before the lofty and the fierce ones who lay waste the lands. Death respects not the persons of the honourable, nor does he receive a bribe from the rich. Death despises not the poor, nor does his soul scorn him that has nothing. Death honours not hem that live in magnificence, nor with him are the good distinguished from the bad. He takes no account of the aged, rather than of children in respect of honour. The lords of prudence he makes without understanding, and them that used to make haste and vex themselves, in

acquiring possessions there with him, these are stripped of their gains. He leads away to himself slaves and their masters; and there the masters are not honoured more than their servants. Small and great are there, and they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The slave who is freed from his master(1) there pays no regard to him who used to oppress him. Death binds and makes captive to himself the keepers of prisoners, and the prisoners who were shut up. By means of Death the prisoners are released, and fear not again because of their oppressors.

8. They that live daintily fear death; but the afflicted look forward with hope that they shall be speedily taken away. All the rich tremble because of death; but the poor desire it, that they may rest from their labour. Death terrifies the mighty when they remember him; but the sick look forward with hope to him that through him they may forget their pains. Again the young children are afraid of death, for when it comes upon them they shall leave their pleasures; but the old men advanced in years pray for it, they that are in need of daily bread.

9. The sons of peace remember death; and they forsake and remove from them wrath and enmity. As sojourners they dwell in this world, and prepare for themselves a provision for the journey before them. On that which is above they set their thoughts, on that which is above they meditate; and those things which are beneath their eyes they despise. They send away their treasures to the place where there is no peril, the place where there is no moth, nor are there thieves. They abide in the world as aliens, sons of a far land; and look forward to be sent out of this world and to come to the city, the place of the righteous. They afflict themselves in the place of their sojourning; and they are not entangled or occupied in the house of their exile. Ever day by day their faces are set upwards, to go to the repose of their fathers. As prisoners are they in this world, and as hostages of the King are they kept. To the end they have no rest in this world, nor is (their) hope in it, that it will continue for ever. They that acquire possessions, rejoice not in them, and they that beget children, death fills them with sorrow. They that build cities, shall not be left in them; and those that hasten and toil for anything, are in no wise to be distinguished from fools. O man without sense, whosoever he be whose trust is in this world!

10. Remember, my beloved, and compare and consider in thy mind, who is there of former generations who has been left in this world so as to continue for ever? Death has led away the former generations, the great ones and the mighty and the subtle. Who is there that acquired great possessions, and at the time when he departed took them with him? That which was gathered together from the earth returns back into its bosom; and naked does a man depart from his possessions. The wise, when they acquire goods, send some of them before them, as Job said: My witnesses are heaven; and again:--My brethren and my lovers are with God.(2) And our Lord commanded them that acquire possessions to make for themselves friends in heaven, and also to lay up treasures there.(3)

11. Do thou also remember death, O wise scribe, that thy heart be not lifted up, so that thou shouldest forget the sentence of judgment. Death leaves not aside the wise, nor respects the persons of the subtle. Death leads away to himself the wise scribes, so that they forget that which they have learned, until the time comes in which all the righteous shall rise again.

12. In that place they shall forget this world. There they have no want; and they shall love one another with an abundant love. In their bodies there shall be no heaviness, and lightly shall they fly as doves to their windows.(1) In their thoughts they shall not there remember wickedness at all, nor shall anything of uncleanness arise in their heart. In that place there shall be no natural desire, for there they shall be weaned from all appetites. There shall not arise in their heart anger or lasciviousness; also they shall remove from them all things that gender sins. Fervent in their heart will be the love of each other; and hatred will not be fixed within them at all. They shall have no need there to build houses, for they shall abide in light, in the mansions of the saints. They shall have no need of woven raiment, for they shall be clothed in eternal light. They shall have no need of food, for they shall recline at His table and be nurtured for ever. The air of that region is pleasant and glorious, and its light shines out, and is goodly and gladsome. Planted there are beautiful trees, whose fruits fail not, and whose leaves fall not. Their boughs are glorious, their perfume



delightful, and of their taste no soul shall grow weary for ever. Spacious is the region, nor is it limited; yet its inhabitants shall see its distance even as that which is near. There the inheritance shall not be divided, and no man shall say to his fellow:--"This is mine and that is thine." They shall not be bound there in the desire of covetousness, nor shall they go astray there concerning remembrance. There a man shall not love his neighbour with especial reverence, but abundantly shall they all love one another after one fashion. They shall not marry wives there, nor shall they beget children; nor shall there the male be distinguished from the female; but all shall be sons of their Father Who is in heaven; as the Prophet said:--Is there not one Father of us all; is there not one God Who created us?(2)

13. And as regards that which I said; that there they shall not take wives, nor is male distinguished from female, our Lord and His Apostles have taught us. For our Lord said:--They that are worthy of that world, and of that resurrection from the abode of the dead, shall not take wives, nor shall (women) become wives to men; for they cannot die; but they are as the angels in heaven, and are the children of God.(3) And the apostle said:--There is neither male nor female, neither band nor free; but ye are all one in Jesus Christ.(4) For, as for Eve, to spread abroad generation, God took her out from Adam, that she might become the mother of all living; but yet in that world there is no female; even as in heaven also there is no female, nor generation, nor use of concupiscence. In that place there is no deficiency, but fulness and perfection. The aged shall not die and the young shall not grow old. And it is in expectation of growing old and dying that young men take wives and beget children, that when the fathers shall have died the children may rise up in their stead. Now all these things have their use only in this world, for in that place there is no want, nor any deficiency, nor concupiscence, nor generation, nor ending, nor failure, nor death, nor termination, nor old age. There is neither hatred, nor wrath, nor envy, nor weariness, nor toil, nor darkness, nor night, nor falsehood. There is not in that place any want at all; but it is full of light, and life, and grace, and fulness, and satisfaction and renewal, and love, and all the good promises that are written but not yet sealed. For there is there that which eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard, and which hath not come up into the heart of man,(5) that which is unspeakable and which a man cannot utter. And the Apostle said:--That which God hath prepared for them that love Him.(6) Though men shall say much, they shall not be able to express it. That which eye hath not seen, they are unable to relate; and that which ear hath not heard, it is not right to speak of in such wise as to compare it with anything that the ear has heard and the eye has seen. And that which has not come up unto the heart, who is there dares to speak of it, as though it was like anything that has come up into the heart? But this is right for a speaker, to liken and call that place the abode of God, and the place of life, the perfect place, the place of light, the place of glory, the Sabbath of God, the day of rest, the repose of the righteous, the joy of the just, the abode and dwelling-place of the righteous and the holy, the place of our hope, the sure abode of our trust, the place of our treasure, the place that shall assuage our weariness and remove our afflictions, and soothe our sighs. To these things it is right for us to liken, and thus to call, that place.

14. Again, Death leads away to himself kings, the founders of cities, who strengthen themselves in splendour. And he does not leave aside the Lords of the countries. Death leads away and takes captive to himself the avaricious who are not satisfied nor say "Enough"; and he is greedy for them with a greater greed than theirs. Death leads away to himself the despoilers who were not by their grace restrained from despoiling their fellows. Death leads away to himself the oppressors, and through death are they restrained from iniquity. Death leads away to himself the persecutors, and the persecuted have rest till they go to him. Death leads away to himself them that swallow up their fellows, and the down-trodden and oppressed have rest for a little until they themselves also are led away and go thither. Death leads away them that abound in meditations, and all they have thought upon is dissolved and brought to nought. Men meditate upon many matters, and death comes upon them suddenly, and they are led away; and thereafter they remember nothing that they have thought upon. There is one that makes plans for many years, and (the knowledge) is withheld from him that he shall not survive to-morrow. Some son of Adam is uplifted and vaunts himself over his fellow; and death comes upon him and brings to nought his vaunting. The rich man plans to add to his possessions, and he knows not that he shall not continue to possess even that which he has acquired. Death

leads away to himself all the children of men, and binds them fast in his abode until the judgment. Also over those that have not sinned is he king, because of the sentence of judgment that Adam received for his sins.

15. And the Life-giver shall come, the Destroyer of Death, and shall bring to nought his power, from over the just and from over the wicked. And the dead shall arise with a mighty shout, and Death shall be emptied and stripped of all the captivity. And for judgment shall all the children of Adam be gathered together, and each shall go to the place prepared for him. The risen of the righteous shall go unto life, and the risen of the sinners shall be delivered unto death. The righteous who kept the commandment shall go, and shall not come nigh unto judgment in the day that they shall rise; as David asked, And bring not thy servant into judgment;(1) nor will their Lord terrify them in that day.

16. Remember that the Apostle also said, We shall judge angels.(2) And our Lord said to His disciples, Ye shall sit on twelve thrones, and judge twelve tribes of the house of Israel.(3) And Ezekiel said concerning righteous men,(4) that they shall judge Ahola and Aholibah. Since, then, the righteous are to judge the wicked, He has made clear concerning them that they shall not come into judgment. And as to what the apostles say, that We shall judge angels, hear, and I will instruct thee. The angels who shall be judged by the apostles are the priests who have violated the law; as the Prophet said, The lips of the priest shall guard knowledge, and the law shall they inquire of his mouth; because he is the angel of the Lord, the most mighty.(5) The angels who are the priests, of whose mouth the law is inquired, when they transgress the law, shall be judged at the last by the apostles, and the priests who observe the law.

17. And the wicked shall not arise in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.(1) And even as the righteous who are perfected in good works shall not come into the judgment to be judged, so of the wicked also whose sins are many, and the measure of whose offences is overflowing, it shall not be required that they should draw nigh unto the judgment, but when they have risen again they shall turn back to Sheol, as David said, The wicked shall turn back to Sheol, and all the nations that forget God.(2) And Isaiah said, All the nations are as a drop from the bucket, and as the turning of the balance. And the isles as a grain of sand shall be cast away, and all the nations are esteemed as nothingness by Him. For destruction and the sword are they esteemed by Him.(3) Therefore learn and be persuaded, that all the nations that know not God their Maker, are esteemed by God as nothingness, and shall not come nigh to judgment, but as soon as they have risen shall turn back to Sheol.

18. But all the rest of the world who are called sinners shall stand in the judgment and be rebuked. Those in whom there is a little shortcoming will the judge rebuke, and make known to them that they have offended. And He will give them the inheritance of life after the judgment. And understand that our Lord has made known to us in His Gospel, that every man according to his work shall receive his reward. He that received money, showed the increase on it. He whose pound or talent produced tenfold, received life, perfect, in nothing lacking. He whose pound or talent produced fivefold, received the half of ten. One was given a tenfold authority and one a fivefold. Now consider and see, that the increase of five is less than that of ten; and the labourers who demand the reward excel them that received it in silence. They who toiled all the day, with bold face receive the reward and demand it, in confidence that He will add more to them. While they who worked one hour receive it in silence, and know that through grace they receive mercy and life. The sinners whose sins are many shall be condemned by the place of judgment, and shall go into torments. And from that time and onwards, judgment shall rule over them.

19. Furthermore, hearken unto the Apostle who said, Every man according to his work shall receive his reward.(4) He that toiled little, shall receive according to his remissness; and he that made much speed, shall be rewarded according to his speed. And Job also said, Far be it from God to do iniquity; and far be it from Him to do sin. For according to a man's works will He reward him, and a man shall receive according to his ways.(5) And also the Apostle said, Star excels star in brightness. So also is the resurrection of the dead.(6) Therefore know that, even when men shall enter into life, yet reward shall excel reward, and glory shall excel glory, and recompense shall excel recompense. Degree is higher than degree; and light is more goodly than

light in aspect. The sun excels the moon, and the moon is greater than the stars that are with her. And observe that the moon and the stars are also under the power of the sun, and their light is swallowed up in the splendour of the sun. And the sun has power along with the moon and the stars, that he may not abolish the night which has been separated from the day. And when the sun was created, he was called a luminary. And observe that the sun and the moon and the stars are all called luminaries; but luminary excels luminary. The sun obscures the light of the moon, and the moon likewise darkens the light of the stars; and star excels star in its light.

20. And understand (this) also, from that which is of this world, those who labour with toil, and from the hired men who work with their fellows. There are some who hire their fellow-men by day-wages, and (these) receive the wage of their toil; and there are some who are hired for the month, and compute and receive the wage for the time, at the time agreed. And the day-wage is distinguished from the monthly wage; and yearly exceeds monthly wage.

21. And also again, understand it from the authority that is in this world. There are some who please the king by their activity, and receive honour from those in authority. One receives a crown from the king, to become governor in one of the countries. And under the authority of another, the king places towns; and also he excels his inferiors in his attire. Some receive presents and gifts, and one honour is distinguished from another. There is one to whom the king gives the honour of being steward over all the treasury. Another, according to his lower condition, serves the king, and his authority is only to provide the daily food.

22. Also in respect of penalty, I say that all men are not equal. He that has done great wickedness is greatly tormented. And he that has offended not so much is less tormented. Some shall go into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.(1) Others shall be cast into the fire, according as they deserve; for it is not written that they shall gnash their teeth, nor that there is darkness there. Some shall be cast into another place, a place where their warm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall become an astonishment to all flesh.(2) In the faces of others the door shall be closed and the Judge will say to them:--I know you not.(3) And consider that, as the reward for good deeds is not equal for all men, so it is also for evil deeds. Not in one fashion shall men be judged, but every man according to his works shall receive his requital, because the Judge is clothed in righteousness and regards not the persons of men.

23. And even as I have showed thee concerning the world, how one honour excels another, of those that kings and rulers of this world give to those beneath them; also concerning this I have showed thee, that even as kings have good gifts to give to those honoured by them, so also they have prisons and chains and fetters, which are various kinds of bonds. One man offends the king with a grievous offence, and without inquiry he is delivered over to death. Another offends, yet is not deserving of death; he is put in bonds until he is judged; and is chastised, and the king remits his offence. There is another whom the king has held in regard; and outside the prison house he is kept in freedom, without chains and without bonds. He that is put to death is distinguished from him that is bound; and the punishment of one exceeds that of another, according to the desert of his offence. But come thou to our Redeemer, Who said:--Many are the mansions in My Father's house.(4)

24. My beloved, men who are inferior in understanding, dispute about this that I write to thee, and say:--"What is the place in which the righteous shall receive a good reward; and what is the place in which are torments, in which the wicked shall receive the punishments of their works?" O man that thinkest thus, I will ask thee, and tell thou me, why is death called death, and why is Sheol called Sheol? For it is written that when Korah and his companions made a schism against Moses, the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and they went down alive into Sheol.(5) Therefore that was the mouth of Sheol that was opened in the wilderness. David also said, The wicked shall turn back to Sheol.(6) We say that to Sheol, in which Korah and his companions were swallowed up, thither shall the wicked be turned back. For God has power, if He chooses, to give inheritance of life in heaven, and if it please Him, in the earth. Jesus our Lord said. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.(1) And to one of those who were crucified

with Him, who believed on him He swore:--Thou shalt be with Me to-day in the garden Eden.(2) And the Apostle said, When the righteous shall rise again, they shall fly upwards to meet our Redeemer.(3) But, however, we say thus: That which our Redeemer said to us is true:--Heaven and earth shall pass away.(4) And the Apostle said, Hope which is seen is not hope.(5) And the Prophet said, The heavens shall pass away as smoke, and the earth as a garment shall wear away; and its inhabitants shall become like it.(6) And Job said concerning those that sleep, Till the heavens wear out, they shall not be aroused, nor shall they wake out of their sleep.(7) From these things be thou persuaded that this earth, in which the children of Adam are sown, and the firmament that is over men, (even) that firmament which is set to divide the upper heavens from the earth and this life, shall pass away, and wear out, and be destroyed. And God will make a new thing for the children of Adam, and they shall inherit inheritances in the Kingdom of Heaven. If He shall give them inheritance in the earth, it shall be called the kingdom of heaven. And if in Heaven, it is easy for Him to do. For with the kings of the earth also, although each one of them abides in his own place, yet every place to which their authority extends, is called their kingdom. So the sun is a luminary set in the heaven, yet for every place to which its rays extend, its authority suffices, whether on sea or on land. And observe that the princes of the world also have banquetings and delights, and in every place or state into which they go, their banquetings are with them; and in whatever place pleases them, they make a prison-house. For the sun in twelve hours circles round, from the east unto the west; and when he has accomplished his course, his light is hidden in the night-time, and the night is not disturbed by his power. And in the hours of the night the sun turns round in his rapid course, and turning round begins to run in his accustomed path. As for the sun that is with thee, thou wise man, from thy childhood till the completion of thy old age, thou knowest not where he runs in the night-time, so as to circle round to the place of its course. Is it necessary for thee to inquire into those things that are hidden from thee?

25. These memorials I have written for our brethren and beloved, the children of the Church of God, that when these come into their hands in various places, and when they read in them, they may also remember my insignificance in their prayers, and may know that I am a sinner also, and fail short; but that this is my faith, that I have set forth from the beginning and written, in these chapters written (by me). Faith is the foundation, and upon faith (rest) the works that become it. And after Faith (I wrote) that there are two commandments of love. And after Love, I have written of Fasting, in its demonstration also along with its works. And after Fasting, I wrote of Prayer in its fruit and in its works. And after Prayer, have written about War and about whatever Daniel wrote concerning the kingdoms. And after War, I have written of the exhortation for Monks. And after the Monks, I have written about Repentance. And after Repentance, I have written about the Resurrection of the dead. And after the Resurrection of the dead, I have written about Humility. And after Humility, I have written of the Pastors, the teachers. And after the Pastors, I have written about the Circumcision in which the people of the Jews pride themselves. And after the Circumcision, I have written about the Passover, and about the fourteenth day. And after the Passover, I have written about the Sabbath, in which the Jews are puffed up. And after the Sabbath, I have written an Exhortation, on account of the dissension which happened in our days. And after the Exhortation, I have written about Meats, those that the jews deem unclean. And after the Meats, I have written about the Gentiles, that they have entered in and become heirs instead of the original people. And after the Gentiles, I have written and proved that God has a Son. And after the Son of God, I have written against the Jews, who speak injuriously about Virginity. And after the apology about Virginity, I have written again Against the Jews, who say:--"It is appointed for us to be gathered together." And after that defence, I have written about Almsgiving to the Poor. And after the Poor, I have written a demonstration about The Persecuted. And after the Persecuted, I have written at the end about Death and the Last Times. These twenty-two discourses have I written according to the twenty-two letters of the alphabet. The first ten I wrote in the six hundred and forty-eighth year of the kingdom of Alexander the son of Philip the Macedonian, as is written in the end of them. And these twelve last I wrote in the six hundred and fifty-fifth year of the kingdom of the Greeks and of the Romans, which is the kingdom of Alexander, and in the thirty-fifth year of the Persian King(1)

26. These things I have written according to what I have attained to. But if anyone shall read these discourses, and find words that do not agree with his thought, he ought not to scorn them; because

whatsoever is written in these chapters was not written according to the thought of one man, nor for the persuasion of one reader; but according to the thought of all the Church, and for the persuasion of all faith. If he shall read and hear with persuasion, it is well; and if not, it is meet for me to say that I wrote for those open to persuasion and not for mockers. And if again any reader should find words that are spoken by us in one fashion, and by another sage in another fashion, let him not be disturbed at this; for every man speaks to his hearers according to what he can attain to. So I, who have written these things, even if some of the words do not agree with what other speakers have said, yet say this; that those sages have spoken well, yet it seemed good to me to speak thus. And if any man shall speak and demonstrate to me about any matter, I will receive instruction from him without contention. Everyone who reads the sacred scriptures, both former and latter, in both covenants, and reads with persuasion, will learn and teach. But if he strives about anything that he does not understand, his mind does not receive teaching. But if he finds words that are too difficult for him, and he does not understand their force, let him say thus, "Whatsoever is written is written well, but I have not attained to the understanding of it." And if he shall ask about the matters that are too hard for him of wise and discerning men who inquire into doctrine, then, when ten wise men shall speak to him in ten different ways about one matter, let him accept that which pleases him; and if any please not him, let him not scorn the sages; for the word of God is like a pearl, that has a beautiful appearance on whatever side you turn it. And remember, O disciple, what David said, From all my teachers have I learned.(2) And the Apostle said:--Thou readest every Scripture that is in the Spirit of God. And prove everything; hold fast that which is good; and flee from every evil thing.(3) For if the days of a man should be many as all the days of the world from Adam to the end of the ages, and he should sit and meditate upon the Holy Scriptures, he would not comprehend all the force of the depth of the words. And man cannot rise up to the wisdom of God; as I have written in the tenth discourse. But, however, the words of all speakers who do not take from the great treasure, are accursed and to be despised. For the image of the king (on his coin) is received whet ever it goes; but (the coin) in which there is base metal, is rejected and is not received. And if any one should say, "These discourses were spoken by such an one;" let him carefully learn that to be careful to inquire about the speaker is not commanded him. I also according to my insignificance have written these things, a man sprung from Adam, and fashioned by the hands of God, a disciple of the Holy Scriptures. For our Lord said:--Every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and for him that knocketh it shall be opened.(1) And the prophet said:--I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh in the last days, and they shall prophesy.(2) Therefore whoever shall read anything that I have written above, let him read with persuasion, and pray for the author as a brother of the Body; that through the petition of all the Church of God; his sins may be forgiven. And let whoever reads understand what is written:--Let him that hears the word, communicate to him that causes him to hear, in all good things.(3) And again it is written, The sower and the reaper shall rejoice together.(4) And Every man according to his labours shall receive his reward.(5) And There is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed to every man.(6)

## **346 AD**

**St. Pachomius (290 – 346 AD), Abbot of Tabennisi**

**The Bohairic Life on Paradise, Hell, and Heavenly Ascents**

**The Life of Saint Pachomius And His Disciples**

**Excerpted from 1980 publication "Pachomian Koinonia Vol. One", translated by Armand Veilleux, Monk of Mistassini**

### **Paragraph 73 – Pachomius has a Terrifying Apparition**

This is the revelation that our father Pachomius saw in his prayer. Looking toward the east wall of the sanctuary, [he saw the wall] become all golden; and on it there was a large icon, like a large picture [of someone] wearing a crown on [his] head. That crown was glorious in the extreme; all around its sides were multicolored images which resembled precious stones and which are the fruits of the Holy Spirit: faith, goodness, fear, mercy, purity, humility, righteousness, patience, kindness, gentleness, temperance, joy, hope, and perfect charity.' Before the icon were two great and very august archangels, motionless and

contemplating the Lord's image that had appeared in the assembly room. While watching that great revelation, our father Pachomius went on praying and imploring [God] in these terms: 'Lord, may your fear descend on us all forever, so that we may not sin against you all our life long.' And he went on repeating that same prayer. Then the angels said to him, 'You cannot endure the fear of the Lord as you request'. He answered, 'Yes, I can, by God's grace.' And at once the ray of fear, after the manner of the sun rising on the entire world, and without leaving its place, moved gradually forward toward him. That shining ray was very green and its sight wonderfully terrifying. When fear touched him, it pinched all his members, his heart, his marrow, and his whole body; and at once he fell to the ground and began to writhe like a living fish. His soul grew very sad and he fainted away toward death. The angels were watching him with part of their faces without in the least averting their eyes from the image of the Lord that was appearing to our father Pachomius. They said to him, 'Did we not tell you that you could not stand the full shock of the Lord?' He cried out, 'Have mercy on me, my Lord Jesus Christ!' At once the ray of fear retreated gradually until it returned to its place. Then the sheen of mercy moved toward him like a rich holy chrism. When mercy reached him he was comforted; he rose at once to his feet and blessed God until the time when the brothers do the synaxis; and he rested a while.

### **Paragraph 82 – Visions Concerning the Fate of Souls at the Time of Death**

Here is the way the angels of light visit the good brothers, as the thing was many times revealed to [Pachomius] by the Lord. If the dying man is good, three angels whose rank corresponds to the measure of the dying man's conduct come to fetch him. If he is of a high rank by his practices, angels who are outstanding are sent to conduct him to God. If on the other hand he is a little one in virtues, angels of lower rank are sent to come for him. God acts thus so that those [angels] who come <to visit> the man may lift him out of his body with proper patience, and lest some high-ranking [angels], being sent to take someone who is of low rank by his practices, should treat him according to the custom of earthly authorities. These [authorities] act with partiality, impressed by the riches and empty glory, and treat those who are despised or poor according to their condition of scorn and poverty.' But the divine powers act in all things in accordance with right judgement, in conformity with the Lord's command and with the merit of the works that have been accomplished.

The three angels sent to fetch a man are in ascending rank, and the one of lower rank always obeys the one whose rank is higher. At the moment when the man is about to breathe his last, one of the angels stands by his head, another by his feet, in the attitude of men who with their hands would anoint him with oil until the soul should leave the body. The third spreads out a large spiritual cloth on which' to receive the soul with honor. As for the soul of the holy man, it is beautiful to see and white as snow. After the soul has emerged from the body onto the cloth, one of the angels seizes the two upper corners of the cloth, the other the two lower ones, after the manner of men on earth lifting a body. The third angel sings in front of the soul in a language no one knows; even the others, namely our father Pachomius and Theodore who were having this apparition, did not understand their singing; they only heard the angel making resound the word Alleluia. And thus they proceeded through the air toward the east with the soul; they did not proceed as men do on foot, but advanced with a gliding movement like flowing water; for they are spirits. They proceeded on high with the soul so it might see the boundaries of the universe from one end to the other, that it might see all creation and glorify God whose creation it was.

After that, they let him know the place in which he will rest by the Lord's order so that, having once entered the place of his rest earned by his good works, he may realize what torments he has escaped and may thus the more bless the Lord for saving him from all those sufferings through the goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then they bring him to the feet of the man of God who taught him the fear of the Lord and nourished him with his law. He in turn carries him like a gift to the feet of the Lord. Then he blesses the Lord outspokenly saying, 'I will bless you, my Lord, with all your saints.' After that they lead him to the resting place the Lord assigned him according to the measure of the works he accomplished. <At the time the soul is about to be presented to the Lord, >4 it is authorized to come near—or to stay at a distance—in accordance with the

merit of the good works it accomplished on earth. For whoever has merited everlasting life doubtless also sings and blesses the Lord before entering the resting place prepared for him by the Lord. <And when they bless the Lord>,5 there are some who see the Lord and bless him, thanks to their purity of heart, saying, Blessed are the pure in heart; they shall see God. For whoever is negligent in his practices has not deserved to see God in the glory of his godhead, because his purity of heart is not perfect. Nevertheless if he deserves simply life, he sees the flesh of the Son of God, that is, his humanity, which is one with his divinity in which it exists inseparably.

According to the merits of each of the dead, the saints come toward those who have done God's good pleasure to meet them solemnly, by the Lord's command. They come toward some of them as far as the door of life and embrace them. They come toward others a distance proportionate to their merits. Others they let come near them before getting up and embracing them. Others have not even enough merit to be embraced by the saints; they merely inherit life in the measure of their littleness. When they come forth to meet them, the just wear crowns brighter than those which the person they come out to meet has won in combats on earth in which he fought against the devil, except the crown of justice which on resurrection day he will receive from God the just judge, as Paul says.' When the soul of the just comes close to the door of life, the Lord puts David's words into his mouth so he may repeat them saying, Open for me the gates of righteousness so I may enter and glorify the Lord. And the angel who keeps the door of life answers saying, This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous ones will enter there. If it is the souls of some who were disciples of perfect men, the angels who accompany them exclaim when they arrive at the door, Open the gates! Let in the people that keep righteousness and that keep justice and peace, for they have hoped in you, Lord, as it is written in Isaiah.'

Our father Pachomius had this great revelation in the monastery of Thmousons on the occasion of the brother catechumen who was secretly baptized before dying. After seeing how the righteous leave the body, he asked further how the soul of the sinner leaves the body; and the angel said to him, 'The Lord will give you entire satisfaction. If it is a soul with an evil way of life, two merciless angels come to fetch it at the time it is to be visited. When the man is at the point of death, when he no longer recognizes anyone, one of the merciless angels is placed near his head, the other at his feet; and thus they begin to thrash him until his wretched soul is on the point of going up. Then they thrust into his mouth a hooked object, a sort of fish-hook, and they yank that wretched soul out of his body; it is dark and shady. Then they tie it to the tail of a spirit-horse — for [the soul] also is a spirit—and thus they take it away and pitch it into torments or else to the bottom of hell, according to its works' deserts.'

'In fact, there are also many good men who pass through these sufferings during their last illness and at the moment of breathing their last. It is because they resemble cooked meat that still needs to be cooked a little longer before being eaten. It is the same with the faithful who are so tried in their latter days before dying as to be free of everything and pure before the Lord. We know likewise that some holy men were made to undergo sufferings at the time of their death, for instance, saint Stephen, all the martyrs, and those who can be likened to them. Job, too, David, and many other holy men sustained great suffering and many tribulations in the course of their lives, some on their deathbed. In fact, many sinners die quietly without having undergone sufferings in this world because of the tribulations and the punishments awaiting them, as it is written, The wicked man is kept for an evil day. That is why, having seen this sort of people, Ecclesiastes said, The same end will come to the righteous and the wicked, the pure and the impure, the good and the bad. Indeed we see our Saviour, the Lord of all, hung on the cross with two thieves, one on the right, one on the left, and the Lord in between.' These things were taught to our father Pachomius at Thmousons. And he was very happy that the brother catechumen had entered into the resting place of the holy men of the Lord. And when that brother had been carried to the mountain and buried beside the brothers, our father went south quickly with Theodore to Phbow, grateful to the Lord for what he had seen.

### **Paragraph 83 – Vision of a Soul Escorted by Angels into Heaven**

Another day, as Theodore was sitting somewhere in the assembly room, he heard in the air angel voices singing a melodious song. He rose at once and went to our father Pachomius, who said, 'It is a righteous soul that has left its body with which they are passing over above us; and we also have had the grace of hearing those who are blessing God in front of it'. While they were speaking together they looked up, they saw the one who had been visited, and they knew who he was.'

The Lord often opened their eyes. And they saw the angel of God at the altar in the sanctuary dispensing to those who were worthy the sacred mysteries by the hand of the priest or the bishop who was dispensing them. And if someone who was unworthy or defiled came forward to receive the sacred mysteries, the angel would withdraw his hand, and it was the celebrant alone who dispensed them to him.'

### **Paragraph 88 – Vision of the Punishments of Sinners After Death**

Still another day, by the Lord's command, our father Pachomius was carried away that he might contemplate the punishments and the torments to which the children of men are subject. Was it in the body that he was carried away, was it out of the body? — God knows that he was carried away.' Having been brought to the north of the paradise of delights, far from this world and from the firmament, he saw rivers, canals, and ditches filled with fire; in them the souls of sinners were being tormented. And while he walked with the angel, contemplating the torments, he saw those above where he was now going suffering much more than those he had seen at the start. They were delivered up to torturing angels of a very frightening aspect and holding fiery whips in their hands. If some of the souls they were tormenting lifted their heads above the fire, they would whip them hard and thrust them farther into the fire. They would sigh desperately without being able to cry out because of their exhaustion and because of the way they were suffering the great number of torments weighing on them. The souls being tormented were very numerous, even innumerable.

He likewise saw wells and cisterns filled with fire which burned more fiercely still. He looked in and saw that there was only one soul in each cistern. That soul's two feet, which had the appearance of the flesh it wore in the world, were set one on each side of the cistern. And fire was consuming, one by one, the members with which it had sullied itself in the world. On looking attentively at one of the cisterns, he recognized the one who was being tormented in it; it was one of those who are marked out in the world, and whom the Scriptures call effeminate.'

He likewise saw monks subjected to punishments in that place, and he questioned the angel who was walking with him, 'What evil have these done to be brought here?' The angel answered, 'Those whom you see are quite pure as regards the body, but they are idlers who go about in places where brothers live as anchorites. They speak evil of the other brothers living near [those they are visiting], knowing that the latter are not on good terms with the former, and thus they think they will find favor on account of their slanders, with a view to getting food and drink. And when they leave these [brothers] and go away elsewhere, in turn they speak ill of those they have been flattering in the ears of those they had just been slandering, again with a view to being well-received by these others. And so for their slanders they have been cast into these hard torments that never cease.'

The torturing angels were quite filled with joy and gladness. They rejoiced as an administrator rejoices to see his master's wealth increasing; for the Lord had created them pitiless, that they might not feel sorrow for the wicked men turned over to them to be tormented. And if the souls they are tormenting beg them to have pity on them, they are full of anger toward them and punish them more with fierce torments. When souls are brought in and turned over to them, they are overjoyed—like one who has made an immense gain — happy over the downfall of the wicked.

As our father Pachomius was looking at the punishments with the angel who accompanied him, one of the torturing angels tugged at him and said joyfully, 'Come, Pachomius, let me show you these other wicked punishments'. Our father Pachomius, seeing himself gaily dragged by him to look at all these punishments, was amazed at the nature of these pitiless angels and at the way they rejoiced over such evil torments. As for



him, he was very sad at the sight of the sufferings in which were found the wretched souls of impious men that were being tormented.

When he had gone on a bit he saw an innumerable crowd of souls of all ages being roughly hustled along by the pitiless torturing angels. Once more he asked his accompanying angel who these souls were and he was told, 'These are the souls of sinners who died today throughout the world, and they are being classified for punishment according to their deserts.'

Having gone on once more toward the west with the angel who was accompanying him and showing him the punishments, he saw down below an opening at the gate of hell. Hell itself is very deep; it is dark and sends out heat like a hearth. This place is the Lord's prison. When men are brought in, they are hurled into it; they utter loud cries, 'Woe is me for not knowing the God who created me that I might be saved'. Then they cannot speak at all because of the heat and the thick mist of the place. And they no longer recognize each other because of the darkness and the distress that grips them.

Going further on, toward the southwest, he saw there other harsh punishments, of the sort which he had previously seen to the north and by which the souls were being punished. He was further shown a kind of large house of stone whose length, breadth, and height were enormous. It was full of fire. Into it were thrown all the young people who in this world have sullied their bodies with impurity, unbeknownst to their parents; that is why they are enduring these fierce torments for evil and impure acts which are wicked before God and before men.

It happened that when the angel had finished showing our father Pachomius all the punishments and the sufferings of the torments they entailed by command of the Lord, he counseled him urgently in these terms, 'Pachomius, bear witness to the brothers of all that you have seen, so that they may strive not to fall into such evil punishments. God has sent me to you to show you all this; in turn bear witness of it to the brothers and to the whole world, that they may do penance and be saved.' From that day on when our father Pachomius assembled the brothers for the instruction, he spoke to them first on the Scriptures because they are the main thing and the breath of God; then he would inform them about all the punishments he had seen and about the sufferings they entailed, and concerning which the angel had given him instructions from the Lord, so that they might have the fear of God and might avoid sinning and falling into such punishments and into the tortures which he had seen.

**Paragraph 103 – Vision of Pachomius (of Dark and Gloomy Hell symbolizing Apostacy of the World)**

Upon another day it happened that the Lord sent our father Pachomius a vision. He looked and saw the aspect of a dark and gloomy hell, in the midst of which stood a pillar. Voices were heard from all sides making an outcry and saying, 'Here is the light, here close to us'. The men in that place were groping their way, for great was the darkness of that gloomy place and very frightening. Then when they would hear 'Here is the light, here close to us', they would run there seeking the light and wanting to see it; but when they ran forward they would hear another voice behind them, 'Here is the light, over here'; and at once they would turn to the rear seeking the light because of the voices they had heard. He saw also in the vision some of those who were in the darkness, as if circling a pillar and thinking they were going forward and drawing near the light, not realizing that they were only turning around a pillar. He looked again and saw in that place the whole community of the Koinonia walking one after the other, holding fast to each other for fear of getting lost by reason of that deep darkness. Those who were in front had a small light like that of a lamp to light their way; only four of the brothers saw that light, while all the rest saw no light whatever. Our father Pachomius watched their way of progressing; if one let go his hold on the man in front of him, he would lose his way in the darkness, along with all those who came after him. He saw one of them, called Paniski and a great man among the brothers, refusing with a few others to walk behind the man in front showing them the way. Then the man of God Pachomius called them each by name in his ecstasy before they should give up, saying, 'Hold to the man in front for fear of going astray!' The small light that went before the brothers continued in front of them until it reached a great opening through which a great light on high was coming;

they climbed up to it. This opening was fitted with a great trap to keep the light from falling below and to keep those who were in the dark from going out by it.

After he had seen this our father Pachomius was likewise instructed on the interpretation of the vision by the one who had shown him all this; 'The image of the hell that you saw is this world; the gloomy darkness that reigns there are all the stupid errors and vain cares. As for the men who are there, they are the souls without knowledge; and the voices crying "here is the light, here close to us", are the heretics—and the schismatics — each of which says, "Ours is the right opinion". The pillars' around which they walk in circles are the authors of error the simple ones trusted in because they said, "We are they who save; they are those who lead astray." The brothers showing the way are all those who love the Lord and walk in the right faith as it is written, For all of you are one in Christ.' He was told besides, 'Those of the brothers who let go their hold stand for bishops who are in the right faith of Christ, but are in communion with the heretics and mislead many of those they teach and especially men who know no malice; they neglect those who behave well and give scandal to many. As it is written, Woe to him through whom scandal comes.'

(The small light guiding the brothers is the Gospel, divine truth; truly he who is deluded by himself and by his passions is not pure, as it is written, Among them God has blinded the hearts of the faithless ones of this age that they might not see the light of the Gospel of Christ who is the image of God.) That is also why that light is small, for in the holy Gospels it is written about the kingdom of heaven, It is like a mustard seed, which is small. As to the flood of light coming in on high through the opening, it is the word spoken by the Apostle, Until we shall all have come to that same notion of faith and to the knowledge of the Son of God; to the perfect man, to the exact measure of the fullness of Christ Jesus.'

#### **Paragraph 114 – Pachomius' Trip to Heaven**

It happened once that he fell sick and he suffered so much that those sent out to fetch him snatched his soul away and he died. Then he was brought to the other age. But as he was approaching the gate of life, an order came from God to bring him back to his body once more. He was sad when he learned this, because he did not want to come back to his body again. Indeed he saw that the light of that air was wonderful and of such beauty as to be indescribable because of its splendor. As he was sad, a man who stood at the door to guard it turned toward him to look at him. The face of that man shone like a great painting because of its splendor, and the appearance of his body was all light. That man said to him, 'Go, my son, return to your body, for you still have to suffer a small martyrdom in the world'. When he heard this word he was very happy, for he greatly desired to be a martyr for the Lord's name. The angels who rejoiced with him informed him that, 'This man who is speaking to you is the apostle Paul'.

As soon as they brought him to the place where his body was, the soul considered its body; and behold, it was dead. It happened that when the soul approached the body, all the members of the body secretly opened up; the soul took its place again and the body became alive. While [Pachomius'] soul had been carried away, the brother who was with him slept.

After this, he was carried away to Paradise many other times. In what manner? God knows; as the Apostle says, Either in the body, I do not know; or without the body, I do not know, it is God who knows; and so it is that that one was caught up to the third heaven and he heard secret words which man' is not allowed to repeat. So also our father Pachomius was carried away to that place, and he saw the cities of the saints, of which it is not possible to describe the constructions, the monuments, and the good things that the Lord has prepared for those who love him.' When he saw those cities, he remembered what the Lord says in a parable in the Gospel, speaking to the servants whose talents had produced ten and five talents, Enter into your master's happiness,<sup>3</sup> and again, He said to one, 'Be in charge of ten cities'; and to the other, 'Be in charge of five.'

The climate of that age is very even and its surface without limits. The fruit trees and the vineyards produce a spiritual food and are incorruptible, so that the fruits of the trees of this age are like unworthy and

contemptible things compared to their variety. No tree or plant growing in paradise is ever deprived of fruits profusely giving out great fragrance. A man cannot bear that fragrance without passing out, unless the Lord gives him the grace. That age is above this earth and outside the firmament. That land is far above the mountains. The lights that are in the firmament and lighten the earth are not those that lighten that age, but it is the Lord that lightens it, as Isaiah says, It will not be the light of the sun that will lighten us during the day, neither the shining of the moon that will lighten us by night, but the Lord will be our everlasting light. There is no day or night in that age, but it is lightened by an abundant and unceasing light. So great are its boundaries that this world is nothing in comparison. A little outside the paradise there are many fruit trees and vineyards totally like those of this world.

### **Paragraph 123 – Pachomius' Death (Vision of Angels Ranked Above Each Other)**

When he had said these things, he fell unconscious for a little while and did not say anything more to any of them. Then he made the sign of the cross with his hand three times. Suddenly he opened his mouth and gave up his spirit, on the fourteenth of the month of Pasons at the tenth hour of the day.' Such great fear [overcame them] at that moment that the place trembled three times. And many of the ancients who often had visions said, 'We saw throngs of angels ranked above each other contemplating him. They preceded him singing very joyfully till he was received into his resting place.'

### **306 – 373 AD**

#### **St. Ephrem the Syrian (306 – 373 AD), Syriac Church Father**

#### **Paradise Has Four Levels: Summit, Heights, Slopes, & Lower Parts; Inhabitants Of These Regions Are Correspondingly: God, Victorious, Righteous, & Repentant Hymns on Paradise (Excerpts)**

#### **Presentation on St. Phillips Seminary site:**

**[http://www.st-philip.net/presentations/paradise\\_hymns.pdf](http://www.st-philip.net/presentations/paradise_hymns.pdf)**

One finds examples of types as "things revealed" when St. Ephrem discusses the topography of the Garden.

He describes Paradise as a mountain divided into distinct regions, each with their own inhabitants.

The summit is the abode for the "glory of God's presence," shkintha. The heights are reserved for the victorious, naçikhe, the middle region for the righteous, zadiqe, and the lowest parts for the repentant, tayabe. According to one's spiritual labors one is allowed to proceed up the Paradisiacal mountain, being halted at the level of which "he is worthy," dshawe leh. Nobody is excluded since there are enough levels for all.

Hence Paradise has four levels: the summit, the heights, the slopes, and the lower parts. The inhabitants of these regions are correspondingly: God, the victorious, the righteous, and the repentant.

One set of "types of Paradise," here, tuphsaw dpardaisa, deals with Noah and the Ark. The animals lived in the lowest part, to the birds was allotted the middle part, while Noah, like the deity, lived in the upper deck.

Mount Sinai provides yet more types. The people were below, the priests round about the mountain, Aaron midway up, and Moses at the heights, while "the Glorious One," mshabhkha, was at the summit.

In these types Paradise, the harbor of all riches, is portrayed, whereby also the Church is portrayed. Thus one finds here several types of Paradise which in turn is a type of the Church.

When He made this intricate design  
He varied its beauties,

so that some levels  
were far more glorious than others,  
To the degree that one level  
is higher than another,  
so too is its glory  
the more sublime.

In this way He allots  
the foothills to the most lowly,  
the slopes to those in between  
and the heights to the exalted.

When the just ascend its various levels  
they receive their inheritance,  
with justice He raises up each one  
to the degree that accords with his labors;  
each is stopped at the level  
whereof he is worthy,  
there being sufficient levels in Paradise  
for everyone;  
the lowest parts for the repentant,  
the middle for the righteous,  
the heights for those victorious,  
while the summit is reserved for God's presence.

Noah made the animals live  
in the lowest part of the Ark;  
in the middle part  
he lodged the birds,  
while Noah himself, like the Deity,  
resided on the upper deck.

On Mount Sinai it was the people  
who dwelt below,  
the priests round about it,  
and Aaron halfway up,  
while Moses was on its heights,  
and the Glorious One on the Summit.

A symbol of the divisions  
in that Garden of Life  
did Moses trace out in the Ark  
and on Mount Sinai too;  
he depicted for us the types of Paradise  
with all its arrangements:  
harmonious, fair and desirable  
in all things --  
in its height, its beauty,  
is the harbor of all riches,  
whereby the Church is depicted. (Hymns on Paradise. 2:10-14)

In this example, the Ark and Sinai are types of the eschatological Paradise. Even the human body, phagra, soul, naphsha, and intellectual spirit, tar'itha (literally "intellect"), are types of Paradise. In any of these types, one receives a partial revelation of the levels of Paradise. Nonetheless, all the types in the world will never depict anything but a partial manifestation of Paradisiacal glory. For a fuller experience thereof, one must await the eschaton. In the meantime, human knowledge of Paradise will be partial and thus subjective, albeit genuine.

**330 – 379 AD**

**St. Basil the Great (306 – 373 AD), Church Father**

**For Among The Glories Of The Saints Are "Many Mansions" In The Father's House; That Is Differences Of Dignities**

**On the Holy Spirit**

**Paragraph 40**

Moreover by any one who carefully uses his reason it will be found that even at the moment of the expected appearance of the Lord from heaven the Holy Spirit will not, as some suppose, have no functions to discharge: on the contrary, even in the day of His revelation, in which the blessed and only potentate will judge the world in righteousness, the Holy Spirit will be present with Him. For who is so ignorant of the good things prepared by God for them that are worthy, as not to know that the crown of the righteous is the grace of the Spirit, bestowed in more abundant and perfect measure in that day, when spiritual glory shall be distributed to each in proportion as he shall have nobly played the man? For among the glories of the saints are "many mansions" in the Father's house; that is differences of dignities. For as "star differeth from star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." They, then, that were sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption, and preserve pure and undiminished the first fruits which they received of the Spirit, are they that shall hear the words "well done thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." In like manner they which have grieved the Holy Spirit by the wickedness of their ways, or have not wrought for Him that gave to them, shall be deprived of what they have received, their grace being transferred to others; or, according to one of the evangelists, they shall even be wholly cut asunder, — the cutting asunder meaning complete separation from the Spirit.

**330 – 389 AD**

**Gregory Nazianzen (306 – 373 AD), Eastern Church Father**

**Are There Many Mansions In God's House, Or Only One? Of Course You Will Admit That There Are Many, And Not Only One**

**Theological Orations**

**First Theological Oration (Oration 27)**

**A Preliminary Discourse Against the Eunomians**

VIII. And yet, O talkative Dialectician, I will ask you one small question, Job 38:3 and answer thou me, as He says to Job, Who through whirlwind and cloud gives Divine admonitions. Job 38:1 Are there many mansions in God's House, as you have heard, or only one? Of course you will admit that there are many, and not only one. Now, are they all to be filled, or only some, and others not; so that some will be left empty, and will have been prepared to no purpose? Of course all will be filled, for nothing can be in vain which has been done by God. And can you tell me what you will consider this Mansion to be? Is it the rest and glory which is in store There for the Blessed, or something else?— No, not anything else. Since then we are agreed upon this point, let us further examine another also. Is there any thing that procures these Mansions, as I think there is; or is there nothing?— Certainly there is— What is it? Is it not that there are various modes of conduct, and various purposes, one leading one way, another another way, according to the proportion of

faith, and these we call Ways? Must we, then, travel all, or some of these Ways...the same individual along them all, if that be possible; or, if not, along as many as may be; or else along some of them? And even if this may not be, it would still be a great thing, at least as it appears to me, to travel excellently along even one.— "You are right in your conception."— What then when you hear there is but One way, and that a narrow one, Matthew 7:14 does the word seem to you to show? That there is but one on account of its excellence. For it is but one, even though it be split into many parts. And narrow because of its difficulties, and because it is trodden by few in comparison with the multitude of the adversaries, and of those who travel along the road of wickedness. "So I think too." Well, then, my good friend, since this is so, why do you, as though condemning our doctrine for a certain poverty, rush headlong down that one which leads through what you call arguments and speculations, but I frivolities and quackeries? Let Paul reprove you with those bitter reproaches, in which, after his list of the Gifts of Grace, he says, Are all Apostles? Are all Prophets? Etc. 1 Corinthians 12:29

**349 – 407 AD**

**St. John Chrysostom (306 – 373 AD), Eastern Church Father**

**In Hell & In Kingdom One Will Find Many Differences; In My Fathers House Are Many Mansions; One Glory Of Sun, Another Glory Of Moon, Difference In That World Between One Star & Another**

**Two Exhortations to Theodore After His Fall**

But I do not wish you to be any of these, nor to be brought out of despair to confession, but with a good expectation, after cutting away the whole root of despair, to manifest zeal in the contrary direction. And what is the root and mother of this despair? It is indolence; or rather one would not call it the root only, but also the nurse and mother. For as in the case of wool decay breeds moths, and is in turn increased by them; so here also indolence breeds despair, and is itself nourished in turn by despair; and thus supplying each other with this accursed exchange, they acquire no small additional power. If any one then cuts one of these off, and hews it in pieces, he will easily be able to get the better of the remaining one. For on the one hand he who is not indolent will never fall into despair, and on the other he who is supported by good hopes, and does not despair of himself, will not be able to fall into indolence. Pray then, wrench this pair asunder, and break the yoke in pieces, by which I mean a variable and yet depressing habit of thought; for that which holds these two things together is not uniform, but manifold in shame and character. And what is this? It happens that one who has repented has done many great and good deeds, but meanwhile he has committed some sin equivalent to those good deeds, and this especially is sufficient to plunge him into despair, as if the buildings which had been set up were all pulled down, and all the labor which he had bestowed upon them had been vain and come to naught. But this must be taken into account, and such reasoning must be repelled, because, if we do not store up in good time a measure of good deeds equivalent to the sins which are committed after them, nothing can hinder us from sinking grievously and completely. But as it is, (right action ) like some stout breastplate does not suffer the sharp and bitter dart to accomplish its work, but even if it is itself cut through, it averts much danger from the body. For he who departs to the other world with many deeds both good and bad, will have some alleviation in respect of the punishment and the torment there; but if a man is destitute of these good works, and takes only the evil with him, it is impossible to say what great sufferings he will undergo, when he is conducted to everlasting punishment. For a balance will be struck there between the evil deeds and those which are not such; and should the latter weigh down the scale they will to no small extent have saved the doer of them, and the injury arising from the doing of evil deeds is not so strong as to drag the man down from the foremost place; but if the evil deeds exceed, they carry him off into hell fire, because the number of his good actions is not so great as to be able to make a stand against this violent impulse. And these things are not merely suggested by our own reasoning, but declared also by the divine oracles; for He Himself says, He shall reward every man according to his works. Romans 2:6 And not only in hell, but also in the kingdom one will find many differences; for He says in my Fathers house are many mansions; John 14:2 and, there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon. 1 Corinthians 15:41

And what wonder, if in dealing with such great matters he has spoken with such precision, seeing that He declares there is a difference in that world even between one star and another?

Knowing then all these things let us never desist from doing good deeds, nor grow weary, nor, if we should be unable to reach the rank of the sun or of the moon, let us despise that of the stars. For if only we display thus much virtue at least, we shall be able to have a place in Heaven. And though we may not have become gold, or precious stone, yet if we only occupy the rank of silver we shall abide in the foundation; only let us not fall back again into that material which the fire readily devours, nor, when we are unable to accomplish great things, desist also from small ones, for this is the part of extreme folly, which I trust we may not experience. For just as material wealth increases if the lovers of it do not despise even the smallest gains, so is it also with the spiritual. For it is a strange thing that the judge should not overlook the reward of even a cup of cold water, but that we, if our achievements are not altogether great, should neglect the performance of little things. For he who does not despise the lesser things, will exercise much zeal concerning the greatest; but he who overlooks the former will also abstain from the latter; and to prevent this taking place Christ has defined great rewards even for these small things. For what is easier than to visit the sick? Yet even this He requites with a great recompense. Lay hold then on eternal life, delight in the Lord, and supplicate Him; take up again the easy yoke, bow yourself beneath the light burden, put a finish to your life worthy of the beginning; do not suffer so great a stream of wealth to slip past you. For if you should continue provoking God by your deeds, you will destroy yourself; but if before much damage has been done, and all your husbandry has been overwhelmed with a flood, you will dam up the channels of wickedness, you will be able to recover again what has been spoiled and to add to it not a little further produce. Having considered all these things, shake off the dust, get up from the ground, and you will be formidable to the adversary; for he himself indeed has overthrown you, as if you would never rise again; but if he sees you again lifting up your hands against him, he will receive such an unexpected blow that he will be less forward in trying to upset you again, and you yourself will be more secure against receiving any wound of that kind in future. For if the calamities of others are sufficient to instruct us, much more those which we have ourselves undergone. And this is what I expect speedily to see in the case of your own dear self, and that by the grace of God you are again become more radiant than before, and displaying such great virtue, as even to be a protector of others in the world above. Only do not despair, do not fall back; for I will not cease repeating this in every form of speech, and wherever I see you, as well as by the lips of others; and if you listen to this you will no longer need other remedies.

**349 – 407 AD**

**St. John Chrysostom (349 – 407 AD), Eastern Church Father**

**Having Made Two Ranks Of Righteous & Of Sinners, These He Subdivides Into Many Parts, Signifying That Neither Righteous Nor Sinners Shall Obtain Same; Neither Righteous Alike With Other Righteous, Nor Sinners With Other Sinners**

**Homilies on 1st Corinthians**

**Homilies**

**Homilies on 1st Corinthians**

15:40. "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another."

15:41. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differs from another star in glory."

And what means he by these expressions? Wherefore from the resurrection of the body did he throw himself into the discourse of the stars and the sun? He did not throw himself out, neither did he break off from his

purpose; far from it: but he still keeps to it. For whereas he had established the doctrine concerning the resurrection, he intimates in what follows that great will be then the difference of glory, though there be but one resurrection. And for the present he divides the whole into two: into "bodies celestial," and "bodies terrestrial." For that the bodies are raised again, he signified by the corn: but that they are not all in the same glory, he signifies by this. For as the disbelief of the resurrection makes men supine, so again it makes them indolent to think that all are vouchsafed the same reward. Wherefore he corrects both. And the one in the preceding verses he had completed; but this he begins now. And having made two ranks, of the righteous and of sinners, these same two he subdivides again into many parts, signifying that neither righteous nor sinners shall obtain the same; neither righteous men, all of them, alike with other righteous, nor sinners with other sinners.

Now he makes, you see, first, one separation between righteous and sinners, where he says, "bodies celestial, and bodies terrestrial:" by the "terrestrial" intimating the latter, and by the "celestial," the former. Then farther he introduces a difference of sinners from sinners, saying, "All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of fishes, another of birds, and another of beasts." And yet all are bodies; but some are in more, and some in lesser vileness; and that in their manner of living too, and in their very constitution.

And having said this, he ascends again to the heaven, saying, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon." For as in the earthly bodies there is a difference, so also in the heavenly; and that difference no ordinary one, but reaching even to the uttermost: there being not only a difference between sun and moon, and stars, but also between stars and stars. For what though they be all in the heaven? yet some have a larger, others a less share of glory. What do we learn from hence? That although they be all in God's kingdom, all shall not enjoy the same reward; and though all sinners be in hell, all shall not endure the same punishment. Wherefore he added,

15:42. "So also is the resurrection of the dead."

### **350 AD?**

#### **Pseudo-Mackarius (Mid-Fourth Century), Syriac Church Father**

#### **Passages on Ascents Prefiguring Resurrection**

#### **The Fifty Spiritual Homilies**

##### **(Moses on Mount Sinai Receiving the Law)**

For Moses, when he climbed the mountain, fasted for forty days. He went up as a mere man; he descended carrying God with him. And look, we see this verified in us. After the space of a few days, unless our bodies are sustained by nourishment, they would die. But Moses, after fasting forty days, descended even stronger than all of the others. For he was nourished by God, and his body was sustained by another, heavenly food. Indeed, the Word of God was his food, and he had a glory shining on his countenance. All this, which happened to him, was a figure of something else. For that glory now shines splendidly from within the hearts of Christians. At the resurrection their bodies, as they rise, will be covered with another vesture, one that is divine, and they will be nourished with a heavenly food. (Homily 12 Par.14)

##### **(Ezekiel during his Vision)**

When Ezekiel the prophet beheld the divinely glorious vision, he described it in human terms but in a way full of mysteries that completely surpass the powers of the human mind ... And all of this which the prophet saw in ecstasy or in a trance was indeed true and certain, but it was only signifying and foreshadowing something no less hidden, something divine and mysterious, a mystery hidden for generations (Col 1:26) but that has been revealed only in our time, the end of the ages, (1 Pt 1:20) when Christ appeared. For the prophet was viewing the mystery of the human soul that would receive its Lord and would become his throne of glory. For the soul that is deemed



to be judged worthy to participate in the light of the Holy Spirit by becoming his throne and habitation, and is covered with the beauty of ineffable glory of the Spirit, becomes all light, all face, all eye. (Homily 1 par. 1-2)

### **(Christ during His Transfiguration)**

As the body of the Lord was glorified when he climbed the mount and was transfigured into the divine glory and into infinite light, so also the bodies of the saints are glorified and shine like lightning.[lviii] Just as the interior glory of Christ covered his body and shone completely, in the same way also in the saints the interior power of Christ in them in the day will be poured out exteriorly upon their bodies ... as many lamps are lighted from the one, same fire, so also it is necessary that the bodies of the saints, which are members of Christ, become the same which Christ himself is. (Homily 15 par. 38)

### **Homily 5**

The Great Difference Between Christians and men of this world; for the latter, imbued with the spirit of this world, are in heart and mind held captive by earthly shackles; Christians, however, are possessed by a love for their Heavenly Father. They keep Him alone before their eyes in all their desires.

For this reason, Christians who are genuine Christians are optimistic and are glad to leave the body because they have that house not made by hands, which house is the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Therefore, even if the house of the body is destroyed, they do not fear, 'for they have the heavenly house of the Spirit and the incorruptible glory, which glory in the day of the resurrection will build up and glorify the house of the body, as the Apostle says: "He that raised Christ from the dead shall raise up also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that vivify us. It says: "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked" (2 Cor 5:3), and "He shall bring to life our mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in us" (Rom 8:11).

For blessed Moses provided us with a certain type through the glory of the Spirit which covered his countenance upon which no one could look with steadfast gaze. This type anticipates how in the resurrection of the just the bodies of the saints will be glorified with a glory which even now the souls of the saintly and faithful people are deemed worthy to possess within, in the indwelling of the inner man. It is written: "For we all with open face [that is to say, in the inward man], reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor 3:18). Likewise: "Moses for forty days and forty nights did not eat bread or drink water" (Ex 23:28). It is not possible that a natural body can live without bread so long, unless he partook of some other spiritual bread. This bread even now the saints invisibly partake by the power of the Holy Spirit.

11. In a double way, therefore, the blessed Moses shows us what glory true Christians will receive in the resurrection: namely, the glory of light and the spiritual delights of the Spirit which even now they are deemed worthy to possess interiorly. Because of this, these gifts of the Spirit will redound also in their bodies then. The saints even now possess this glory in their souls, as said above, but it will then cover and clothe their naked bodies. It will sweep them up into Heaven and we will at last come to rest, both body and soul, with the Lord forever.

When God created Adam, he did not furnish him with material wings as birds have, but he prepared for him the wings of the Holy Spirit. The same he plans on giving him at the resurrection, to lift him and direct him wherever the Spirit wishes. These wings the saints already now are deemed worthy to possess to fly up mentally to the realm of heavenly thoughts."

For Christians live in another world, eat from another table, are clothed differently, prefer different enjoyment, different dialogue, and a different mentality. Because of this they exceed all other men. This power already they are considered worthy to enjoy in their souls through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, also in

the resurrection their bodies • will be worthy to receive those eternal blessings of the Holy Spirit. They will be permeated with that glory which their souls in this life have already experienced.

12. Therefore, each one of us should strive and make every effort to pursue diligently all virtues. We ought to believe and seek from the Lord that the inner man receive even now this glory and that we may participate in the holiness of the Spirit so that, purged from all sordid traces of evil, we may receive also in the resurrection what will clothe our bodies as they rise naked, what will cover over any deformity, will vivify and transform them in the heavenly kingdom forever.

Christ will descend from Heaven and raise up all generations of Adam that have fallen asleep from the beginning of time, as Holy Scripture proves. And he will divide all into two parts. Those who bear his particular sign, that is, the sign of the Spirit, he will call to himself as his very own and place them at his right hand. He says: "My sheep hear my voice and I know mine own and I am known by mine" (in 10:27, 14). Then shall their bodies be surrounded with the divine glory because of their good works. They themselves will be filled with the glory of the Spirit which in this life they enjoyed in their souls. And thus, illumined by the divine light and caught up into Heaven "to meet the Lord in the air (as is written), we shall be always with the Lord" (1 Thes 4:17), reigning with him forever and ever. Amen.

### **Homily 8**

Concerning those things which occur when Christians pray; on the degrees of perfection that is, whether Christians are able to reach the highest degree of perfection

6. Question: Tell us, in what degree of perfection are you

Answer: After I received the experience of the sign of the cross, grace now acts in this manner. It quiets all my parts and my heart so that the soul with the greatest joy seems to be a guileless child. No longer am I a man that condemns Greek or Jew or sinner or worldling. Truly, the interior man looks on all human beings with pure eyes and finds joy in the whole world. He really wishes to reverence and love all Greeks and Jews.

At certain times he, like the son of a king, places all his trust in the Son of God as in his father. Doors are opened to him and he enters inside into "many mansions", (Jn 14:2). And the further he enters, again new doors open in a progression. From a hundred mansions he enters into another hundred. He becomes rich and yet ever richer. Other new and amazing wonders are disclosed to him. Things are entrusted to him as a son and an heir which can never be explained by human nature or expressed in syllables by mouth or tongue. Glory to God. Amen.

### **Homily 15**

This homily teaches through many ways how a soul ought conduct herself in holiness, chastity, and purity, towards her spouse, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. It touches also on certain questions, namely, whether in the resurrection all the members are raised up and other questions on evil, grace, free will, and the dignity of human nature.

45. Just as in the visible world we see that kings are not served by peasants who watch sheep, but by well-groomed and well-instructed persons, so also in the heavenly palace, those who serve the heavenly King are those who are free of all fault and reproach and are pure of heart. As in the palace, the attractive maidens without blemish and reproach, namely, the most beautiful, are called to participate in the company of the king, so also in the spiritual palace, it is those who possess all manner of good virtues that enter into fellowship with the heavenly King.

### **Homily 20**

Only Christ, the true physician of the interior man, can heal the soul and adorn it with the garment of His grace.

3. If anyone stands solely on his own righteousness and redemption, he labors in vain and to no purpose. For every fancy of one's own justification will appear on the last day as a filthy rag, as the Prophet Isaiah says: "All our justification has been as a filthy rag" (Is 64:6). Let us, then, beg and implore God to clothe us with "the garment of salvation" (Is 61:10), namely, our Lord Jesus Christ, the ineffable Light, which those who have borne it will never put off for all eternity. But in the resurrection their bodies also will be glorified by the glory of the Light with which the faithful and noble persons are even now clothed, as the Apostle says: "He that raised up Christ from the dead will also raise up our mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in us" (Rom 8:11). Glory to his ineffable compassion and his ineffable mercy.

### **Homily 32**

The glory of the Christians, even now, dwells within their souls and will at the time of the resurrection be manifested and will glorify their bodies in proportion to their piety.

1. The languages of this world are different. For each nation has its own language. But Christians learn now only one language and all are taught one wisdom of God, a wisdom not of this world nor of this passing age. And as Christians walk in this creation, they discover newer, heavenly insights and glories and mysteries, receiving them from what things hit their senses.

There are genera of domesticated animals, such as the horse and ox. Each of them has its own proper body and voice. This is the same for wild animals. The lion has its own body and voice; likewise the deer. And among the reptiles there is also a great variety, as also among the birds there are many types of bodies. The body and voice of the eagle are of one kind, that of a hawk of another.

There are the same differences in the sea. There are many bodies that are not like to each other. And in the earth there are many seeds, but each seed has its own fruit. There are many trees; but some trees are bigger, some are smaller. And the harvests of fruit show forth a great variety. For each type of tree has its own flavor. And there are herbs and great differences exist among them. Some are useful for healing, others only for their fragrance. But each tree produces from within a cover which appears visibly: leaves and flowers and fruit. Likewise also the seeds bring forth from within the covering visible to the eye. And the lilies themselves produce from within their covering and adorn the earth.

2. So also those Christians who have been deemed worthy in this life to possess the heavenly raiment carry that raiment dwelling within their souls. And when it will be preordained by God to dissolve this creation and for heaven and earth to pass away, then the heavenly raiment that clothed and glorified their soul in this present life and which they possessed in their heart, that raiment also will adorn their naked bodies which will rise from the tombs, the bodies that will awake in that day. This invisible and heavenly gift and raiment even in this life Christians receive.

### **Homily 34**

Concerning the glory of the Christians which their bodies in the resurrection will be deemed worthy to receive and how the bodies will be made radiant along with the soul

1. Just as the bodily eyes see all things distinctly, so also to the souls of the saints the beauties of the Godhead are manifested and seen. Christians are absorbed in contemplating them and they ponder over them. But to bodily eyes that glory is hidden, while to the believing soul it is distinctly revealed. This is the dead soul the Lord raises to life out of sin, just as he also raises up dead bodies as he prepares for the soul a new heaven and a new earth (RI: 21:1; Is 65:127) and a sun of righteousness, giving the soul all things out of his Godhead.

There is a true world and a living earth and a fruit-bearing vine and a bread of life and a living water, as it is written: "I believe to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living" (Ps 27:13). And again: "Unto them that fear the Lord the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings" (Mt 4:2). And the Lord

said: "I am the true vine" ( Jn 15:1). And again: "I am the bread of life" (Jn 6:35). And again: "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him, there shall be in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting" ( Jn 4:14).

2. For the coming of the Lord was completely for man, who lay dead in the tomb of darkness, sin, of the unclean spirit and of evil powers, so that in this world now he might raise up man and give him life and purify him from all blackness and enlighten him with his very own light and cover him with his own raiment, the heavenly raiment of his Godhead. But in the resurrection of those bodies whose souls were earlier raised up and glorified, the bodies also will be glorified with the soul and illumined by the soul which in this present life has been illumined and glorified. For the Lord is their home and their tabernacle and their city. They are clothed with a dwelling place from I leaven "not made with hands" (2 Cor 5:1), the glory of the divine light, as having become children of light.

3. So in many forms and many different divine glories they gaze upon each other and each is astonished and rejoices "with unspeakable joy" (1 Pt 1:8). You see how the glories of God are unspeakable and incomprehensible, of ineffable light and eternal mysteries and of innumerable good things. For example, in the visible things around us, it is impossible for anyone to comprehend the number of plants of the earth or of seeds or of various flowers.

And it is also impossible for anyone to measure all the richness of the earth. Or in the sea, it is impossible for any man to understand the living creatures in it or their number or their kinds or their variety or the measure of the sea's water or the measure of its extent. Or in the air, it is impossible to know the number of birds or their kinds or their variety. Or it is impossible to comprehend the greatness of the heaven or the positions of the stars or their course.

So likewise it is impossible to speak or describe the richness of Christians which is immeasurable, infinite, and incomprehensible. For if such creatures as these are so infinite and incomprehensible to men, how much more he that created and furnished them! Therefore, one ought rather to rejoice and be glad because such richness and inheritance has been stored up for Christians, so that no one can speak of it nor explain it adequately. With all diligence and humility, then, we must go forth to the struggle of Christians and to receive that richness. For the inheritance and share of Christians is God himself. It says: "The Lord himself is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup" (Ps 16:5). Glory to him, who gives himself and shares his own holy nature with the souls of Christians, forever. Amen.

### **Homily 36**

The double resurrection of souls and bodies and of the differing glory bestowed upon the risen.

1. The resurrection of the souls of the dead takes place even now in time of death. But the resurrection of bodies will take place in that day. Just as in the heavens the stars are fixed, but all are not equal, one differing from the other (1 Cor 15:41) in brightness and magnitude, so also in spiritual matters there are degrees of progress according "to the measure of faith, in the Spirit himself" (Rom 12:3; 1 Cor 12:9), one being richer than another. And Scripture says, "He that speaks in a tongue, speaks by the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 14:2). Such a person is a spiritual man, speaking to God. But he who prophesizes, "builds up the Church" (1 Cor 14:2). Such a one possesses a greater degree of grace. For the first one edifies himself alone, the other also the neighbor. This is like the grain of wheat sown in the earth. The same grain out of the same earth brings forth many and differing grains. And again from the sheaves, some are larger while some are smaller, but all are brought together to one threshing floor, to one barn. And even though they are different, one bread is made from them.

2. Or as in a city there are crowds of people and some are infants, some are adults or some adolescents, and yet all drink water from one fountain and eat from one bread, all enjoy the same air. Or in the case of lamps, one may have two wicks and one have seven. But where there is a more abundance of light, there the

illumination is greater. As many as are in fire and light, such cannot be also in darkness. But there is a great difference. It is like the case of a certain father who has two sons, one a child, the other a youth. He sends the older one abroad to cities and foreign countries. But the child he always guards since he is incapable of doing anything. Glory to God. Amen.

## **The Great Letter**

### **God Wills to Save All**

Let them not be servants of the bodies and souls of others, but as servants of Christ and of us, let their work appear pure and sincere before God. Let no one believe that by zeal for good works he cannot do the things which will bring salvation to his soul. For God does not enjoin the impossible upon his servants, but he shows abundant and great love and divine goodness, so that of his own good will he rewards each one by giving him some good work to do. Therefore, no one who seriously seeks salvation will lack power to do good. The Lord says: "Whoever will give even a cup of cold water to someone simply in the name of a disciple, amen, I say to you, that he will not go unrewarded" (Mt 10:42).

What can be more powerful than this commandment? Heavenly reward follows upon a cup of cold water. And look at the immense love for mankind! He says: "As long as you did it to one of these, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40). Indeed it is a small commandment, but when obeyed it brings forth from God a great and abundant gain.

### **A Will Toward God**

Indeed, he demands nothing beyond our powers. But whether you do something small or great, your reward depends on your will. If in the name and in reverence for God you do anything, a splendid and unbelievable gift is bestowed upon you. But if you do good out of the motive of ostentation and for the praise of men, listen to the Lord himself categorically stating: "Truly I say to you, they have received their reward" (Mt 6:2). In order that we may not act in this way, he commands his disciples and through them us: "Be on your guard. Do not display your deeds of mercy or prayer or fasting before men. Otherwise you will not have a reward before your Father in Heaven" (Mt 6:1). So the Lord orders us to run away from the perishable praises of perishable men, to flee the withering glory, but truly to seek only that glory whose beauty neither can be described nor has any end. By it we ourselves will be able to become participators of those ineffable mysteries in Christ Jesus, our Lord, to whose glory be forever and ever. Amen.

## **200 – 460 AD; English translation by M.R. James in 1924**

### **Pseudepigraphical work in name of Paul**

### **Paul's Ascent to Paradise & Descent to Hell, With Numerous Different Rewards & Punishments**

#### **Apocalypse of Paul**

#### **Here beginneth the Vision of Saint Paul the Apostle**

But I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ fourteen years ago, whether in the body I know not or whether out of the body I know not -God knoweth- that such an one was caught up unto the third heaven: and I knew such a man, whether in the body or out of the body I know not -God knoweth- that he was caught up into paradise and heard secret words which it is not lawful for men to utter. For such an one will I boast, but for myself I will boast nothing, save of mine infirmities.

1 At what time was it made manifest? In the consulate of Theodosius Augustus the younger and Cynegius, a certain honourable man then dwelling at Tarsus, in the house which had been the house of Saint Paul, an angel appeared unto him by night and gave him a revelation, saying that he should break up the foundation of the house and publish that which he found; but he thought this to be a lying vision.

2 But a third time the angel came, and scourged him and compelled him to break up the foundation. And he dug, and found a box of marble inscribed upon the sides: therein was the revelation of Saint Paul, and his shoes wherein he walked when he taught the word of God. But he feared to open that box, and brought it to the judge; and the judge took it, sealed as it was with lead, and sent it to the emperor Theodosius fearing that it might be somewhat strange; and the emperor when he received it, opened it and found the revelation of Saint Paul. A copy thereof he sent to Jerusalem and the original he kept with him. (Gr. reverses this: he kept the copy and sent away the original. It adds: And there was written therein as followeth.)

3 Now while I was in the body, wherein I was caught up unto the third heaven, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying: Speak unto this people: How long will ye transgress, and add sin upon sin, and tempt the Lord that made you? Saying that ye are Abraham's children but doing the works of Satan (so Gr.; Lat. Ye are the sons of God, doing the work of the devil), walking in the confidence of God, boasting in your name only, but being poor because of the matter of sin. Remember therefore and know that the whole creation is subject unto God, but mankind only sinneth. It hath dominion over the whole creation, and sinneth more than the whole of nature.

4 For oftentimes hath the sun, the great light, appealed unto the Lord, saying: O Lord God Almighty, I look forth upon the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Suffer me, and I will do unto them according to my power, that they may know that thou art God alone. And there came a voice unto it, saying: All these things do I know, for mine eye seeth and mine ear heareth, but my long-suffering beareth with them until they turn and repent. But if they return not unto me, I will judge them all.

5 And sometimes the moon and the stars have appealed unto the Lord, saying: O Lord God Almighty, unto us hast thou given rule over the night; how long shall we look upon the ungodliness and fornications and murders which the children of men commit? suffer us to do unto them according unto our powers, that they may know that thou art God alone. And there came a voice unto them, saying: I know all these things, and mine eye looketh upon them and mine ear heareth, but my long-suffering beareth with them until they turn and repent. But if they return not unto me, I will judge them.

6 Oftentimes also the sea hath cried out, saying: O Lord God Almighty, men have polluted thine holy name in me: suffer me and I will arise and cover every wood and tree and all the world, till I blot out all the children of men from before thy face, that they may know that thou art God alone. And again a voice came, saying: I know all, for mine eye seeth all things, and mine ear heareth, but my long-suffering beareth with them until they turn and repent. But if they return not I will judge them. Sometimes also the waters have appealed against the children of men, saying: O Lord God Almighty, the children of men have all defiled thine holy name. And there came a voice, saying: I know all things before they come to pass, for mine eye seeth and mine ear heareth all things: but my long-suffering beareth with them until they turn. And if not, I will judge. Often also hath the earth cried out unto the Lord against the children of men, saying: O Lord God Almighty, I suffer hurt more than all thy creation, bearing the fornications, adulteries, murders, thefts, forswearings, sorceries, and witchcrafts of men, and all the evils that they do, so that the father riseth up against the son, and the son against the father, the stranger against the stranger, every one to defile his neighbour's wife. The father goeth up upon his son's bed, and the son likewise goeth up upon the couch of his father; and with all these evils have they that offer a sacrifice unto thy name polluted thine holy place. Therefore do I suffer hurt more than the whole creation, and I would not yield mine excellence and my fruits unto the children of men. Suffer me and I will destroy the excellence of my fruits. And there came a voice and said: I know all things, and there is none that can hide himself from his sin. And their ungodliness do I know, but my holiness suffereth them until they turn and repent. But if they return not unto me, I will judge them.

7 Behold then ye children of men. The creature is subject unto God, but mankind alone sinneth. Therefore, ye children of men, bless ye the Lord God without ceasing at all hours and on all days; but especially when

the sun setteth. For in that hour do all the angels go unto the Lord to worship him and to present the deeds of men which every man doeth from morning until evening, whether they be good or evil. And there is an angel that goeth forth rejoicing from the man in whom he dwelleth. When therefore the sun is set, at the first hour of the night, in the same hour goeth the angel of every people and of every man and woman, which protect and keep them, because man is the image of God: and likewise at the hour of morning, which is the twelfth hour of the night, do all the angels of men and women go to meet God and present all the work which every man hath wrought, whether good or evil. And every day and night do the angels present unto God the account of all the deeds of mankind. Unto you, therefore, I say, O children of men, bless ye the Lord God without ceasing all the days of your life.

8 At the hour appointed, therefore, all the angels, every one rejoicing, come forth before God together to meet him and worship him at the hour that is set; and lo, suddenly at the set time there was a meeting, and the angels came to worship in the presence of God, and the spirit came forth to meet them, and there was a voice, saying: Thence could ye, our angels, bringing burdens of news?

9 They answered and said: We are come from them that have renounced the world for thy holy name's sake, wandering as strangers and in the caves of the rocks, and weeping every hour that they dwell on the earth and hungering and thirsting for thy name's sake; with their loins girt, holding in their hands the incense of their heart, and praying and blessing at every hour, suffering anguish and subduing themselves, weeping and lamenting more than all that dwell on the earth. And we that are their angels do mourn with them, whither therefore it pleaseth thee, command us to go and minister lest they do otherwise, but the poor more than all that dwell on the earth. (The sense required as shown by Gr. is that the angels ask that these good men may continue in goodness.) And the voice of God came unto them, saying: Know ye that from henceforth my grace shall be established with you, and mine help which is my dearly beloved Son, shall be with them, ruling them at all times; and he shall minister unto them and never forsake them, for their place is his habitation.

10 When, then, these angels departed, lo, there came other angels to worship in the presence of the majesty, to meet therewith, and they were weeping. And the spirit of God went forth to meet them, and the voice of God came, saying: Whence are ye come, our angels bearing burdens, ministers of the news of the world? They answered and said in the presence of God: We are come from them which have called upon thy name, and the snares of the world have made them wretched, devising many excuses at all times, and not making so much as one pure prayer out of their whole heart all the time of their life. Wherefore then must we be with men that are sinners? And the voice of God came unto them: Ye must minister unto them until they turn and repent; but if they return not unto me, I will judge them. Know therefore, O children of men, that whatsoever is wrought by you, the angels tell it unto God, whether it be good or evil.

11 Again, after these things, I saw one of the spiritual ones coming unto me, and he caught me up in the spirit, and carried me to the third heaven. And the angel answered and said unto me: Follow me, and I will show thee the place of the righteous where they are taken when they are dead. And there after will I take thee to the bottomless pit and show thee the souls of the sinners, into what manner of place they are taken when they are dead. And I went after the angel, and he took me into heaven, and I looked upon the firmament, and saw there the powers; and there was forgetfulness which deceiveth and draweth unto itself the hearts of men, and the spirit of slander and the spirit of fornication and the spirit of wrath and the spirit of insolence and there were the princes of wickedness. These things saw I beneath the firmament of the heaven. And again I looked and saw angels without mercy, having no pity, whose countenances were full of fury, and their teeth sticking forth out of their mouth: their eyes shone like the morning star of the east, and out of the hairs of their head and out of their mouth went forth sparks of fire. And I asked the angel, saying: Who are these, Lord? And the angel answered and said unto me: These are they which are appointed unto the souls of sinners in the hour of necessity, even of them that have not believed that they had the Lord for their helper and have not trusted in him.

12 And I looked into the height and beheld other angels whose faces shone like the sun, and their loins were girt with golden girdles, holding palms in their hands, and the sign of God, clad in raiment whereon was written the name of the Son of God, full of all gentleness and mercy. And I asked the angel and said: Who are these, Lord, that are of so great beauty and compassion? And the angel answered and said unto me: These are the angels of righteousness that are sent to bring the souls of the righteous in the hour of necessity, even them that have believed that they had the Lord for their helper. And I said unto him: Do the righteous and the sinners of necessity meet [witnesses] when they are dead? And the angel answered and said unto me: The way whereby all pass unto God is one: but the righteous having an holy helper with them are not troubled when they go to appear in the presence of God.

13 And I said unto the angel: I would see the souls of the righteous and of the sinners as they depart out of the world. And the angel answered and said unto me: Look down upon the earth. And I looked down from heaven upon the earth and beheld the whole world, and it was as nothing in my sight; and I saw the children of men as though they were nought, and failing utterly; and I marvelled, and said unto the angel: Is this the greatness of men? And the angel answered and said unto me: This it is, and these are they that do hurt from morning until evening. And I looked, and saw a great cloud of fire spread over the whole world, and said unto the angel: What is this, Lord? And he said to me: This is the unrighteousness that is mingled by the princes of sinners (Gr. mingled with the destruction of sinners; Syr. mingled with the prayers of the sons of men).

14 And I when I heard that sighed and wept, and said unto the angel: I would wait for the souls of the righteous and of the sinners, and see in what fashion they depart out of the body. And the angel answered and said unto me: Look again upon the earth. And I looked and saw the whole world: and men were as nought, and failing utterly; and I looked and saw a certain man about to die; and the angel said to me: He whom thou seest is righteous. And again I looked and saw all his works that he had done for the name of God, and all his desires which he remembered and which he remembered not, all of them stood before his face in the hour of necessity. And I saw that the righteous man had grown in righteousness, and found rest and confidence: and before he departed out of the world there stood by him holy angels, and also evil ones: and I saw them all; but the evil ones found no abode in him, but the holy ones had power over his soul and ruled it until it went out of the body. And they stirred up the soul, saying: O soul, take knowledge of thy body whence thou art come out; for thou must needs return into the same body at the day of resurrection, to receive that which is promised unto all the righteous. They received therefore the soul out of the body, and straightway kissed it as one daily known of them, saying unto it: Be of good courage, for thou hast done the will of God while thou abodest on the earth. And there came to meet it the angel that watched it day by day, and he said unto it: Be of good courage, O soul: for I rejoice in thee because thou hast done the will of God on the earth; for I told unto God all thy works, how they stood. Likewise also the spirit came forth to meet it and said: O soul, fear not, neither be troubled, until thou come unto a place which thou never knewest; but I will be thine helper, for I have found in thee a place of refreshment in the time when I dwelt in thee, when I was (thou wast?) on the earth. And the spirit [thereof] strengthened it, and the angel thereof took it up and carried it into the heaven. And the angel said (Syr. And there went out to meet it wicked powers, those that are under heaven. And there reached it the spirit of error, and said): Whither runnest thou, O soul, and presumest to enter heaven? stay and let us see if there be aught of ours in thee. And lo! we have found nothing in thee. I behold also the help of God, and thine angel; and the spirit rejoiceth with thee because thou didst the will of God upon earth. (Syr. has more here. There is a conflict between the good and evil angels. The spirit of error first laments. Then the spirit of the tempter and of fornication meet it and it escapes, and they lament. All the principalities and evil spirits come to meet it and find nothing, and gnash their teeth. The guardian angel bids them go back, 'Ye tempted this soul and it would not listen to you.' And the voice of many angels is heard rejoicing over the soul. Probably this is original matter.) And they brought it until it did worship in the presence of God. And when they (it?) had ceased, forthwith Michael and all the host of the angels fell and worshipped the footstool of his feet and his gates, and said together unto the soul: This is the God of all, which made thee in his image and likeness. And the angel returned and declared, saying: Lord, remember his works; for this is the soul whereof I did report the works unto thee, Lord, doing according to thy judgement.



And likewise the spirit said: I am the spirit of quickening that breathed upon it; for I had refreshment in it in the time when I dwelt therein, doing according to thy judgement. And the voice of God came, saying: Like as this soul hath not grieved me neither will I grieve it, for like as it hath had mercy, I also will have mercy. Let it be delivered therefore unto Michael the angel of the covenant, and let him lead it into the paradise of rejoicing that it become fellow-heir with all the saints. And thereafter I heard the voices of thousands of thousands of angels and archangels and the cherubim and the four-and-twenty elders uttering hymns and glorifying the Lord and crying: Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just are thy judgements, and there is no respect of persons with thee, but thou rewardest every man according to thy judgement. And the angel answered and said unto me: Hast thou believed and known that whatsoever every one of you hath done, he beholdeth it at the hour of his necessity? And I said: Yea, Lord.

15 And he said unto me: Look down again upon the earth and wait for the soul of a wicked man going forth of the body, one that hath provoked the Lord day and night, saying: I know nought else in this world, I will eat and drink and enjoy the things that are in the world. For who is he that hath gone down into hell and come up and told us that there is a judgement there? And again I looked and saw all the despising of the sinner, and all that he did, and they stood together before him in the hour of necessity: and it came to pass in that hour when he was led out of his body to the judgement, that he (MS. I) said: It were better for me (MS. him) that I (he) had not been born. And after that the holy angels and the evil and the soul of the sinner came together, and the holy angels found no place in it. But the evil angels threatened (had power over) it, and when they brought it forth out of the body, the angels admonished it thrice, saying: O wretched soul, look upon thy flesh whence thou art come out; for thou must needs return into thy flesh at the day of resurrection to receive the due reward for thy sins and for thy wickedness;

16 And when they had brought it forth, the accustomed (i.e. guardian) angel went before it and said unto it: O miserable soul, I am the angel that clave unto thee and day by day reported unto the Lord thine evil deeds, whatsoever thou wroughtest by night or day; and if it had been in my power I would not have ministered unto thee even one day; but of this I could do nothing, for God is merciful and a just judge, and he commanded us not to cease ministering unto your soul till ye should repent: but thou hast lost the time of repentance. I indeed am become a stranger unto thee and thou to me. Let us go then unto the just judge: I will not leave thee until I know that from this day I am become a stranger unto thee. (Here Copt. inserts a quite similar speech of the spirit to the soul, which may be original.) And the spirit confounded it, and the angel troubled it. When therefore they were come unto the principalities, and it would now go to enter into heaven, one burden (labour, suffering) was laid upon it after another: error and forgetfulness and whispering met it, and the spirit of fornication and the rest of the powers, and said unto it: Whither goest thou, wretched soul and darest to run forward into heaven? Stay, that we may see whether we have property of ours in thee, for we see not with thee an holy helper. (Syr. adds: And the angel answered and said: Know ye that it is a soul of the Lord, and he will not cast it aside, neither will I surrender the image of God into the hand of the wicked one. The Lord supported me all the days of the life of the soul, and he can support and help me: and I will not cast it off until it go up before the throne of God on high. When he shall see it, he hath power over it, and will send it whither he pleases.) And after that I heard voices in the height of the heavens, saying: Present this miserable soul unto God, that it may know that there is a God, whom it hath despised. When therefore it was entered into the heaven, all the angels, even thousands of thousands, saw it, and all cried out with one voice saying: Woe unto thee, miserable soul, for thy works which thou didest upon the earth, what answer wilt thou make unto God when thou drawest near to worship him? The angel which was with it answered and said: Weep with me, my dearly beloved, for I have found no rest in this soul. And the angels answered him and said: Let this soul be taken away out of our midst, for since it came in, the stench of it is passed upon us the angels. And thereafter it was presented, to worship in the presence of God, and the angel showed it the Lord God that made it after his own image and likeness. And its angel ran before it, saying: O Lord God Almighty, I am the angel of this soul, whose works I presented unto thee day and night, not doing according to thy judgement. And likewise the spirit said: I am the spirit which dwelt in it ever since it was made, and I know it in itself, and it followed not my will: judge it, Lord, according to thy judgement. And the voice of God came unto it and said: Where is thy fruit that thou hast yielded, worthy of those good things which thou

hast received? did I put a distance even of a day between thee and the righteous? did I not make the sun to rise upon thee even as upon the righteous? And it was silent, having nothing to answer; and again the voice came, saying: Just is the judgement of God, and there is no respect of persons with God, for whosoever hath done his mercy he will have mercy on him, and whoso hath not had mercy, neither shall God have mercy on him. Let him therefore be delivered unto the angel Tartaruchus (Gr. Temeluchus) that is set over the torments, and let him cast him into the outer darkness where is weeping and gnashing of teeth, and let him be there until the great day of judgement. And after that I heard the voice of the angels and archangels saying: Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just is thy judgement.

17 And again I beheld, and lo, a soul which was brought by two angels, weeping and saying: Have mercy on me, thou righteous God, O God the judge; for to-day it is seven days since I went forth out of my body, and I was delivered unto these two angels, and they have brought me unto those places which I had never seen. And God the righteous judge said unto it: What hast thou done? for thou hast never wrought mercy; therefore wast thou delivered unto such angels, which have no mercy, and because thou hast not done right, therefore neither have they dealt pitifully with thee in the hour of thy necessity. Confess therefore thy sins which thou hast committed when thou wert in the world. And it answered and said: Lord, I have not sinned. And the righteous Lord God was wroth with indignation when it said: I have not sinned, for it lied. And God said: Thinkest thou that thou art yet in the world? If every one of you there when he sinneth, hideth and concealeth his sin from his neighbour, yet here no thing is hidden, for when the souls come to worship before the throne both the good works and the sins of every one are made manifest. And when the soul heard that, it held its peace, having no answer. And I heard the Lord God, the righteous judge, saying again: Come, thou angel of this soul, and stand in the midst. And the angel of the sinful soul came, having a writing in his hands, and said: These, Lord, that are in mine hands, are all the sins of this soul from its youth up unto this day, even from ten years from its birth: and if thou bid me, Lord, I can tell the acts thereof since it began to be fifteen years old. [Apocalypse of Zephaniah: I looked and saw that a writing (the same word, chirographum) was in his hand: he began to open it, and when he had spread it out I read it in mine own language, and I found all my sins that I had committed, recorded by him, even those which I had committed from my childhood up unto this day.] And the Lord God the righteous judge said: I say unto thee, O angel, I desire not of thee the account since it began to be fifteen years old; but declare its sins of five years before that it died and came hither. And again God the righteous judge said: For by myself I swear, and by mine holy angels and by my power, that if it had repented five years before it died, even for the walk (conversation) of one year, there should be forgetfulness of all the evil which it committed before and it should have pardon and remission of sins: but now let it perish. And the angel of the sinful soul answered and said: Command, Lord, that (such and such an) angel to bring forth those (such and such) souls.

18 And in that same hour the souls were brought forth into the midst, and the soul of the sinner knew them. And the Lord said unto the soul of the sinner: I say unto thee, O soul, confess thy deeds which thou didst upon these souls whom thou seest, when they were in the world. And it answered and said: Lord, it is not yet a full year since I slew this one and shed its blood upon the earth, and with another I committed fornication; and not that only, but I did it much harm by taking away its substance. And the Lord God the righteous judge said: Knewest thou not that he that doth violence to another, if he that suffered violence die first, he is kept in this place until he that hurt him dieth, and then do both of them appear before the judge? and now hath every one received according as he did. And I heard a voice saying: Let that soul be delivered into the hands of Tartaruchus, and he must be taken down into hell. Let him take him into the lower prison and let him be cast into torments and be left there until the great day of judgement. And again I heard thousands of thousands of angels singing an hymn unto the Lord and saying: Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just are thy judgements.

19 The angel answered and said unto me: Hast thou perceived all these things? And I said: Yea, Lord. And he said unto me: Follow me again, and I will take thee and show thee the places of the righteous. And I followed the angel and he took me up unto the third heaven and set me before the door of a gate; and I looked on it and saw, and the gate was of gold, and there were two pillars of gold full of golden letters; and the angel turned again to me and said: Blessed art thou if thou interest in by these gates, for it is not

permitted to any to enter save only to those that have kept goodness and pureness of their bodies in all things. And I asked the angel and said: Lord, tell me for what cause are these letters set upon these tables? The angel answered and said unto me: These are the names of the righteous that minister unto God with their whole heart, which dwell on the earth. And again I said: Lord, then are their names also their countenance and the likeness of them that serve God is in heaven, and they are known unto the angels: for they know them that with their whole heart serve God before they depart out of the world.

20 And when I had entered within the gate of paradise there came to meet me an old man whose face shone like the sun, and he embraced me and said: Hail, Paul, dearly beloved of God And he kissed me with a joyful countenance, but he wept, and I said unto him: Father (Lat. Brother), why weepest thou? And again sighing and weeping he said: Because we are vexed by men, and they grieve us sore; for many are the good things which the Lord hath prepared, and great are his promises, but many receive them not. And I asked the angel and said: Who is this, Lord? And he said unto me: This is Enoch the scribe of righteousness. And I entered within that place and straightway I saw Elias I and he came and saluted me with gladness and joy. And when he had seen me, he turned himself away and wept and said unto me: Paul, mayest thou receive the reward of thy labour which thou hast done among mankind. As for me, I have seen great and manifold good things which God hath prepared for all the righteous, and great are the promises of God, but the more part receive them not; yea hardly through much toil doth one and another enter into these places.

21 And the angel answered and said unto me: What things soever I now show thee here, and whatsoever thou hearest, reveal them not unto any upon earth. And he led me and showed me: and I heard there words which it is not lawful for a man to utter; and again he said: Yet again follow me and I will show thee that which thou must relate and tell openly. And he brought me down from the third heaven, and led me into the second heaven, and again he led me to the firmament, and from the firmament he led me unto the gates of heaven. And the beginning of the foundation thereof was upon the river that watereth all the earth. And I asked the angel and said: Lord, what is this river of water? and he said unto me: This is the Ocean. And suddenly I came out of heaven, and perceived that it is the light of the heaven that shineth upon all the earth (or, all that land). And there the earth (or, land) was seven times brighter than silver. And I said: Lord, what is this place? and he said unto me: This is the land of promise. Hast thou not yet heard that which is written: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth? The souls therefore of the righteous when they are gone forth of the body are sent for the time into this place. And I said unto the angel: Shall then this land be made manifest after (lat. before) a time? The angel answered and said unto me: When Christ whom thou preachest cometh to reign, then by the decree of God the first earth shall be dissolved, and then shall this land of promise be shown and it shall be like dew or a cloud; and then shall the Lord Jesus Christ the eternal king be manifested and shall come with all his saints to dwell therein; and he shall reign over them a thousand years, and they shall eat of the good things which now I will show thee.

22 And I looked round about that land and saw a river flowing with milk and honey. And there were at the brink of the river trees planted, full of fruits: now every tree bare twelve fruits in the year, and they had various and divers fruits: and I saw the fashion (creation) of that place and all the work of God, and there I saw palm-trees of twenty cubits and others of ten cubits: and that land was seven times brighter than silver. And the trees were full of fruits from the root even to the upper branches. (Lat. is confused here. Copt. has: From the root of each tree up to its heart there were ten thousand branches with tens of thousands of clusters, [and there were ten thousand clusters on each branch,] and there were ten thousand dates in each cluster. And thus was it also with the vines. Every vine had ten thousand branches, and each branch had upon it ten thousand bunches of grapes, and every bunch had on it ten thousand grapes. And there were other trees there, myriads of myriads of them, and their fruit was in the same proportion.) And I said unto the angel: Wherefore doth every tree bring forth thousands of fruits? The angel answered and said unto me: Because the Lord God of his bounty giveth his gifts in abundance unto the worthy; for they also of their own will afflicted themselves when they were in the world, doing all things for his holy name's sake. And again I said unto the angel: Lord, are these the only promises which the most holy Lord God promiseth? and he answered and said unto me: No; for there are greater by seven times than these. But I say unto thee, that when the righteous are

gone forth out of the body and shall see the promises and the good things which God hath prepared for them, yet again they shall sigh and cry, saying: Wherefore did we utter a word out of our mouth to provoke our neighbour even for a day? And I asked again and said: Be these the only promises of God? And the angel answered and said unto me: These which now thou seest are for them that are married and keep the purity of their marriage, being continent. But unto the virgins, and unto them that hunger and thirst after righteousness and afflict themselves for the name of the Lord, God will give things seven-fold greater than these, which now I will show thee. And after that he took me out of that place where I saw these things, and lo, a river, and the waters of it were white exceedingly, more than milk, and I said unto the angel: What is this? and he said to me: This is the lake Acherusa where is the city of Christ: but not every man is suffered to enter into that city: for this is the way that leadeth unto God, and if any be a fornicator or ungodly, and turn and repent and bear fruits meet for repentance, first when he cometh out of the body he is brought and worshippeth God, and then by the commandment of the Lord he is delivered unto Michael the angel, and he washeth him in the lake Acherusa and so bringeth him in to the city of Christ with them that have done no sin. And I marvelled and blessed the Lord God for all the things which I saw.

23 And the angel answered and said unto me: Follow me and I will bring thee into the city of Christ. And he stood by (upon) the lake Acherusa, and set me in a golden ship, and angels as it were three thousand sang an hymn before me until I came even unto the city of Christ. And they that dwelt in the city of Christ rejoiced greatly over me as I came unto them, and I entered in and saw the city of Christ. And it was all of gold, and twelve walls compassed it about, and there were twelve towers within (a tower on each wall, Copt.; 12,000 towers, Syr.), and every wall had a furlong between them (i.e. the walls were a furlong apart, so Syr., Copt. the circumference of each was 100 furlongs) round about; and I said unto the angel: Lord, how much is one furlong? The angel answered and said unto me: It is as much as there is betwixt the Lord God and the men that are on the earth, for the great city of Christ is alone. And there were twelve gates in the circuit of the city, of great beauty, and four rivers that compassed it about. There was a river of honey, and a river of milk, and a river of wine, and a river of oil. And I said unto the angel: What are these rivers that compass this city about? And he saith to me: These are the four rivers which flow abundantly for them that are in this land of promise, whereof the names are these: the river of honey is called Phison, and the river of milk Euphrates, and the river of oil Geon, and the river of wine Tigris. Whereas therefore when the righteous were in the world they used not their power over these things, but hungered and afflicted themselves for the Lord God's sake, therefore when they enter into this city, the Lord will give them these things without number (?) and without all measure.

24 And I when I entered in by the gate saw before the doors of the city trees great and high, having no fruits, but leaves only. And I saw a few men scattered about in the midst of the trees, and they mourned sore when they saw any man enter into the city. And those trees did penance for them, humbling themselves and bowing down, and again raising themselves up. And I beheld it and wept with them, and I asked the angel and said: Lord, who are these that are not permitted to enter into the city of Christ? And he said unto me: These are they that did earnestly renounce the world day and night with fasting, but had an heart proud above other men, glorifying and praising themselves, and doing nought for their neighbours. For some they greeted friendly, but unto others they said not even 'Hail', and unto whom they would they opened, and if they did any small thing for their neighbour they were puffed up. And I said: What then, Lord? their pride hath prevented them from entering into the city of Christ? And the angel answered and said unto me: The root of all evils is pride. Are they better than the Son of God who came unto the Jews in great humility? And I asked him and said: Wherefore is it then that the trees humble themselves and are again raised up? And the angel answered and said unto me: All the time that these spent upon earth (Of old time they were on the earth, Copt.) serving God (they served God): But because of the shame and reproaches of men they were ashamed (did blush) for a time and humbled themselves, but they were not grieved, neither did repent, to cease from this pride that was in them (and one day they bowed themselves because of the disgrace of man, for they cannot endure the pride that is in him, Copt.). This is the cause why the trees humble themselves and again are raised up. And I asked and said: For what cause are they let in unto the gates of the city? The angel answered and said unto me: Because of the great goodness of God, and because this is the entry of all his

saints which do enter into this city. Therefore are they left in this place, that when Christ the eternal king entereth in with his saints, when he cometh in, all the righteous shall entreat for them, and then shall they enter into the city with them: yet none of them is able to have confidence such as they have that have humbled themselves, serving the Lord God all their life long.

25 But I went forward and the angel led me and brought me unto the river of honey, and I saw there Esaias and Jeremias and Ezekiel and Amos and Micheas and Zacharias, even the prophets lesser and greater, and they greeted me in the city. I said unto the angel: What is this path? and he said unto me: This is the path of the prophets: every one that hath grieved his soul and not done his own will for God's sake, when he is departed out of the world and hath been brought unto the Lord God and worshipped him, then by the commandment of God he is delivered unto Michael, and he bringeth him into the city unto this place of the prophets, and they greet him as their friend and neighbour because he hath performed the will of God.

26 Again he led me where was the river of milk, and I saw in that place all the children whom the king Herod slew for the name of Christ, and they greeted me, and the angel said unto me: All they that keep chastity in cleanness, when they are gone out of the body, after they worship the Lord God, are delivered unto Michael and brought unto the children: and they greet them saying: They are our brothers and friends and members: among them shall they inherit the promises of God.

27 Again he took me and brought me to the north side of the city, and led me to where was the river of wine, and I saw there Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Lot and Job and other saints, and they greeted me. [Apocalypse of Zephaniah: (The angel) ran unto all the righteous that are there, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Enoch, Elias, and David. He conversed with them as a friend with a friend, who talk together.] And I asked and said: What is this place, Lord? The angel answered and said unto me: All they that are entertainers of strangers, when they are departed out of the world first worship the Lord God, and then are delivered unto Michael and brought by this path into the city, and all the righteous greet him as a son and brother, and say unto him: Because thou hast kept kindness and the entertainment of strangers, come thou and have an inheritance in the city of our Lord God. Every one of the righteous shall receive the good things of God in the city according to his deeds.

28 And again he took me to the river of oil on the east side of the city. And I saw there men rejoicing and singing psalms, and said: Who are these, Lord? and the angel said unto me: These are they that have devoted themselves unto God with their whole heart, and had in them no pride. For all that rejoice in the Lord God and sing praises to the Lord with their whole heart are brought here into this city.

29 And he took me into the midst of the city, by the twelve walls (to the twelfth wall, Copt.). Now there was in that place an higher wall; and I asked and said: Is there in the city of Christ a wall more excellent in honour than this place? And the angel answered and said unto me: The second is better than the first, and likewise the third than the second; for one excelleth the other even unto the twelfth wall. And I said: Wherefore Lord, doth one excel another in glory? show me. And the angel answered and said unto me: All they that have in them even a little slandering or envy or pride, somewhat is taken away from his glory, even if he be in the city of Christ. Look thou behind thee. And I turned myself and saw golden thrones set at the several gates, and upon them men having golden crowns and jewels: and I looked and saw within among the twelve men, thrones set in another order (row, fashion?), which appeared of much glory so that no man is able to declare the praise of them. And I asked the angel and said: Lord, who is upon the throne? And the angel answered and said unto me: These are the thrones of them that had goodness and understanding of heart and yet made themselves foolish for the Lord God's sake, knowing neither the Scriptures nor many psalms, but keeping in mind one chapter of the precepts of God they performed it with great diligence, and had a right intent before the Lord God; and for these great wonder shall take hold upon all the saints before the Lord God, who shall speak one with another, saying: Stay and behold the unlearned that know nothing [more], how they have earned such and so fair raiment and so great glory because of their innocency. And I saw in the midst of the city an altar exceeding high. And there was one standing by the altar whose visage shone like the sun, and he held in his hands a psaltery and an harp and sang praises, saying: Alleluia. And

his voice filled all the city. And when all that were upon the towers and the gates heard him, they answered: Alleluia, so that the foundations of the city were shaken. And I asked the angel and said: Who is this, Lord, that is of so great might? And the angel said unto me: This is David. This is the city of Jerusalem; and when Christ the king of eternity shall come in the fullness (confidence, freedom) of his kingdom, he shall again go before him to sing praises, and all the righteous together shall sing praises, answering: Alleluia. And I said: Lord, how is it that David only above the rest of the saints maketh (made) the beginning of singing praises? And the angel answered and said unto me: When (or, because) Christ the Son of God sitteth on the right hand of his Father, this David shall sing praises before him in the seventh heaven: and as it is done in the heavens, so likewise is it below: for without David it is not lawful to offer a sacrifice unto God: but it must needs be that David sing praises at the hour of the offering of the body and blood of Christ: as it is performed in heaven, so also is it upon earth.

30 And I said unto the angel: Lord, what is Alleluia? And the angel answered and said unto me: Thou dost examine and inquire of all things. And he said unto me: Alleluia is spoken in the Hebrew, that is the speech of God and of the angels: now the interpretation of Alleluia is this: tecel . cat . marith . macha (Gr.thebel marematha). And I said: Lord, what is tecel cat marith macha? And the angel answered and said unto me: This is tecel cat marith macha: Let us bless him all together. I asked the angel and said: Lord, do all they that say Alleluia bless God? And the angel answered and said unto me: So it is: and again, if any sing Alleluia, and they that are present sing not with him, they commit sin in that they sing not with him. And I said: Lord, doth a man likewise sin if he be doting or very aged? The angel answered and said unto me: Not so: but he that is able, and singeth not with him, know ye that such a one is a despiser of the word, for it would be proud and unworthy that he should not bless the Lord God his creator.

31 And when he had ceased speaking unto me, he led me out without the city through the midst of the trees and back from the place of the land of good things (or, men) and set me at the river of milk and honey: and after that he led me unto the ocean that beareth the foundations of the heaven. The angel answered and said unto me: Perceivest thou that thou goest hence? And I said: Yea, Lord. And he said unto me: Come, follow me, and I will show thee the souls of the ungodly and the sinners, that thou mayest know what manner of place they have. And I went with the angel and he took me by the way of the sunsetting, and I saw the beginning of the heaven founded upon a great river of water, and I asked: What is this river of water? And he said unto me: This is the ocean which compasseth the whole earth about. And when I was come beyond (to the outside of) the ocean, I looked and there was no light in that place, but darkness and sorrow and sadness: and I sighed. And I saw there a river of fire burning with heat, and in it was a multitude of men and women sunk up to the knees, and other men up to the navel; others also up to the lips and others up to the hair: and I asked the angel and said: Lord, who are these in the river of fire? And the angel answered and said unto me: They are neither hot nor cold.; for they were not found either in the number of the righteous or in the number of the wicked, for they passed the time of their life upon the earth, spending some days in prayer, but other days in sins and fornications, until their death. And I asked and said: Who are these, Lord, that are sunk up to their knees in the fire? He answered and said unto me: These are they which when they are come out of the church occupy themselves in disputing with idle (alien) talk. But these that are sunk up to the navel are they who, when they have received the body and blood of Christ, go and commit fornication, and did not cease from their sins until they died; and they that are sunk up to their lips are they that slandered one another when they gathered in the church of God; but they that are sunk up to the eyebrows are they that beckon one to another, and privily devise evil against their neighbours.

32 And I saw on the north side a place of sundry and diverse torments, full of men and women, and a river of fire flowed down upon them. And I beheld and saw pits exceeding deep, and in them many souls together, and the depth of that place was as it were three thousand cubits; and I saw them groaning and weeping and saying: Have mercy on us, Lord. And no man had mercy on them. And I asked the angel and said: Who are these, Lord? And the angel answered and said unto me: These are they that trusted not in the Lord that they could have him for their helper. And I inquired and said: Lord, if these souls continue thus, thirty or forty generations being cast one upon another, if (unless?) they be cast down yet deeper, I trow the pits would not

contain them. And he said to me; The abyss hath no measure: for beneath it there followeth also that which is beneath: and so it is that if a strong man took a stone and cast it into an exceeding deep well and after many hours (long time) it reacheth the earth, so also is the abyss. For when the souls are cast therein, hardly after five hundred years do they come at the bottom.

33 And I when I heard it, mourned and lamented for the race of men. The angel answered and said unto me: Wherefore mournest thou? art thou more merciful than God? for inasmuch as God is good and knoweth that there are torments, he beareth patiently with mankind, leaving every one to do his own will for the time that he dwelleth on the earth.

34 Yet again I looked upon the river of fire, and I saw there a man caught by the throat (Copt. an old man who was being dragged along, and they immersed him up to the knees. And the angel Aftemeloukhos came with a great fork of fire, &c. Syr. similar. Some sentences are lost in Lat.) by angels, keepers of hell (Tartaruchi), having in their hands an iron of three hooks wherewith they pierced the entrails of that old man. And I asked the angel and said: Lord, who is this old man upon whom such torments are inflicted? And the angel answered and said unto me: He whom thou seest was a priest who fulfilled not well his ministry, for when he was eating and drinking and whoring he offered the sacrifice unto the Lord at his holy altar.

35 And I saw not far off another old man whom four evil angels brought, running quickly, and they sank him up to his knees in the river of fire, and smote him with stones and wounded his face like a tempest, and suffered him not to say: Have mercy on me. And I asked the angel and he said unto me: He whom thou seest was a bishop, and he fulfilled not well his bishopric: for he received indeed a great name, but entered not into (walked not in) the holiness of him that gave him that name all his life; for he gave not righteous judgement, and had not compassion on widows and orphans: but now it is recompensed unto him according to his iniquity and his doings.

36 And I saw another man in the river of fire sunk up to the knees: and his hands were stretched out and bloody, and worms issued out of his mouth and his nostrils, and he was groaning and lamenting and crying out, and said: Have mercy on me for I suffer hurt more than the rest that are in this torment. And I asked: Who is this, Lord? And he said unto me: This whom thou seest was a deacon, who devoured the offerings and committed fornication and did not right in the sight of God: therefore without ceasing he payeth the penalty. And I looked and saw beside him another man whom they brought with haste and cast him into the river of fire, and he was there up to the knees; and the angel that was over the torments came, having a great razor, red-hot, and therewith he cut the lips of that man and the tongue likewise. And I sighed and wept and asked: Who is this man, Lord? And he said unto me: This that thou seest was a reader and read unto the people: but he kept not the commandments of God: now also he payeth his own penalty.

37 And I saw another multitude of pits in the same place, and in the midst thereof a river filled with a multitude of men and women, and worms devoured them. But I wept and sighed and asked the angel: Lord, who are these? And he said unto me: These are they that extorted usury on usury and trusted in their riches, not having hope in God, that he was their helper. And after that I looked and saw a very strait place, and there was as it were a wall, and round about it fire. And I saw within it men and women gnawing their tongues, and asked: Who are these, Lord? And he said unto me: These are they that mocked at the word of God in the church, not attending thereto, but as it were making nought of God and of his angels: therefore now likewise do they pay the due penalty.

38 And I looked in and saw another pool (lat. old man!) beneath in the pit, and the appearance of it was like blood: and I asked and said: Lord, what is this place? And he said unto me: Into this pit do all the torments flow. And I saw men and women sunk up to the lips, and asked: Who are these, Lord? And he said unto me: These are the sorcerers which gave unto men and women magical enchantments, and they found no rest (i.e. did not cease?) until they died. And again I saw men and women of a very black countenance in a pit of fire, and I sighed and wept and asked: Who are these, Lord? And he said unto me: These are whoremongers and

adulterers who, having wives of their own, committed adultery, and likewise the women after the same sort committed adultery, having their own husbands: therefore do they pay the penalty without ceasing.

39 And I saw there girls clad in black raiment, and four fearful angels holding in their hands red-hot chains, and they put them upon their necks (heads) and led them away into darkness. And again I wept and asked the angel: Who are these, Lord? And he said unto me: These are they which being virgins defiled their virginity, and their parents knew it not: wherefore without ceasing they pay the due penalty. And again I beheld there men and women with their hands and feet cut off and naked, in a place of ice and snow, and worms devoured them. And when I saw it I wept and asked: Who are these, Lord? and he said unto me: These are they that injured the fatherless and widows and the poor, and trusted not in the Lord: wherefore without ceasing they pay the due penalty. And I looked and saw others hanging over a channel of water, and their tongues were exceeding dry, and many fruits were set in their sight, and they were not suffered to take of them. And I asked: Who are these, Lord? And he said unto me: These are they that brake the fast before the time appointed: therefore without ceasing do they pay this penalty. And I saw other men and women hanged by their eyebrows and their hair, and a river of fire drew them, and I said: Who are these, Lord? And he said unto me: These are they that gave themselves not unto their own husbands and wives, but unto adulterers, and therefore without ceasing they pay the due penalty. (For this Copt. has: men and women hung head downwards torches burning before their faces, serpents girt about them devouring them. These are the women that beautified themselves with paints and unguents and went to church to ensnare men. Syr. and Gr. omit.) And I saw other men and women covered with dust, and their appearance was as blood, and they were in a pit of pitch and brimstone and borne down in a river of fire. And I asked: Who are these, Lord? And he said unto me: These are they that committed the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah, men with men, wherefore they pay the penalty without ceasing. (Copt., Syr., Gr. omit this paragraph.)

40 And I looked and saw men and women clad in white (bright) apparel, and their eyes were blind, and they were set in a pit, and I asked: Who are these, Lord? And he said unto me: These are they of the heathen that gave alms and knew not the Lord God; wherefore without ceasing they pay the due penalty. And I looked and saw other men and women upon a spit of fire, and beasts tearing them, and they were not suffered to say: Lord, have mercy on us. And I saw the angel of the torments (Aftemeloukhos, Copt.) laying most fierce torments upon them and saying: Acknowledge the Son of God. For it was told you before, but when the scriptures of God were read unto you, ye paid no heed: wherefore the judgement of God is just, for your evil doings have taken hold upon you, and brought you into these torments. But I sighed and wept, and I inquired and said: Who are these men and women that are strangled in the fire and pay the penalty? And he answered me: These are the women which defiled the creation of God when they brought forth children from the womb, and these are the men that lay with them. But their children appealed unto the Lord God and unto the angels that are over the torments, saying: Avenge us of our parents: for they have defiled the creation of God. Having the name of God, but not observing his commandments, they gave us for food unto dogs and to be trampled on by swine, and others they cast into the river (Copt. adds: and did not permit us to grow up into righteous men and to serve God). But those children were delivered unto the angels of Tartarus (Gr. unto an angel) that they should bring them into a spacious place of mercy: but their fathers and mothers were haled (strangled) into everlasting torment. And thereafter I saw men and women clad in rags full of pitch and brimstone of fire, and there were dragons twined about their necks and shoulders and feet, and angels having horns of fire constrained them and smote them and closed up their nostrils, saying unto them: Wherefore knew ye not the time wherein it was right for you to repent and serve God, and ye did not? And I asked: Who are these, Lord? And he said unto me: These are they that seemed to renounce the world (lat. God), wearing our garb, but the snares of the world made them to be miserable: they showed no charity and had no pity upon the widows and fatherless: the stranger and pilgrim they did not take in, neither offered one oblation nor had pity on their neighbour: and their prayer went not up even one day pure unto the Lord God; but the many snares of the world held them back, and they were not able to do right in the sight of God. And the angels carried (lat. surrounded) them about into the place of torments: and they that were in torments saw them and said unto them: We indeed when we lived in the world neglected God, and ye did so likewise. And we when we were in the world knew that we were sinners, but of you it was said: These are righteous and



servants of God: now we know that ye were only called by the name of the Lord. Wherefore also they pay the due penalty. And I sighed and wept and said: Woe unto men! woe unto the sinners! to what end were they born? And the angel answered and said unto me: Wherefore weepest thou? Art thou more merciful than the Lord God which is blessed for ever, who hath established the judgement and left every man of his own will to choose good or evil and to do as pleaseth him? Yet again I wept very sore, and he said unto me: Weepest thou, when as yet thou hast not seen the greater torments? Follow me, and thou shalt see sevenfold greater than these.

41 And he took me from the north side (to the west, Syr.) and set me over a well, and I found it sealed with seven seals. And the angel that was with me answered and said unto the angel of that place: Open the mouth of the well, that Paul the dearly beloved of God may behold; for power hath been given unto him to see all the torments of hell. And the angel said unto me: Stand afar off, that thou mayest be able to endure the stench of this place. When therefore the well was opened, straightway there arose out of it a stench hard and evil exceedingly, which surpassed all the torments: and I looked into the well and saw masses (lumps) of fire burning on every side, and anguish, and there was straitness in the mouth of the pit so as to take but one man in. And the angel answered and said unto me: If any be cast into the well of the abyss, and it be sealed over him, there shall never be remembrance made of him in the presence of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost or of the holy angels. And I said: Who are they, Lord, that are cast into this well? And he said unto me: They are whosoever confesseth not that Christ is come in the flesh and that the Virgin Mary bare him and whosoever saith of the bread and the cup of blessing of the Eucharist that it is not the body and blood of Christ.

42 And I looked from the north unto the west and saw there the worm that sleepeth not, and in that place was gnashing of teeth. And the worms were of the measure of one cubit, and on them were two heads; and I saw there men and women in cold and gnashing of teeth. And I asked and said: Lord, who are they that are in this place? And he said unto me: These are they which say that Christ rose not from the dead, and that this flesh riseth not again. And I inquired and said: Lord, is there no fire nor heat in this place? And he said unto me: In this place is nothing else but cold and snow. And again he said to me: Even if the sun (seven suns, Copt.) rose upon them, they would not be warmed, because of the excessive cold of this place, and the snow. And when I heard this I spread forth mine hands and wept and sighed, and again I said: It were better for us if we had not been born, all we that are sinners.

43 But when they that were in that place saw me weeping, with the angel, they also cried out and wept, saying: Lord God, have mercy upon us. And after that I beheld the heaven open and Michael the archangel coming down out of heaven, and with him all the host of the angels; and they came even unto them that were set in torment. And they when they saw them wept again and cried out and said: Have mercy upon us, thou Michael, archangel, have mercy upon us and upon the race of men, for it is by thy prayers that the earth standeth. We have now seen the judgement and have known the Son of God. It was not possible for us to pray for this before we came into this place: for we heard that there was a judgement, before we departed out of the world, but the snares and the life of the world suffered us not to repent. And Michael answered and said: Hearken when Michael speaketh: I am he that stands in the presence of God alway. As the Lord liveth, before whose face I stand, I cease not for one day nor one night to pray continually for the race of men; and I indeed pray for them that are upon earth: but they cease not from committing wickednesses and fornication. And they bring not forth aught of good while they are upon earth; and ye have wasted in vanity the time wherein ye ought to have repented. But I have prayed alway, and now do I entreat that God would send dew and that rain may be sent upon the earth, and still pray I until the earth yield her fruits: and I say that if any man doeth but a little good I will strive for him and protect him until he escape the judgement of torment. Where then be your prayers? Where be your repentances? ye have lost the time despicably. Yet now weep ye, and I will weep with you, and the angels that are with me, together with the dearly beloved Paul, peradventure the merciful God will have pity and grant you refreshment. And they when they heard these words cried out and wept sore, and all said with one voice: Have mercy upon us, O Son of God. And I, Paul,

sighed and said: O Lord God, have mercy upon thy creature, have mercy on the children of men, have mercy upon thine image.

44 I beheld and saw the heaven shake like unto a tree that is moved by the wind: and suddenly they cast themselves down upon their faces before the throne: and I saw the four-and- twenty elders and the four beasts worshipping God: and I saw the altar and the veil and the throne, and all of them were rejoicing, and the smoke of a sweet odour rose up beside the altar of the throne of God; and I heard a voice saying: For what cause do ye entreat me, our angels, and our ministers? And they cried out, saying: We entreat thee, beholding thy great goodness unto mankind. And thereafter I saw the Son of God coming down out of heaven, and on his head was a crown. And when they that were in torments saw him they all cried out with one voice, saying: Have mercy upon us, O exalted Son of God (or, Son of God Most High): thou art he that hast granted refreshment unto all that are in heaven and earth; have mercy upon us likewise: for since we beheld thee we have been refreshed. And there went forth a voice from the Son of God throughout all the torments, saying: What good works have ye done that ye should ask of me refreshment? My blood was shed for you, and not even so did ye repent: for your sake I bare a crown of thorns on mine head, for you I received buffets upon my cheeks, and not even so did ye repent. I asked for water when I hanged upon the cross, and they gave me vinegar mingled with gall: with a spear did they open my right side: for my name's sake have they slain my servants the prophets, and the righteous: and for ail these things did I give you a place of repentance, and ye would not. Yet now because of Michael the archangel of my covenant and the angels that are with him, and because of Paul my dearly beloved whom I would not grieve. and because of your brethren that are in the world and do offer oblations, and because of your sons, for in them are my commandments, I and yet more because of mine own goodness: on that day whereon I rose from the dead I grant unto all you that are in torment refreshment for a day and a night for ever. And all they cried out and said: We bless thee, O Son of God, for that thou hast granted us rest for a day and a night: for better unto us is the refreshment of one day than the whole time of our life wherein we were upon earth: and if we had known clearly that this place was appointed for them that sin, we should have done none other work whatsoever, neither traded nor done any wickedness. For what profit was our pride in the world? (Copt. What profit was it to us to be born into the world?) For this our pride is taken captive, which came up out of our mouth against our neighbour (Copt. our life is like the breath of our mouth): and this pain and our sore anguish and tears and the worms which are under us, these are worse unto us than the torments which we suffer. (This is hardly sense, but Copt. agrees; should it not have been ' these are worse than not to have been born '?) And as they thus spake, the angels of torment and the evil angels were wroth with them and said: How long have ye wept and sighed? for ye have had no mercy. For this is the judgement of God on him that hath not had mercy. Yet have ye received this great grace, even refreshment for the night and day of the Lord's day, because of Paul the dearly beloved of God who hath come down unto you.

45 And after these things the angel said unto me: Hast thou seen all these things? And I said: Yea, Lord. And he said unto me: Follow me, and I will bring thee into Paradise, that the righteous which are there may see thee: for, behold, they hope to see thee, and are ready to come and meet thee with joy and exultation. And I followed after the angel in the swiftness of the Holy Ghost, and he set me in Paradise and said unto me: This is Paradise, wherein Adam and his wife erred. And I entered into Paradise and saw the head of the waters, and the angel beckoned unto me and said to me: Behold, saith he, these waters: for this is the river Phison that compasseth about all the land of Evila. and this other is Geon that goeth about all the land of Egypt and Ethiopia, and this other is Tigris that is over against the Assyrians, and this other is Euphrates that watereth the land of Mesopotamia. And I entered in further and saw a tree planted, out of whose roots flowed waters, and out of it was the beginning of the four rivers, and the Spirit of God rested upon that tree, and when the spirit breathed the waters flowed forth: and I said: Lord, is this tree that which maketh the waters to flow? And he said unto me: Because in the beginning, before the heaven and the earth were made to appear, and all things were invisible, the Spirit of God moved (was borne) upon the waters; but since by the commandment of God the heaven and the earth appeared the spirit hath rested upon this tree; wherefore when the spirit breatheth, the waters flow out from the tree. And he took hold on mine hand and led me unto the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and said: This is the tree whereby death entered into the world, and Adam

taking of it from his wife did eat, and death entered into the world. And he showed me another tree in the midst of Paradise, and saith unto me: This is the tree of life.

46 And as I yet looked upon the tree, I saw a virgin coming from afar off, and two hundred angels before her singing hymns: and I inquired and said: Lord, who is this that cometh in such glory? and he said unto me: This is Mary the virgin, the mother of the Lord. And she came near and saluted me, and said: Hail, Paul, dearly beloved of God and angels and men. For all the saints have besought my son Jesus who is my Lord, that thou shouldest come here in the body that they might see thee before thou didst depart out of the world. And the Lord said to them: Wait and be ye patient: yet a little while, and ye shall see him, and he shall be with you for ever. And again they all with one accord said unto him: Grieve us not, for we desire to see him while he is in the flesh, for by him hath thy name been greatly glorified in the world, and we have seen that he hath excelled (done away with) all the works whether of the lesser or the greater. For we inquire of them that come hither, saying: Who is he that guided you in the world? and they have told us: There is one in the world whose name is Paul; he declareth Christ, preaching him, and we believe that by the power and sweetness of his speech many have entered into the kingdom. Behold, all the righteous are behind me, coming to meet thee. But I say unto thee, Paul, that for this cause I come first to meet them that have performed the will of my son and my Lord Jesus Christ, even I come first to meet them and leave them not as strangers until they meet with him in peace.

47 While she was yet speaking I saw three men coming from afar, very beautiful, after the appearance of Christ, and their forms were shining, and their angels; and I asked: Who are these, Lord? And he answered: These are the fathers of the people, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And they came near and greeted me, and said: Hail, Paul, dearly beloved of God and men: blessed is he that endureth violence for the Lord's sake. And Abraham answered me and said: This is my son Isaac, and Jacob my best beloved, and we knew the Lord and followed him. Blessed are all they that have believed thy word that they may inherit the kingdom of God by labour and self-sacrifice (renunciation) and sanctification and humility and charity and meekness and right faith in the Lord: and we also had devotion unto the Lord whom thou preachest, covenanting that we will come unto every soul of them that believe in him, and minister unto him as fathers minister unto their sons. While they yet spake I saw twelve men coming from afar with honour, and I asked: Who are these, Lord? And he said: These are the patriarchs. And they came and saluted me and said: Hail, Paul, dearly beloved of God and men. The Lord hath not grieved us, that we might see thee yet being in the body, before thou departedst out of the world. And every one of them signified his name unto me in order, from Ruben unto Benjamin; and Joseph said unto me: I am he that was sold; and I say unto thee, Paul, that for all that my brethren did unto me, in nothing did I deal evilly with them, not in all the labour which they laid upon me, nor did I hurt them in any thing (Copt. kept no evil thought against them) from morning until evening. Blessed is he that is hurt for the Lord's sake and hath endured, for the Lord will recompense him manifold more when he departeth out of the world.

48 While he yet spake I saw another coming from afar, beautiful, and his angels singing hymns, and I asked: Who is this, Lord, that is fair of countenance? And he said unto me: Dost thou not know him? And I said: No, Lord. And he said to me: This is Moses the lawgiver, unto whom God gave the law. And when he was nigh me, straightway he wept, and after that he greeted me; and I said unto him: Why weepest thou? for I have heard that thou excellest all men in meekness. And he answered, saying: I weep for them whom I planted with much labour, for they have borne no fruit, neither doth any of them do well. And I have seen all the sheep whom I fed that they are scattered and become as having no shepherd, and that all the labours which I have endured for the children of Israel are come to nought, and however great wonders I did in their midst [and] they understood not: and I marvel how the strangers and uncircumcised and idolaters are converted and entered into the promises of God, but Israel hath not entered in: and now I say unto thee, O brother Paul, that in that hour when the people hanged up Jesus whom thou preachest, God the Father of all, which gave me the law, and Michael and all the angels and archangels, and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the righteous wept over the Son of God that was hanged on the cross. And in that hour all the saints waited upon me, looking on me and saying: Behold, Moses, what they of thy people have done unto the Son

of God. Therefore blessed art thou O Paul, and blessed is the generation and people that hath believed thy word.

49 While he yet spake there came other twelve and saw me and said: Art thou Paul that is glorified in heaven and upon earth? And I answered and said: Who are ye? The first answered and said: I am Esaias whose head Manasses cut with a saw of wood. And the second said likewise: I am Jeremias who was stoned by the children of Israel, and slain. And the third said: I am Ezechiel whom the children of Israel dragged by the feet over the stones in the mountain until they scattered my brains abroad: and all of us endured these labours, desiring to save the children of Israel: and I say unto thee that after the toils which they laid upon me I would cast myself down upon my face before the Lord, praying for them and bowing my knees unto the second hour of the Lord's day, even until Michael came and raised me up from the earth. Blessed art thou, Paul, and blessed is the people that hath believed through thee. And as they passed by, I saw another, fair of countenance and asked: Who is this, Lord? [And when he saw me he was glad] and he said unto me: This is Lot, which was found righteous in Sodom. And he came near and greeted me and said: Blessed art thou, Paul, and blessed is the generation unto whom thou hast ministered. And I answered and said unto him: Art thou Lot, that wast found righteous in Sodom? And he said: I entertained angels in mine house as strangers, and when they of the city would have done them violence I offered them my two daughters, virgins, that had never known man, and gave them to them, saying: Use them as ye will, only do no ill unto these men, for therefore have they entered under the roof of mine house. Therefore ought we to have confidence, and know that whatsoever any man hath done, God recompenseth him manifold more when he cometh (they come) unto him. Blessed art thou Paul, and blessed is the generation which hath believed thy word. When therefore he had ceased speaking unto me, I saw another coming from afar off, very beautiful in the face, and smiling, and his angels singing hymns, and I said unto the angel that was with me: Hath, then, every one of the righteous an angel for his fellow? And he saith to me: Every one of the saints hath his own, that standeth by him and singeth hymns, and the one departeth not from the other. And I said: Who is this, Lord? And he said: This is Job. And he drew near and greeted me and said: Brother Paul, thou hast great praise with God and men. Now I am Job, which suffered much for the season of thirty years by the issue of a plague, and in the beginning the blains that came forth of my body were as grains of wheat; but on the third day they became like an ass's foot, and the worms that fell from them were four fingers long: and thrice the devil appeared unto me and saith to me: Speak a word against the Lord, and die. But I said unto him: If thus be the will of God that I continue in the plague all the time of my life until I die, I will not rest from blessing the Lord God, and I shall receive the greater reward. For I know that the sufferings of this world are nought compared with the refreshment that is thereafter: wherefore blessed art thou, Paul, and blessed is the people which hath believed by thy means.

50 While he yet spake there came another crying out from afar off and saying: Blessed art thou, Paul, and blessed am I that have seen thee the beloved of the Lord. And I asked the angel: Who is this, Lord? and he answered and said unto me: This is Noe of the days of the flood. And straightway we greeted one another, and he, rejoicing greatly, said unto me: Thou art (or, Art thou) Paul the best beloved of God. And I asked him: Who art thou? And he said: I am Noe that was in the days of the flood: but I say unto thee, Paul, that I spent an hundred years making the ark, not putting off the coat (tunic) which I wore, and I shaved not the hair of mine head. Furthermore I kept continence, not coming near mine own wife, and in those hundred years the hair of mine head grew not in greatness, neither was my raiment soiled. And I besought men at that time, saying: Repent, for a flood of waters cometh upon you. But they mocked me and derided my words; and again they said unto me: This is the time of them that would play and sin as much as they will, that have leave to fornicate not a little (lat. confused; other versions omit): for God looketh not on these things, neither knoweth what is done of us men, and moreover there is no flood of waters coming upon this world. And they ceased not from their sins until God blotted out all flesh that had the breath of life in it. But know thou that God loveth one righteous man more than all the world of the wicked. Therefore blessed art thou, O Paul, and blessed is the people that hath believed by thy means.

51 And I turned myself and saw other righteous ones coming from afar off, and I asked the angel: Who are these, Lord? and he answered me: These are Elias and Eliseus. And they greeted me, and I said unto them: Who are ye? And one of them answered and said: I am Elias the prophet of God. I am Elias that prayed, and because of my word the heaven rained not for three years and six months, because of the iniquities of men. Righteous and true is God, who doeth the will of his servants; for oftentimes the angels besought the Lord for rain, and he said: Be patient until my servant Elias pray and entreat for this, and I will send rain upon the earth.

[Here the Greek, latin, and Syriac texts end, save that the Syriac adds thus much:]

And he gave not, until I called upon him again; then he gave unto them. But blessed art thou, O Paul, that thy generation and those thou teachest are the sons of the kingdom. And know thou, O Paul, that every man who believes through thee hath a great blessing, and a blessing is reserved for him. Then he departed from me.

And the angel who was with me led me forth, and said unto me: Lo, unto thee is given this mystery and revelation: as thou pleasest, make it known unto the sons of men.

And I, Paul, returned unto myself, and I knew all that I had seen: and in life I had not rest that I might reveal this mystery, but I wrote it and deposited it under the ground and the foundations of the house of a certain faithful man with whom I used to be in Tarsus a city of Cilicia. And when I was released from this life of time, and stood before my Lord, thus said he unto me: Paul, have we shown all these things unto thee that thou shouldst deposit them under the foundations of a house? Then send and disclose concerning this revelation, that men may read it and turn to the way of truth, that they also may not come to these bitter torments.

### **380 AD – 450 AD ( Time of Jovinianist controversy)**

**1998 by Christopher John Gousmett, Scholar of early Christianity**

#### **Shall the Body Strive and Not be Crowned?**

#### **Unitary and instrumentalist anthropological models as keys to interpreting the structure of Patristic eschatology**

(Jovinian opposed the idea of degrees of reward and punishment, and this article is a good source for the arguments of the Church Fathers who discussed this issue)

#### **5.2.4. The controversy with Jovinian**

It was maintained by many Patristic writers that there were distinctions of rewards and the corresponding glory of the resurrection body among the righteous.<sup>80</sup> The principal passages used in support of this idea were John 14:2, in my Father's house there are many mansions,<sup>81</sup> and 1 Corinthians 15:41, The sun has one kind of splendour, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendour.<sup>82</sup> Differences of punishment for the wicked are also asserted on such grounds as that "it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom on the day of judgement" than for those who rejected Christ.<sup>83</sup> The most extensive discussion of this subject is perhaps that found in the rebuttal by Jerome of the view held by Jovinian,<sup>84</sup> namely that there were no differences in the rewards or punishments given to the dead at the judgement: the same reward or punishment was given to all.<sup>85</sup> Jovinian was opposing the view that differences of reward and punishment were associated with different earthly states: virgins, widows, wives, monks, priests, laymen. Jovinian also taught the equality of marriage and virginity,<sup>86</sup> the uselessness of fasting, and that the baptised could not be induced to sin by the devil.<sup>87</sup>

Jerome saw his rejection of the differences of rewards and punishments as an attack on the value of the merits of the saints, and a denial of the seriousness of the depravity of some sinners, since all were punished

alike.<sup>88</sup> While the details of the controversy take us away from our theme, it is of interest in that here Jerome is specifically defending the idea that while it is valid to distinguish between the just and the unjust, as Jovinian did, it is also legitimate to make distinctions among those in each group.

To establish his position, Jovinian cited various passages of Scripture. In the parable of the ten virgins, five remained outside and five went in to the marriage feast. With Noah's ark, and in Sodom and Gomorrah, the righteous were delivered and the sinners perished. In Egypt the ten plagues fell with equal violence on all that sinned, and at the Red Sea the righteous passed over while the sinners were destroyed. Thus, at the judgement there will be two classes: the sheep and the goats, the just and the unjust. With these and similar examples, Jovinian sought to show there were only two classes: the sinners and the righteous.<sup>89</sup>

Jerome attempts to refute Jovinian by showing that in the parable of the sower [Matthew 13], there were three degrees of fruitfulness and of sterility,<sup>90</sup> while Jovinian focused on the fact that there was a difference between good soil and bad soil. Similarly he accepts that there is a distinction between the good and the bad, as in the examples given by Jovinian, but he then asks:

But what are we to think of your assertion, that because there is a division into good and bad, the good, or the bad it may be, are not distinguished one from another, and that it makes no difference whether one is a ram in the flock or a poor little sheep?<sup>91</sup>

Jovinian had argued that as one star differs from another in glory, so spiritual persons differ from carnal. He argues that the one who calls his brother a fool, a murderer and an adulterer, will all be sent to Gehenna, in spite of the differences in their sins.

Similarly some martyrs were burned, some were strangled, and some beheaded, but all share the same victor's crown. He cites especially the parable of the labourers in the vineyard who all laboured for different periods, but were all nevertheless paid the same wages.<sup>92</sup> Jerome argues that this is twisting Scripture with perverse ingenuity, and a Stoic outlook on rewards and punishments.<sup>93</sup> He says that to say that all sins are equal is to say that all deserve the same punishment, and a hungry man stealing food is as guilty as a murderer. He wishes to maintain the distinction of merits and punishments, correlated with the distinctions in the resurrection bodies among both the wicked and the just, so that we do not all receive identical rewards and punishments.<sup>94</sup> Jerome argues from Ezekiel 34:17, I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats, that God will indeed distinguish not only between the sinners and the saints, but also between those in each group.<sup>95</sup>

Jerome uses many other texts to establish his case, and he is convinced of the justice of making distinctions among the righteous and among the wicked, seeing them as deserving of different rewards and punishments.<sup>96</sup> A similar argument is found in the works of Ambrose, who also wrote against Jovinian.<sup>97</sup> Again 1 Corinthians 15:40-44 is used to support this idea.

All men rise again, but let no one lose heart, and let not the just grieve at the common lot of rising again, since he awaits the chief fruit of his virtue. All indeed shall rise again, but, as says the Apostle, each in his own order. The fruit of the divine mercy is common to all, but the order of merit differs. The day gives light to all, the sun warms all, the rain fertilises the possessions of all with genial showers. We are all born, and we shall all rise again, but in each state, whether of living or of living again, grace differs and the condition differs.<sup>98</sup>

The phrase, each in his own order, was thus understood by Ambrose to refer to the differing merits of those raised,<sup>99</sup> as can be seen from his view that the resurrection is an "order of grace" in which "all are raised again in a moment, yet all are raised in the order of their merits."<sup>100</sup>

Chrysostom answers the problem of the differences of rewards not by the distinction of the groups who shall face judgement, but by distinctions in the glory of the resurrection which the righteous share, as well as the differences in the resurrection bodies of the sinners. Some receive honour and others dishonour, fates which are reflected in the character of the bodies they receive.all

As he also said in the former epistle, We shall all be raised, but each in his own order [1 Corinthians 15:22,23]. And, There are celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial [1 Corinthians 15:40]. For the resurrection indeed is common to all, but the glory is not common; but some shall rise in honour and others in dishonour, and some to a kingdom but others to punishment.<sup>101</sup>

The resurrection is general, he says, as indicated in 1 Corinthians 15 by the image of the seed, and all will be raised; but the honour received by each differs, and only those who are in Christ are raised in glory.<sup>102</sup> The difference between the resurrection bodies is described by Paul in the imagery of the differences between the sun, the moon and the stars. Thus there are also distinctions between the different saints, as well as a general distinction between the saints and the sinners. Chrysostom insists that while disbelief in the resurrection results in carelessness about behaviour (on the assumption there is no judgement to face), the idea that all receive the same reward makes people lazy. Just as the sun, moon and stars are all in the heavens yet differ in their glory, so too all the believers will be saved but will differ in their rewards. Nor will all sinners receive the same punishment.<sup>103</sup> He maintains then, as did many other Patristic writers, that there are distinctions of merit in the resurrection, and different degrees of glory for the saints. The consistent conclusion drawn from making distinctions among those resurrected is the distinctions of rewards and punishments.

Emma Disley states that “The writings of the Fathers were weightily disposed towards the concept of degrees of reward and punishment...”<sup>104</sup> She argues that

Men’s ideas of a hierarchic heaven seem to have been constructed to reflect social patterns on earth: the notion of an equality of heavenly bliss, or of hellish torments, seems to have played no part in the medieval picture of the hereafter. Jovinian’s ideas, that all sins are equal and that there is but one grade of punishment and one of reward in the future states, seem to have been effectively silenced after their condemnation at the synods of Rome and Milan (c. 390).

Jerome’s refutation of Jovinian had been constructed upon the argument that all sins are not equal, and that degrees of holiness (Jerome referred specifically to chastity and martyrdom) attained in this life, are intimately linked with our future position within the hierarchy of heaven. It seemed self-evident that some sins were graver than others, that a truly evil man would receive severer punishments in the depths of hell than one who had committed sins of a more “trivial” nature. Hence the Church’s division of sins into classes of “venial” and “mortal.”...

Once the notion of varying degrees of torment in hell had been accepted, it seemed logical to extend the idea to heaven and to varying degrees of reward, associated with the varying degrees of holiness achieved in this life.<sup>105</sup>

The notion of a hierarchy is inconsistent with a coherent concept of the people of God, with a diversity of offices, which does not elevate one office over others which are subordinated to it.<sup>106</sup>

**Notes:**

80 Augustine also asserts, but without giving textual support, that there shall be degrees of reward, apparently considering it evident enough, as he says simply “it cannot be doubted that there shall be degrees [of honour and glory].” *The City of God* 22.30. NPNF 1/2, p. 510. See also Ambrose. *Exposition of the Gospel according to Luke* 7.220. PL 15, 1848. Letter 42 to Siricius. PL 16, 1172-1177.

81 For example, an early use of John 14:2 (in conjunction with Matthew 13:8) which leads to the idea of the distinctions of rewards is found in Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 5.36.2. ANF 1, p. 567.

82 Cf. for instance Augustine, who cites 1 Corinthians 15:40-43 and says, "You see, glory was promised to the bodies of the saints and different degrees of glory because the merits of charity are different." Sermon 241.8. FC 38, p. 263. Augustine discusses these two passages in other places. Tractate in John 67.2. NPNF 1/7, p. 321. Tractate in John 68.3. NPNF 1/7, pp. 323-324. On the spirit and the letter 41. NPNF 1/5, p. 100. On the spirit and the letter 48. NPNF 1/5, p. 104. Of holy virginity 26. NPNF 1/3, p. 426. However, Jerome interprets Daniel 12:3 to mean that the "learned teachers" will shine brighter than the "righteous who are without learning," so that there are different degrees of glory depending on intellectual attainment, an elitist idea at odds with the gospel. Commentary on Daniel 12.3. G L Archer, pp. 146-147. This is also found in another of his writings: "In the close of his most solemn vision Daniel declares that the righteous shall shine as the stars; and the wise, that is the learned, as the firmament. You can see, therefore, how great is the difference between righteous ignorance and instructed righteousness. Those who have the first are compared with the stars, those who have the second with the heavens. Yet, according to the exact sense of the Hebrew, both statements may be understood of the learned, for it is to be read in this way: They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." Jerome. Letter 53.3. NPNF 2/6, pp. 97-98. Cf. by way of contrast the words of Herman Bavinck on his deathbed: "My learning does not help me now; neither does my Dogmatics; faith alone saves me." Translator's Preface. Herman Bavinck. *The Doctrine of God* (n. p.).

83 Augustine. On baptism, against the Donatists 4.19. NPNF 1/4, p. 459.

84 Jerome. *Against Jovinianus* 2.18-38. NPNF 2/6, pp. 402-416. For an account of the controversy concerning the views of Jovinian, see: F H Dudden. *The life and times of Saint Ambrose*. Vol. 2, pp. 393-398. J N D Kelly. *Jerome. His life, writings and controversies*, pp. 180-189.

85 For Jovinian the equality of all Christians based on their common baptism was the starting point of his thought. David G Hunter. "Resistance to the virginal ideal in late fourth-century Rome: the case of Jovinian." *Theological Studies* 48 (1987) 47.

86 Augustine attacked this view in his tractate *Of Holy Virginity* 6, where for instance he asserted that virgins give birth to spiritual children in Christ, while mothers give birth to fleshly children in Adam. NPNF 1/3, p. 419. Jovinian was also condemned for his view in an encyclical of pope Siricius. Letter 7. *Against Jovinian the heretic*. PL 13, 1168-1172. Siricius also wrote the first papal document insisting on clerical celibacy. Decretal to Bishop Himerius. PL 13, 1131-1147. See the discussion of these documents by Daniel Callam. "Clerical continence in the fourth century: Three papal decretals." *Theological Studies* 41 (1980) 3-50.

87 David G Hunter has shown that Jovinian was attacking the Manichean heresy, and that each of his points has its opposite proposition in Manichean teaching as well as in Priscillianism. The sensitivity of Jerome and Ambrose to the views of Jovinian is because their exegesis of the Scriptural passages in dispute is identical to that of the Manicheans and the Priscillianists, whom Jovinian was attacking. Hunter says that while Augustine tried to distinguish between Manichean and orthodox Christian asceticism, Jovinian tried to undercut the appeal to asceticism as such, since he saw it as a denigration of the goodness of marriage and bodily life. As a result, Jovinian held to the equality of the rewards for the saints, with no advantage given to ascetics. "Resistance to the virginal ideal in late fourth-century Rome: the case of Jovinian." *Theological Studies* 48 (1987) 45-64.

88 However, although both Jerome and Jovinian agreed that all sins can be forgiven in baptism, Jovinian opposed the idea of rank among Christians whether here or hereafter. Elizabeth Clark. "The place of



Jerome's Commentary on Ephesians in the Origenist controversy: the apokatastasis and ascetic ideals." *Vigiliae Christianae* 41 (1987) 165.

89 Cited by Jerome. *Against Jovinian* 2.18. NPNF 2/6, p. 402.

90 This idea appears also in Irenaeus. *Against Heresies* 5.36.2. ANF 1, p. 567. Pseudo-Cyprian. *Sermo de centesima, sexagesima, tricesima*. PLS 1, 53-67, identifies the "thirty-fold" fruit of the seed as the reward of married people who practice chastity. Brian E Daley. *The hope of the early Church*, p. 234, n. 13. Cf. for this idea also Jerome. *Letter* 22.15. NPNF 2/6, p. 27. Athanasius. *Letter* 48. NPNF 2/4, p. 557. Augustine. *On holy virginity* 46. NPNF 1/3, p. 434.

91 Jerome. *Against Jovinian* 2.22. NPNF 2/6, p. 404. Jerome said elsewhere that if a human king is not satisfied with a single order of servants, instead of a hierarchy of officers, why should God, the King of kings, accept this? *Commentary on Ephesians* 1. PL 26, 491-492. Cited in: Elizabeth Clark. "The place of Jerome's Commentary on Ephesians in the Origenist controversy: the apokatastasis and ascetic ideals." *Vigiliae Christianae* 41 (1987) 160.

92 Cited by Jerome. *Against Jovinian* 2.20. NPNF 2/6, p. 403. Tertullian had earlier used this text to demonstrate the equality of all but the difference in the reward given. "Consequently, we who shall be with God shall be together; since we shall all be with the one God - albeit the wages be various, albeit there be "many mansions" in the house of the same Father - having laboured for the "one penny" of the self-same hire, that is, of eternal life..." *On Monogamy* 10. ANF 4, p. 67. Thus Tertullian provides a precedent for Jovinian's interpretation, even though he wishes to allow for different rewards as well.

93 Jerome also accused Jovinian of being an Epicurean (*Against Jovinian* 1.1, 1.4, 2.6, 2.21, 2.36. NPNF 2/6, pp. 346-416) as did Augustine (*Letter* 167.2.4. NPNF 1/1, p. 534). This Patristic tendency to trace heretical ideas to pagan philosophers such as Epicurus is frequently based on a gross oversimplification of the ideas of both Epicurus and the opponents of the Fathers, but was used to impute hedonistic motives to anyone who cast aspersions on the value placed on ascetic life. R Jungkuntz. "Fathers, Heretics and Epicureans." *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 17 (1966) 3-10. It is interesting to note that Jerome's treatise against Jovinian "marks the full revival of his unrestrained use of the pagan classics and of 'rhetoric'." J N D Kelly. *Jerome. His life, writings and controversies*, p. 182.

94 Elizabeth Clark argues that the desire to allow for a heavenly hierarchy with distinctions of merits based on ascetic renunciation is one reason why Jerome rejected Origen's doctrine of apokatastasis, which did not allow for this because of the universal restitution to goodness. This is found in his *Commentary on Ephesians* which he wrote before the controversy with Jovinian, as well as in his *Letter* 84.7. NPNF 2/6, p. 179. "The place of Jerome's Commentary on Ephesians in the Origenist controversy: the apokatastasis and ascetic ideals." *Vigiliae Christianae* *Against Jovinian* 2.21-22. NPNF 41 (1987) 155.

95 Jerome. 2/6, p. 404.

96 Cf. Herman Bavinck, who also says there are distinctions of rewards and punishments, basing his view on passages such as *Romans* 2:6, 12, *Matthew* 10:15, 11:22, 24, 16:27, *Luke* 12:47. *Our Reasonable Faith*, p. 565.

97 Jovinian was condemned in a letter by Ambrose [*Letter* 42, to Siricius. PL 16, 1172-1177] resulting from a synod in Milan. On another occasion Ambrose also condemned two monks who taught much the same ideas, labelling them Epicureans. *Letter* 63.7-19. NPNF 2/10, pp. 457-459. Ambrose also condemned the Novatianists who considered all sins alike. *On repentance* 1.5. NPNF 2/10, p. 330.

98 Ambrose. *On belief in the resurrection* 2.92-93. NPNF 2/10, p. 189.

99 Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 753, understands this phrase to mean “each event in its own order,” that is, first the resurrection of Christ, then the resurrection of the believers.

100 Ambrose. *On belief in the resurrection* 2.115-116. NPNF 2/10, p. 194.

101 John Chrysostom. *Homilies on Second Corinthians* 10.3. NPNF 1/12, p. 327. This idea appears in one of Chrysostom’s earliest writings. “He shall reward every man according to his works [Romans 2:6]. And not only in hell, but also in the kingdom one will find many differences, for he said, in my Father’s house are many mansions, and, there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon. And what wonder, if in dealing with such great matters he has spoken with such precision, seeing that He declares there is a difference in that world even between one star and another?” *To the fallen Theodore* 1.19. NPNF 1/9, p. 111. See also Basil. *The Long Rules* 267. Translation cited in: Richard Travers Smith. *St. Basil the Great*, pp. 137-138.

102 John Chrysostom. *Homilies on First Thessalonians* 7. NPNF 1/13, p. 353.

103 John Chrysostom. *Homilies on First Corinthians* 41.4. NPNF 1/12, p. 251.

104 E Disley. “Degrees of glory: Protestant doctrines and the concepts of rewards hereafter.” *Journal of Theological Studies* 42 (1991) 80.

105 E Disley. “Degrees of glory: Protestant doctrines and the concepts of rewards hereafter.” *Journal of Theological Studies* 42 (1991) 80-81.

106 The concept of sphere sovereignty in neo-Calvinist thought exposes the dualistic and authoritarian roots of hierarchical approaches to both society, church and (it would seem) the eschaton. See Gordon Spykman. “Sphere sovereignty in Calvin and the Calvinist Tradition.” In: *Exploring the heritage of John Calvin*, pp. 164-169.

## **389AD**

### **St. Ambrose (340-397 AD), Church Father, & The Council of Milan**

#### **They Place Every Thing Level, Abolish Different Degrees Of Merit & Have Meagreness In Heavenly Rewards, As If Christ Had Only One Palm To Bestow & No Copious Diversity In His Rewards**

#### **Letter XLII to Pope Siricius regarding Jovinian**

In this, their reply to Siricius, drawn up in all probability by S. Ambrose himself, the Council of Milan thank him for his care, and announce that they have followed his example and condemned Jovinian and his followers in the same way. They dwell upon his errors, particularly on his disparagement of virginity, on his denial of the true virginity of our Lord's Mother, on his contempt of widowhood, and of fasting, and condemn him as a follower of Manes. They argue in especial detail against his argument with regard to the Virgin Mary, which differs from that of Helvidius and other assailants.

#### **To their Lord, their Dearly Beloved Brother, Pope Siricius: Ambrose, Sabinus, Bassanius, and the Rest Send Greeting.**

1. In your Holiness' Letter we recognized the vigilance of a good shepherd, for you faithfully guard the door which has been entrusted to you, and with pious solicitude watch over the fold of Christ, being worthy to be heard and followed by the sheep of the Lord. Knowing therefore the lambs of Christ, you will easily discover the wolves, and meet them as a wary shepherd, so as to keep them from scattering the Lord's flock by their unbelieving life and dismal barking.

2. We praise you for this, our Lord and brother dearly beloved, and join in cordial commendations of it. Nor are we surprised that the Lord's flock was terrified at the rage of wolves in whom they recognized not the voice of Christ. For it is a savage barking to shew no reverence to virginity, observe no rule of chastity, to seek to place every thing on a level, to abolish the different degrees of merit, and to introduce a certain meagreness in heavenly rewards, as if Christ had only one palm to bestow, and there was no copious diversity in His rewards.

3. They pretend that they are giving honour to marriage. But what praise can rightly be given to marriage if no distinction is paid to virginity? We do not deny that marriage was hallowed by Christ, for the Divine words say, And they twain shall be one flesh, and one spirit, but our birth precedes our calling, and the mystery of the Divine operation is much more excellent than the remedy of human frailty. A good wife is deservedly praised, but a pious virgin is more properly preferred, for the Apostle says, He that giveth his virgin in marriage doeth well, but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better; for the one careth for the things of the Lord, the other for the things of the world. The one is bound by the chains of marriage, the other is free from chains; the one is under the Law, the other under Grace. Marriage is good, for thereby the means of continuing the human race has been devised, but virginity is better, for thereby the heritage of the heavenly kingdom is regained, and the mode of attaining to heavenly rewards discovered. By a woman care entered the world; by a virgin salvation was brought to pass. Lastly, Christ chose virginity as His own special gift, and displayed the grace of chastity, thus making an exhibition of that in His own person which in His Mother He had made the object of His choice.

### **393 AD**

**St. Jerome (345-420 AD), Church Father**

**Defense Of All Scriptures As Basis For Degrees Of Merit, & Refutation Of All Scriptural Arguments In Opposition  
Against Jovinius**

#### **Book II sections 18-34**

18. His fourth and last contention is that there are two classes, the sheep and the goats, the just and the unjust: that the just stand on the right hand, the other on the left: and that to the just the words are spoken: S. Matt. xxv. 34. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But that sinners are thus addressed: S. Matt. xxv. 41. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels." That a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, nor an evil tree good fruit. Hence it is that the Saviour says to the Jews: S. John viii. 44. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do." He quotes the parable of the ten virgins, the wise and the foolish, and shows that the five who had no oil remained outside, but that the other five who had gotten for themselves the light of good works went into the marriage with the bridegroom. He goes back to the flood, and tells us that they who were righteous like Noah were saved, but that the sinners perished all together. We are informed that among the men of Sodom and Gomorrha no difference is made except between the two classes of the good and the bad. The righteous are delivered, the sinners are consumed by the same fire. There is one salvation for those who are released, one destruction for those who stay behind. Lot's wife is a clear warning that we must not deviate a hair's breadth from right. If, however, he says, you object and ask me why the righteous toils in time of peace, or in the midst of persecution, if he is to gain nothing nor have a greater reward, I would assert that he does this, not that he may gain a further reward but that he may not lose what he has already received. In Egypt also the ten plagues fell with equal violence upon all that sinned, and the same darkness hung over master and slave, noble and ignoble, the king and the people. Again at the Red Sea the righteous all passed over, the sinners were all overwhelmed. Six hundred thousand men, besides those who were unfit for war through age or sex, all alike fell in the desert, and two who were alike in righteousness are alike delivered. For forty years all Israel toiled and died alike. As regards

food, an homer of manna was the measure for all ages: the clothes of all alike did not wear out: the hair of all alike did not grow, nor the beard increase: the shoes of all lasted the same time. Their feet grew not hard: the food in the mouths of all had the same taste. They went on their way to one resting place with equal toil and equal reward. All Hebrews had the same Passover, the same Feast of Tabernacles, the same Sabbath, the same New Moons. In the seventh, the Sabbatical Year, all prisoners were released without distinction of persons, and in the year of Jubilee all debts were forgiven to all debtors, and he who had sold land returned to the inheritance of his fathers.

19. Then, again, as regards the parable of the sower in the Gospel, we read that the good ground brought forth fruit, some a hundred fold, some sixty fold, and some thirty fold; and, on the other hand, that the bad ground admitted of three degrees of sterility: but Jovinianus makes only two classes, the good soil and the bad. S. Matt. xix. 29; S. Mark x. 29, 30; S. Luke xviii. 29, 30. And as in one Gospel our Lord promises the Apostles a hundred fold, in another seven fold, for leaving children and wives, and in the world to come life eternal; and the seven and the hundred mean the same thing: so, too, in the passage before us, the numbers describing the fertility of the soil need not create any difficulty, particularly when the Evangelist Mark gives the inverse order, thirty, sixty, and a hundred. The Lord says, S. John vi. 56. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him." As, then, there are not varying degrees of Christ's presence in us, so neither are there degrees of our abiding in Christ. S. John xiv. 23. "Every one that loveth me will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." He that is righteous, loves Christ: and if a man thus loves, the Father and the Son come to him, and make their abode with him. Now I suppose that when the guest is such as this the host cannot possibly lack anything. And if our Lord says, S. John xiv. 2. "In my Father's house are many mansions," His meaning is not that there are different mansions in the kingdom of heaven, but He indicates the number of Churches in the whole world, for though the Church be seven-fold she is but one. "I go," He says, "to prepare a place for you," not places. If this promise is peculiar to the twelve apostles, then Paul is shut out from that place, and the chosen vessel will be thought superfluous and unworthy. John and James, because they asked more than the others, did not obtain it; and yet their dignity is not diminished, because they were equal to the rest of the apostles. 1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 19. "Know ye not that your bodies are a temple of the Holy Ghost?" A temple, He says, not temples, in order to show that God dwells in all alike. S. John xvii. 20–23. "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee, are one, so they may be all one in us. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them. I have loved them, as thou hast loved me. And as we are Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, so may they be one people in themselves, that is, like dear children, partakers of the divine nature." Call the Church what you will, bride, sister, mother, her assembly is but one and never lacks husband, brother, or son. Her faith is one, and she is not defiled by variety of doctrine, nor divided by heresies. She continues a virgin. Whithersoever the Lamb goeth, she follows Him: she alone knows the Song of Christ.

20. "If you tell me," says he, "that one star differeth from another star in glory, I reply, that one star does differ from another star; that is, spiritual persons differ from carnal. We love all the members alike, and do not prefer the eye to the finger, nor the finger to the ear: but the loss of any one is attended by the sorrow of all the rest. We all alike come into this world, and we all alike depart from it. There is one Adam of the earth, and another from heaven. The earthly Adam is on the left hand, and will perish: the heavenly Adam is on the right hand, and will be saved. He who says to his brother, 'thou fool,' and 'raca,' will be in danger of Gehenna. And the murderer and the adulterer will likewise be sent into Gehenna. In times of persecution some are burnt, some strangled, some beheaded, some flee, or die within the walls of a prison: the struggle varies in kind, but the victors' crown is one. No difference was made between the son who had never left his father, and his brother who was welcomed as a returning penitent. To the labourers of the first hour, the third, the sixth, the ninth, and the eleventh, the same reward of a penny was given, and what may perhaps seem still more strange to you, the first to receive the reward were they who had toiled least in the vineyard."

21. Who is there even of God's elect that would not be disturbed at these and similar passages of Holy Scripture which our crafty opponent, with a perverse ingenuity, twists to the support of his own views? The

Apostle John says that many Antichrists had come, and to make no difference between John himself and the lowest penitent is the preaching of a real Antichrist. At the same time, I am amazed at the portentous forms which Jovianus, as slippery as a snake and like another Proteus, so rapidly assumes. In sexual intercourse and full feeding he is an Epicurean; in the distribution of rewards and punishments he all at once becomes a Stoic. He exchanges Jerusalem in Cyprus, where Zeno the founder of the Stoic school was born. Cition, Judæa for Cyprus, Christ for Zeno. If we may not depart a hair's breadth from virtue, and all sins are equal, and a man who in a fit of hunger steals a piece of bread is no less guilty than he who slays a man: you must, in your turn, be held guilty of the greatest crimes. The case is different if you say that you have no sin, not even the least, and if, although all apostles and prophets and all the saints (as I have maintained in dealing i.e., Jovianus. Jerome for the moment addresses the reader. his second proposition) bewail their sinfulness, you alone boast of your righteousness. But a minute ago you were barefooted: now you not only wear shoes, but decorated ones. Just now you wore a rough coat and a dirty shirt, you were grimy, and haggard, and your hand was horny with toil: now you are clad in linen and silks, and strut like an exquisite in the fashions of the Atrebatæ and the Laodiceans. Your cheeks are ruddy, your skin sleek, your hair smoothed down in front and behind, your belly protrudes, your shoulders are little mountains, your neck full and so loaded with fat that the half-smothered words can scarce make their escape. Surely in such extremes of dress and mode of life there must be sin on the one side or the other. I will not assert that the sin lies in the food or clothing, but that such fickleness and changing for the worse is almost censurable in itself. And what we censure, is far removed from virtue; and what is far from virtue becomes the property of vice; and what is proved to be vicious is one with sin. Now sin, according to you, is placed on the left hand, and corresponds to the goats. You must, therefore, return to your old habits if you are to be a sheep on the right hand; or, if you perversely repent of your former views and change them for others, whether you like it or not, and although you shave off your beard, you will be reckoned among the goats.

22. But what is the good of calling Persius I. 128, Conington's translation. one-eyed man Old One-eye, and of showing the inconsistency of an assailant, when we have to refute a whole series of statements? That the sheep and the goats on the right hand and on the left are the two classes of the righteous and the wicked, I do not deny. That a good tree does not bring forth evil fruit, nor an evil one good fruit, no one doubts. The ten virgins also, wise and foolish, we divide into good and bad. We are not ignorant that at the deluge the righteous were delivered, and sinners overwhelmed with the waters. That at Sodom and Gomorrhæ the just man was rescued, while the sinners were consumed by fire, is clear to everyone. We are also aware that Egypt was stricken with the ten plagues, and that Israel was saved. Even little children in our schools sing how the righteous passed through the Red Sea, and Pharaoh with his host was drowned. That six hundred thousand fell in the desert because they were unbelieving, and that two only entered the land of promise, is taught by Scripture; and so is the rest of your description of the two classes, good and bad, down to the labourers in the vineyard. But what are we to think of your assertion, that because there is a division into good and bad, the good, or the bad it may be, are not distinguished one from another, and that it makes no difference whether one is a ram in the flock or a poor little sheep? whether the sheep have the first or the second fleece? whether the flock is diseased and covered with the scab, or full of life and vigour? Ezek. xxxiv. 17, 20, 21. especially when by the authoritative utterances of His own prophet Ezekiel God clearly points out the difference between flock and flock of His rational sheep, saying, "Behold I judge between cattle and cattle, and between the rams and the he-goats, and between the fat cattle and the lean. Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, until they were scattered abroad." And that we might know what the cattle were, He immediately added: Ezek. xxxiv. 31. "Ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men." Will Paul and that penitent who had lain with his father's wife be on an equality, because the latter repented and was received into the Church: and shall the offender because he is with him on the right hand shine with the same glory as the Apostle? How is it then that tares and wheat grow side by side in the same field until the harvest, that is the end of the world? What is the significance of good and bad fish being contained in the Gospel net? Why, in Noah's ark, the type of the Church, are there different animals with different abodes according to their rank? Why standeth the queen upon the Lord's right hand, in raiment of wrought gold, in a vesture of gold? Why had Joseph, representing Christ, a coat of many colours? Why does the Apostle say to the Romans: Rom. xii. 3 sq. "According as God

had dealt to each man a measure of faith. For even as we have 405 many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another. And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith; or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry; or he that teacheth, to his teaching; or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting: he that giveth, let him do it with liberality; he that ruleth, with diligence,” and so on. And elsewhere: Rom. xiv. 5. “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.” To the Corinthians he says: 1 Cor. iii. 6 sq. “I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God, ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.” And again elsewhere: 1 Cor. iii. 10 sq. “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder I laid a foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. But if any man buildeth on the foundation, gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble: each man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall reveal it, because it is revealed in fire: and the fire itself shall prove each man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire.” If the man whose work is burnt and is to suffer the loss of his labour, while he himself is saved, yet not without proof of fire: it follows that if a man’s work remains which he has built upon the foundation, he will be saved without probation by fire, and consequently a difference is established between one degree of salvation and another. Again in another place he says: 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. “Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Here, moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” Would you be assured that between one steward and another there is a great difference (I am not speaking of bad and good, but of the good themselves who stand on the right hand)? then listen to the sequel: 1 Cor. ix. 13 sq. “Know ye not that they which minister about the sacrifices, eat of the sacrifices, and they which wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar? Even so did the Lord ordain that they which proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel. But I have used none of these things: and I wrote not these things that it may be so done in my case: for it were good for me rather to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel. For if I do this of mine own will, I have a reward: but if not of mine own will, I have a steward-ship intrusted to me. What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel without charge, so as not to use to the full my right in the gospel. For though I was free from all men, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more.” You surely cannot say that men commit sin by living by the Gospel, and partaking of the sacrifices. Of course not. The Lord himself made the rule that they who preach the Gospel, should live by the Gospel. But an Apostle who does not abuse this freedom, but labours with his hands that he may not be a burden to anyone, and toils night and day and ministers to his companions of course does this, that for his greater toil he may receive a greater reward.

23. Let us hasten to what remains. 1 Cor. xii. 4. “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but the same God who worketh all things in all. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal.” And again: 1 Cor. xii. 12. “As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.” But he precludes you from saying that the different members of the one body have the same rank; for he immediately describes the orders of the Church, and says: 1 Cor. xii. 28 sq. “And God hath set some in the Church, first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers; then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all gifts of healings? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But desire earnestly the greater gifts. And a still more excellent way shew I unto you.” And after discoursing more in detail of the graces of 406 charity, he added: 1 Cor. xiii. 8, 9, 10. “Whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part: but when that which is perfect is come, then that which

is in part shall be done away.” And afterwards we read: 1 Cor. xiii. 18; xiv. 1. “But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love. Follow after love; yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.” And again: 1 Cor. xiv. 5. “I would have you all speak with tongues, but rather that ye should prophesy: and greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues.” And again: 1 Cor. xiv. 18. “I thank God, I speak with tongues more than you all.” Where there are different gifts, and one man is greater, another less, and all are called spiritual, they are all certainly sheep, and they stand on the right hand; but there is a difference between one sheep and another. It is humility that leads the Apostle Paul to say: 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10. “I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain: but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” But the very fact of his thus humbling himself shows the possibility of there being apostles of higher or lower rank, and God is not unjust that He will forget the work of him who is called the chosen vessel of election, and who laboured more abundantly than they all, or assign equal rewards to unequal deserts. Afterwards we read, 1 Cor. xv. 22. “As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be now alive. But each in his own order.” If each is to rise in his own order, it follows that those who rise are of different degrees of merit. 1 Cor. xv. 39. “All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fishes. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.” Like a learned commentator, you have explained this passage by saying that the spiritual differ from the carnal. It follows that in heaven there will be both spiritual and carnal persons, and not only will the sheep climb thither, but your goats also. “One star,” he says, “differeth from another star in glory”: this is not the distinction of sheep and goat, but of sheep and sheep, star and star. Lastly, he says, “there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon.” But for this, you might maintain that the phrase one star from another star covers the whole human race; but he introduces the sun and moon, and you cannot possibly reckon them among the goats. “So,” says he, “is also the resurrection of the dead”—the just will shine with the brightness of the sun, and those of the next rank will glow with the splendour of the moon, so that one will be a Lucifer, another an Arcturus, a third an Orion, another Mazzaroth, or some other of the stars whose names are hollowed in the book of Job. Job ix. 9; xxxviii. 32. 2 Cor. v. 10. “For we all,” he says, “must be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” And you cannot say that the mode of our manifestation before the judgment-seat of Christ is such that the good receive good things, the bad evil things; for he 2 Cor. ix. 6. teaches us in the same epistle that he who soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Surely he who sows more and he who sows less are both on the right side. And although they belong to the same class, that of the sower, yet they differ in respect of measure and number. The same Paul, writing to the Ephesians, says: Eph. iii. 10. “to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God.” You observe that it is a varied and manifold wisdom of God which is spoken of as existing in the different ranks of the church. And in the same epistle we read, Eph. iv. 7. “Unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the grace of Christ”: not that Christ’s measure varies, but only that so much of His grace is poured out as we can receive.

24. In vain, therefore, do you multiply instances of sheep and goats, of the five wise and five foolish virgins, of Egyptians and Israelites, and so forth, because retribution is not in the present, but will be in the future. Hence we find that the day of judgment is promised at the end of all things, because the judgment is not now. For it would be absurd to call the last day the day of judgment, if God were judging at the present time. Now we sail the ship, wrestle, and fight, that at last we may reach the haven, be crowned, and triumph. But you, with no less adroitness than perversity, make the life of this world illustrate that of the world to come, although we know full well that here unrighteousness prevails, there, righteousness: Ps. lxxiii. 17. “until we go into the sanctuary of God, and understand the end of those men.” The saint does not die one way, the sinner another. Those who sail the same sea have the same calm and storm. A violent death is not one thing

to the robber, another to the martyr. Children are not born one way of adultery and prostitution, in another of pure marriage. Certainly our Lord and the robbers incurred the same penalty of crucifixion. If the judgment of this world and of that which is to come be the same, it follows that they who were here crucified side by side, will also be esteemed of equal rank hereafter. Paul and they who bound him, sailed together, endured the same storm, escaped together to the shore when the ship was broken with the waves. You cannot deny that the prisoner and the keepers were of unequal merit. And what were the circumstances of that same shipwreck of the Apostle and the soldiers? The Apostle Paul afterwards See Acts xxvii. 23 and the context. related a vision, and said that they who were with him in the ship had been given to him by the Lord. Are we to suppose that he to whom they were given, and they who were given to him, were of one degree of merit? Ten righteous men can save a sinful city. Lot together with his daughters was delivered from the fire: his sons-in-law would also have been saved, had they been willing to leave the city. Now there was surely a great difference between Lot and his sons-in-law. One city out of the five, Gen. xix. 18–21, Zoar, was saved, and a place which lay under the same sentence as Sodom, Gomorrhah, Admah, and Zeboiim, was preserved by the prayers of a holy man. Lot and Zoar were of different merit, but both of them escaped the fire. 1 Sam. xxx. 1. The robbers who in the absence of David had laid waste Ziklag, and made a prey of the wives and children of the inhabitants were slain on the third day in the plain, but forty men mounted on camels fled. Will you maintain that there was some difference between those who were slain and those who made good their escape? We read in the S. Luke xiii. 4. Gospel that the tower of Siloam fell upon eighteen men who perished in the ruins. Certainly our Saviour did not regard them as the only sinners: but they were punished to terrify the rest: it was like scourging a pestilent fellow to teach fools wisdom. If all sinners are punished alike, it is unjust for one to be slain while another is admonished by his comrade's death.

25. You raise the objection that all Israelites had the same measure of manna, an homer, and were alike in respect of dress, and hair, and beard, and shoes; as though we did not all alike partake of the body of Christ. In the Christian mysteries there is one means of sanctification for the master and the servant, the noble and the low-born, for the king and his soldiers, and yet, that which is one varies according to the merits of those who receive it. 1 Cor. xi. 27. "Whosoever shall eat or drink unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." Does it follow that because Judas drank of the same cup as the rest of the apostles, that he and they are of equal merit? But suppose that we do not choose to receive the sacrament, at all events we all have the same life, breathe the same air, have the same blood in our veins, are fed on the same food. Moreover, if our viands are improved by culinary skill and are made more palatable for the consumer, food of this kind does not satisfy nature, but tickles the appetite. We are all alike subject to hunger, all alike suffer with cold: we alike are shrivelled with the frost, or melted with the broiling heat. The sun and the moon, and all the company of the stars, the showers, the whole world run their course for us all alike, and, as the Gospel tells us, the same refreshing rain falls upon all, good and bad, just and unjust. If the present is a picture of the future, then the Sun of Righteousness will rise upon sinners as well as upon the righteous, upon the wicked and the holy, upon the heathen as well as upon Jews and Christians, though the Scripture says, Mal. iv. 2. "Unto you that fear the Lord shall the Sun of Righteousness arise." If He will rise to those that fear, He will set to the despisers and the false prophets. The sheep which stand on the right hand will be brought into the kingdom of heaven, the goats will be thrust down to hell. The parable does not contrast the sheep one with another, or on the other hand the goats, but merely makes a difference between sheep and goats. The whole truth is not taught in a single passage: we must always bear in mind the exact point of an illustration. For instance, the ten virgins are not examples of the whole human race, but of the careful and the slothful: the former are ever anticipating the advent of our Lord, the latter abandon themselves to idle slumber without a thought of future judgment. And so at the end of the parable it is said, S. Matt. xxv. 13. "Watch, for ye know not the day, nor the hour." If at the deluge Noah was delivered, and the whole world perished, all men were flesh, and therefore were destroyed. You must either say that the sons of Noah and Noah for whose sake they were delivered were of unequal merit, or you must place the accursed Ham in the same rank as his father because he was delivered with him from the flood. At the passion of Christ all wavered, all were unprofitable together: there was none that did good, no not one. Will you therefore dare to say that Peter and the rest of the Apostles who fled denied the Saviour in the same sense as Caiaphas and the Pharisees and the people who cried out, S. John xix. 6. "Crucify him, crucify him"? And, to say no more about the Apostles, do



you think Annas and Caiaphas, and Judas the traitor guilty of no greater crime than Pilate who was compelled against his will to give sentence against our Lord? The guilt of Judas is proportioned to his former merit, and the greater the guilt, the greater the penalty too. Wisd. vi. 7. "For the mighty shall mightily suffer torment." An evil tree does not bear good fruit, nor a good tree evil fruit. If this be so, tell me how it was that Paul though he was an evil tree and persecuted the Church of Christ, afterwards bore good fruit? And Judas, though he was a good tree and wrought miracles like the other Apostles, afterwards turned traitor and brought forth evil fruit? The truth is that a good tree does not bear evil fruit, nor an evil tree good fruit, so long as they continue in their goodness, or badness. And if we read that every Hebrew keeps the same Passover, and that in Ex. xxi. 2. the seventh year every prisoner is set free, and that at Jubilee, that is the fiftieth year, Lev. xxv. 13. every possession returns to its owner, all this refers not to the present, but to the future; for being in bondage during the six days of this world, on the seventh day, the true and eternal Sabbath, we shall be free, at any rate if we wish to be free while still in bondage in the world. If, however, we do not desire it, our ear will be bored in token of our disobedience, and together with our wives and children, whom we preferred to liberty, that is, with the flesh and its works, we shall be in perpetual slavery.

26. As for the parable of the sower which makes both good and bad ground bear a triple crop, and the passage from the apostle in which upon Christ as the foundation one man builds gold, silver, costly stones, another wood, hay, stubble, the meaning is perfectly clear. We know that in a great house there are different vessels, and to wish to contradict so plain a truth would be sheer impudence. Yet that Jovinianus may not triumph in a lie and quote the instance of the apostles by way of discrediting the hundred fold, sixty fold, and thirty fold, let me inform him that in S. Matt. xix. 29; S. Mark x. 30; S. Luke xviii. 30. In S. Matthew some authorities agree with S. Luke in reading "manifold." Matthew and Mark a hundred fold is promised to the apostles who had left all. And I would tell him further, that in the Gospel of Luke we find much more, that is *πολύ πλείονα*, and that there is absolutely no instance in the Gospels of a hundred standing for seven; and that he is convicted either of forgery, or of ignorance; and that our cause is not prejudiced by the fact that in one Gospel the enumeration begins at a hundred, in another at thirty, since it is a rule with all Scripture, and especially with the older writings, to put the lowest number first and so ascend by degrees to the higher. For instance, suppose one to say that so-and-so lived five and seventy and a hundred years, it does not follow that five and seventy are more than a hundred because they were first mentioned. If you do not on the side of good admit the difference between a hundred, sixty, and thirty, neither will you do so on the side of evil, and the seed which fell by the wayside, upon the rock, and among thorns, will be equally faulty. But if the former three, or the latter three, on the side of good, or on the side of evil respectively, are one and the same, it was foolish instead of speaking of two things to enumerate six kinds, and all the more because according to the account of the parable in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the Saviour always added: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Where there is no deep inner meaning, it is useless to draw our attention to the mystic sense.

27. You give it as your opinion that, since the Father and the Son make their abode with the faithful, and since Christ is their guest, nothing is lacking. I suppose, however, that Christ's abiding with the Corinthians was one thing, with the Ephesians another: it was one thing, I say, for Him to abide with those whom Paul blamed for many sins, another for Him to dwell with those to whom the apostle revealed mysteries hidden from the beginning of the world; one thing for Him to be in Titus and Timothy, another in Paul. Certainly amongst them that have been born of women, there has not arisen a greater than John the Baptist. But the term greater implies others who are less. And Matt. xi. 11. "he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." You see then that in heaven one is greatest and another is least, and that among the angels and the 409 invisible creation there is a manifold and infinite diversity. Why do the apostles say: S. Luke xvii. 5. "Lord, increase our faith," if there is one measure for all? And why did our Lord rebuke His disciple, saying: Matt. xiv. 31. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" In Jeremiah also we read concerning the future kingdom: Jer. xxxi. 31. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers." And so on after: Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least

of them unto the greatest of them.” The context of this passage clearly shows that the prophet is describing the future kingdom, and how can there possibly be in it a least or greatest, if all are to be equal? The secret is disclosed in the Gospel: S. Matt. v. 19. “Whosoever shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall teach, and not do, shall be least.” S. Luke xiv. 9. The Saviour taught us at a feast to take the lowest place, lest, when one greater than us came, we should be thrust with disgrace from the higher place. If we cannot fall, but only raise ourselves by penitence, what is the meaning of the ladder at Bethel, on which the angels come from heaven to earth and descend as well as ascend? Surely while on that ladder they are reckoned among the sheep and stand on the right hand. There are angels who descend from heaven; but Jovinianus is sure that they retain their inheritance.

28. But when Jovinianus supposes that the many mansions in our Father’s house are churches scattered throughout the world, who can refrain from laughing; since Scripture plainly teaches in John’s Gospel that our Lord was discoursing not of the number of the churches, but of the heavenly mansions, and the eternal tabernacles for which the prophet longed? S. John xiv. 2, 3. “In my Father’s house,” He says, “are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and will receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” The place and the mansions which Christ says He would prepare for the apostles are of course in the Father’s house, that is, in the kingdom of heaven, not on earth, where for the present He was leading the apostles. And at the same time regard must be had to the sense of Scripture: “I might tell you,” He says, “that I go to prepare a place for you, if there were not many mansions in my Father’s house, that is to say, if each individual did not prepare for himself a mansion through his own works rather than receive it through the bounty of God. The preparation is therefore not mine, but yours.” This view is supported by the fact that it profited Judas nothing to have a place prepared, since he lost it by his own fault. And we must interpret in the same way what our Lord says to the sons of Zebedee, one of whom wished to sit on His left hand, the other on His right: S. Matt. xx. 23. “My cup indeed ye shall drink: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left hand, is not mine to give, but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared of my Father.” It is not the Son’s to give; how then is it the Father’s to prepare? There are, He says, prepared in heaven, many different mansions, destined for many different virtues, and they will be awarded not to persons, but to persons’ works. In vain therefore do you ask of me what rests with yourselves, a reward which my Father has prepared for those whose virtues will entitle them to rise to such dignity. Again when He says: S. John xiv. 3. “I will come again, and will receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also,” He is speaking especially to the apostles, concerning whom it is elsewhere written, “That as I and thou, Father, are one, so they also may be one in us,” inasmuch as they have believed, have been perfected, and can say, Ps. lxxiii. 26. “the Lord is my portion.” If, however, there are not many mansions, how is it taught in the Old Testament correspondingly with the New, that the chief priest has one rank, the priests another, the Levites another, the door-keepers another, the sacristans another? How is it that in the Ez. xliv. 10 .book of Ezekiel, where a description is given of the future Church and of the heavenly Jerusalem, the priests who have sinned are degraded to the rank of sacristans and doorkeepers, and although they are in the temple of God, that is on the right hand, they are not among the rams, but among the poorest of the sheep? How again is it that in the river which flows from the temple, and replenishes the salt sea, and gives new life to everything, we read there are many kinds of fish? Why do we read that in the kingdom of heaven there are Archangels, Angels, Thrones, Dominions, Powers, Cherubim and Seraphim, and every name which is named, not only in this present world, but also that which is to come? A difference of name is meaningless where there is not a difference of rank. An Archangel is of course an Archangel to other inferior angels, and Powers, and Dominions have other spheres over which they exercise authority. This is what we find in heaven and in the administration of God. You must not therefore smile and sneer at us, as is your wont, for making a graduated series of emperors, præfects and counts, tribunes and centurions, companies, and all the other steps in the service.

29. It is mere trifling to quote the passage: 1 Cor. vi. 19. “Know ye not that your bodies are a temple of the Holy Ghost,” for it is customary in Holy Scripture to speak of a single object as though it were many, and of many as though they were one. And Jovinianus himself should know that even in a temple there are many

divisions—the outer and the inner courts, the vestibules, the holy place, and the Holy of Holies. There are also in a temple kitchens, pantries, oil-cellars, and cupboards for the vessels. And so in the temple of our body there are different degrees of merit. God does not dwell in all alike, nor does He impart Himself to all in the same degree. A portion of the spirit of Moses was taken and given to the seventy elders. I suppose there is a difference between the abundance of the river, and that of the rivulets. Correctly, a portion of two, i.e., the portion of a first-born. Deut. xxi. 17. Elijah’s spirit was given in double measure to Elisha, and thus double grace wrought greater miracles. Elijah while living restored a dead man to life; Elisha after death did the same. Elijah invoked famine on the people; Elisha in a single day put the enemy’s forces in the power of the city which they besieged. No doubt the words, “Know ye not that your bodies are a temple of the Holy Ghost,” refer to the whole assembly of the faithful, who, joined together, make up the one body of Christ. But the question now is, who in the body is worthy to be the feet of Christ, and who the head? who is His eye, and who His hand?—a distinction indicated by the S. Luke vii., S. Matt. xxvi., S. Mark xiv., S. John xii. two women in the Gospel, the penitent and the holy woman, one of whom held His feet, the other His head. Some authorities, however, think there was only one woman, and that she who began at His feet gradually advanced to His head. Jovinianus further urges against us our Lord’s words, S. John xvii. 20, 21. “I pray not for these only, but also for those who shall believe on me through their word: that as I, Father, in thee and thou in me are one, so they all may be one in us,” and reminds us that the whole Christian people is one in God, and, as His well-beloved sons, are 2 Pet. i. 4. “partakers of the divine nature.” We have already said, and the truth must now be inculcated more in detail, that we are not one in the Father and the Son according to nature, but according to grace. For the essence of the human soul and the essence of God are not the same, as the Manichæans constantly assert. But, says our Lord: S. John xvii. 23. “Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.” You see, then, that we are privileged to partake of His essence, not in the realm of nature, but of grace, and the reason why we are beloved of the Father is that He has loved the Son; and the members are loved, those namely of the body. S. John i. 12, 13. “For as many as received Christ, to them gave He power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” The Word was made flesh that we might pass from the flesh into the Word. The Word did not cease to be what He had been; nor did the human nature lose that which it was by birth. The glory was increased, the nature was not changed. Do you ask how we are made one body with Christ? Your creator shall be your instructor: S. John vi. 57 sq. “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven.” But the Evangelist John, who had drunk in wisdom from the breast of Christ, agrees herewith, and says: 1 John iv. 13, 15. “Hereby know we that we abide in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God.” If you believe in Christ, as the apostles believed, you shall be made one body with them in Christ. But, if it is rash for you to claim for yourself a faith and works like theirs when you have not the same faith and works, you cannot have the same place.

30. You repeat the words bride, sister, mother, and affirm that all these are titles of the one Church and names applied to all believers. The fact goes against you. For if the Church admits but one rank, and has not many members in one body, what necessity is there for calling her bride, sister, mother? It must be that she is the bride of some, the sister of others, the mother of others. All indeed stand on the right hand, but one stands as a bridegroom, another as a brother, a third as a son. Gal. iv. 19. “My little children” says the Apostle, “of whom I am again in travail 41 until Christ be formed in you.” Do you think that the children who are being born and the apostle who is in travail are of equal rank? And the folly of your contention that we love all the members alike, and do not prefer the eye to the finger, nor the hand to the ear, but that if one be lost all mourn, is proved by the lesson which the apostle teaches the Corinthians: 1 Cor. xii. 22–24. “Some members are more honourable, others excite the sense of shame: and those parts to which shame attaches are clothed with more abundant honour; whereas our comely parts have no need of our care.” Do you think that the mouth and the belly, the eyes and the outlets of the body are to be classed together as of equal merit? S. Luke xi. 34. “The lamp of thy body,” he says, “is thine eye. If thine eye be blinded, thy whole body is in darkness.” If you cut off a finger, or the tip of the ear, there is indeed pain, but the loss is not so great, nor is the

disfigurement attended by so much pain as it would be were you to take out the eyes, mutilate the nose, or saw through a bone. Some members we can dispense with and yet live: without others life is an impossibility. Some offences are light, some heavy. It is one thing to owe ten thousand talents, another to owe a farthing. We shall have to give account of the idle word no less than of adultery; but it is not the same thing to be put to the blush, and to be put upon the rack, to grow red in the face and to ensure lasting torment. Do you think I am merely expressing my own views? Hear what the Apostle John says: 1 John v. 16. "He who knows that his brother sinneth a sin not unto death, let him ask, and he shall give him life, even to him that sinneth not unto death. But he that hath sinned unto death, who shall pray for him?" You observe that if we entreat for smaller offences, we obtain pardon: if for greater ones, it is difficult to obtain our request: and that there is a great difference between sins. And so with respect to the people of Israel who had sinned a sin unto death, it is said to Jeremiah: Jer. vii. 16. "Pray not thou for this people, neither entreat for them, and do not withstand me, for I will not hear thee." Moreover, if it be true that we all alike enter the world and all alike leave it, and this is a precedent for the world to come, it follows that whether righteous or sinners we shall all be equally esteemed by God, because the conditions of our birth and death are now the same. And if you contend that there are two Adams, the one of the earth, the other from heaven; and that they who were in the earthly Adam stand on the left hand, those who were in the heavenly are on the right hand, before we go further, let me ask you a question concerning two brothers: Was Esau in the earthly Adam, or in the heavenly? No one doubts that you will reply, he was in the earthly. In which was Jacob? Without hesitation you will say, in the heavenly. How then was he in the heavenly when Christ had not yet come in the flesh—Christ who is called the second Adam from heaven? You must either reckon all before the incarnation of Christ in the old Adam, and even the just in the man from the earth, and then they will be on the left among your goats; or, if it be impious to give Isaac the same place as Ishmael, Jacob as Esau, the saints as sinners, the last Adam will date from the time when Christ was born of a Virgin, and your argument from the two Adams will not benefit your sheep and goats, because we have proved that in the first Adam there were both sheep and goats, and that of those who were in one and the same man, some stood on the right hand of God, others on the left: Rom. v. 14. "For from Adam even until Moses death reigned over all, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression."

31. As regards your attempt to show that railing and murder, the use of the expression *raca* and adultery, the idle word and godlessness, are rewarded with the same punishment, I have already given you my reply, and will now briefly repeat it. You must either deny that you are a sinner if you are not to be in danger of Gehenna: or, if you are a sinner you will be sent to hell for even a light offence: Wisd. i. 11. "The mouth that lieth," says one, "kills the soul." I suspect that you, like other men, have occasionally told a lie: Ps. cxvi. 11; Rom. iii. 4. for all men are liars, that God alone may be true, Ps. li. 4. and that He may be justified in His words, and may prevail when He judges. It follows either that you will not be a man lest you be found a liar: or if you are a man and are consequently a liar, you will be punished with parricides and adulterers. For you admit no difference between sins, and the gratitude of those whom you raise from the mire and set on high will not equal the rage against you of those whom for the trifling offences of daily life you have thrust into utter darkness. And if it be so that in a persecution one is stifled, another beheaded, another flees, or the fourth dies within the walls of a prison, and one crown of victory awaits various kinds of struggle, the fact tells in our favour. For in martyrdom it is the will, which gives occasion to the death, that is crowned. My duty is to resist the frenzy of the heathen, and not deny the Lord. It rests with them either to behead, or to burn, or to shut up in prison, or enforce various other penalties. But if I escape, and die in solitude, there will not at my death be the same crown for me as for them, because the confession of Christ will not have been to me as to them the cause of death. As for your remark that absolutely no difference was made between the brother who had always been with his father, and him who was afterwards welcomed as a penitent, I am willing to add, if you like, that the one drachma which was lost and was found was put with the others, and that the one sheep which the good shepherd, leaving the ninety and nine, sought and brought back, made up the full tale of a hundred. But it is one thing to be a penitent, and with tears sue for pardon, another to be always with the father. And so both the shepherd and the father say by the mouth of Ezekiel to the sheep that was carried back, and to the son that was lost, Ezek. xvi. 62, 63. "And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy

mouth ever more, because of thy shame, when I have forgiven thee all that thou hast done.” That penitents may have their due it is enough for them to feel shame instead of all other punishment. Hence in another place it is said to them, Ezek. xxxvi. 31, 32. “Then shall ye remember your evil ways, and all the crimes wherewith ye were defiled, and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all the wickedness that ye have done; and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall have done you good for my name’s sake, and not according to your evil ways, nor according to your evil doings.” The son, moreover, was reprov’d by his father for envying his brother’s deliverance, and for being tormented by jealousy while the angels in heaven were rejoicing. The parallel, however, is not to be drawn between the merits of the two sons (one of whom was temperate, the other a prodigal) and those of the whole human race, but the characters depicted are either Jews and Christians, or saints and penitents. In the lifetime of Bishop Damasus I dedicated to him a small treatise upon this parable. Letter XXI.

32. And if a penny was given to all the labourers, those of the first, the third, the sixth, the ninth, and the eleventh hours, and they came first for the reward who were the last to work in the vineyard, even here the persons described do not belong to one time or one age, but from the beginning of the world to the end of it there are different calls and a special meaning attaches to each. Abel and Seth were called at the first hour: Enoch and Noah at the third: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the sixth: Moses and the prophets at the ninth: at the eleventh the Gentiles, to whom the recompense was first given because they believed on the crucified Lord, and inasmuch as it was hard for them to believe they earned a great reward. Many kings and prophets have desired to see the things that we see, and have not seen them. But the one penny does not represent one reward, but one life, and one deliverance from Gehenna. And as by the favour of the sovereign those guilty of various crimes are released from prison, and each one, according to his toil and exertions, is in this or that condition of life, so too the penny, as it were by the favour of our Sovereign, is the discharge from prison of us all by baptism. Now our work is, according to our different virtues, to prepare for ourselves a different future.

33. So far I have replied to the separate portions of his argument; I shall now address myself to the general question. Our Lord says to his disciples, S. Matt. xx. 26. “Whosoever would become great among you, let him be least of all.” If we are all to be equal in heaven, in vain do we humble ourselves here that we may be greater there. Of the two debtors who owed, one five hundred pence, the other fifty, he to whom most was forgiven loved most. And so the Saviour says, S. Luke vii. 47. “I say to you, her sins which are many are forgiven her, for she hath loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.” He who loves little, and has little forgiven, he will of course be of inferior rank. S. Matt. xxv. 15 sq. The householder when he set out delivered to his servants his goods, to one five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Just as in another Gospel it is written that a nobleman setting out for a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and return, called the servants, and gave them each a sum of money, with which one gained ten pounds, another five, and they, each according to his ability and the gain he had made, received ten or five cities. But one who had received a talent, or a pound, buried it in the ground, or tied it up in a napkin, and kept it until his master’s return. Our first thought is that if, according to the modern Zeno, the righteous do not toil in hope of reward, but to avoid the loss of what they already have, he who buried his pound or talent that he might not lose it, did no wrong, 413 and the caution of him who kept his money is worthy of more praise than the fruitless toil of those who wore themselves out and yet received no reward for their labour. Then observe that the very talent which was taken from the timid or negligent servant, was not given to him who had the smaller profit, but to him who had gained the most, that is, to him who had been placed over ten cities. If difference of rank is not constituted by the difference in number, why did our Lord say, “He gave to everyone according to his ability”? If the gain of five talents and ten talents is the same, why were not ten cities given to him who gained the least, and five to him who gained the most? But that our Lord is not satisfied with what we have, but always desires more, He himself shows by saying, “Wherefore didst thou not give my money to the money-changers, that so when I came I might have received it with usury?” The Apostle Paul understood this, and Phil. iii. 13. forgetting those things which were behind, reached forward to those things which were in front, that is, he made daily progress, and did not keep the grace given to him carefully wrapped up in a napkin, but his spirit, like the capital of a keen man of business,

was renewed from day to day, and if he were not always growing larger, he thought himself growing less. Six cities of refuge are mentioned in the law, provided for fugitives who were involuntary homicides, and the cities themselves belonged to the priests. I should like to ask whether you would put those fugitives among your goats, or among our sheep. If they were goats, they would be slain like other homicides, and would not enter the cities of God's ministers. If you say they were sheep, they will not possibly be such sheep as can enjoy full liberty and feed without fear of wolves. And it will be plain to you that sheep indeed they are, but wandering sheep: that they are on the right hand, but do not stand there: they flee until the High Priest dies and descending into hell liberates their souls. The Gibeonites met the children of Israel, and although other nations were slaughtered, they were kept Josh. ix. 27. for hewers of wood and drawers of water. 2 Sam. xxi. 1. And of such value were they in God's eyes, that the family of Saul was destroyed for the wrong done to them. Where would you put them? Among the goats? But they were not slain, and they were avenged by the determination of God. Among the sheep? But holy Scripture says they were not of the same merit as the Israelites. You see then that they do indeed stand on the right hand, but are of a far inferior grade. Jonathan came between David, the holy man, and Saul, the worst of kings, and we can neither place him among the kids because he was worthy of a prophet's love, nor amongst the rams lest we make him equal to David, and particularly when we know that he was slain. He will, therefore, be among the sheep, but low down. And just as in the case of David and Jonathan, you will be bound to recognize differences between sheep and sheep. S. Luke xii. 47, 48. "That servant, which knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more." Lo! more or less is committed to different servants, and according to the nature of the trust, as well as of the sin, is the number of stripes inflicted.

34. The whole account of the land of Judah and of the tribes is typical of the church in heaven. Let us read Joshua the son of Nun, or the concluding portions of Ezekiel, and we shall see that the historical division of the land as related by the one finds a counterpart in the spiritual and heavenly promises of the other. What is the meaning of the seven and eight steps in the description of the temple? or again, what significance attaches to the fact that in the Psalter, after being taught the mystic alphabet by the Ps. cxix. in our arrangement of the Psalter. The psalm is divided into twenty-two portions, which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The following fifteen psalms are called in our Authorized Version, Songs of Degrees (Vulgate, graduum, steps). For the origin of the title, Wordsworth, or Neal and Littledale on Ps. cxx. may be consulted. one hundred and eighteenth psalm we arrive by fifteen steps at the point where we can sing: Ps. cxxxiv. 1. "Behold, now bless the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord: ye who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God." Why did Numb. xxxiv. 15; Josh. xiv. 3. two tribes and a half dwell on the other side of Jordan, a district abounding in cattle, while the remaining nine tribes and a half either drove out the old inhabitants from their possessions, or dwelt with them? Why did the tribe of Levi Numb. xviii. 20. receive no portion in the land, but have the Lord for their portion? And how is it that of the priests and Levites, themselves, the Lev. xvi. 2; Heb. ix. 7. high priest alone entered the Holy of Holies where were the cherubim and the mercy-seat? Why did the other priests wear Ex. xxviii. etc. linen raiment only, and not have their clothing of wrought gold, blue, scarlet, purple, and fine cloth? The priests and Numb. vii. 5. Levites of the lower order took care of the oxen and wains: those of the higher order carried the ark of the Lord on their shoulders. If you do away with the gradations of the tabernacle, the temple, the Church, if, to use a common military phrase, all upon the right hand are to be "up to the same standard," bishops are to no purpose, priests in vain, deacons useless. Why do virgins persevere? widows toil? Why do married women practise continence? Let us all sin, and when once we have repented, we shall be on the same footing as the apostles.

#### **427 AD**

**St. Jerome (345-420 AD), Church Father**

**In Father's House Many Mansions & Different Degrees Of Merit; Sun Has Its Own Splendour, Moon Tempers Darkness Of Night; Five Heavenly Bodies Called Planets Traverse**

**Sky In Different Tracks & With Different Degrees Of Luminousness; Countless Other Stars Whose Movements We Trace In Firmament & Each Has Its Own Brightness**  
**Against the Palegians**

**Book 1:16-17**

16. C. My dear Atticus, your speech is really a clever feat of memory. But the labour you have spent in mustering this host of authorities is to my advantage. For I do not any more than you compare man with God, but with other men, in comparison with whom he who takes the trouble can be perfect. And so, when we say that man, if he chooses, can be without sin, the standard is the measure of man, not the majesty of God, in comparison with Whom no creature can be perfect.

A. Critobulus, I am obliged to you for reminding me of the fact. For it is just my own view that no creature can be perfect in respect of true and finished righteousness. But that one differs from another, and that one man's righteousness is not the same as another's, no one doubts; nor again that one may be greater or less than another, and yet that, relatively to their own status and capacity, men may be called righteous who are not righteous when compared with others. For instance, the Apostle Paul, the chosen vessel who laboured more than all the Apostles, was, I suppose, righteous when he wrote to Timothy, 2 Timothy 4:7-8 "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day: and not only to me, but also to all them that love His appearing." Timothy, his disciple and imitator, whom he taught the rules of action and the limits of virtue, was also righteous. Are we to think there was one and the same righteousness in them both, and that he had not more merit who laboured more than all? "In my Father's house are many mansions." I suppose there are also different degrees of merit. "One star differs from another star in glory," and in the one body of the Church there are different members. The sun has its own splendour, the moon tempers the darkness of the night; and the five heavenly bodies which are called planets traverse the sky in different tracks and with different degrees of luminousness. There are countless other stars whose movements we trace in the firmament. Each has its own brightness, and though each in respect of its own is perfect, yet, in comparison with one of greater magnitude, it lacks perfection. In the body also with its different members, the eye has one function, the hand another, the foot another. Whence the Apostle says, "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Are all Apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But desire earnestly the greater gifts. But all these works the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as He will." And here mark carefully that he does not say, as each member desires, but as the Spirit Himself will. For the vessel cannot say to him that makes it, Romans 9:21 "Why do you make me thus or thus? Hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" And so in close sequence he added, "Desire earnestly the greater gifts," so that, by the exercise of faith and diligence, we may win something in addition to other gifts, and may be superior to those who, compared with us, are in the second or third class. In a great house there are different vessels, some of gold, some of silver, brass, iron, wood. And yet while in its kind a vessel of brass is perfect, in comparison with one of silver it is called imperfect, and again one of silver, compared with one of gold, is inferior. And thus, when compared with one another, all things are imperfect and perfect. In a field of good soil, and from one sowing, there springs a crop thirty-fold, sixty-fold, or a hundred-fold. The very numbers show that there is disparity in the parts of the produce, and yet in its own kind each is perfect. Elizabeth and Zacharias, whom you adduce and with whom you cover yourself as with an impenetrable shield, may teach us how far they are beneath the holiness of blessed Mary, the Lord's Mother, who, conscious that God was dwelling in her, proclaims without reserve, "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty has done to me great things; and holy is His name. And His mercy is unto generations and generations of them that fear Him: He has showed strength with His arm." Where, observe, she says she is blessed not by her own merit and virtue, but by the mercy of God dwelling in her. And John himself, a greater than whom has not arisen among the sons of men, is better than his parents. For not only does our Lord compare him with men, but with angels also. And yet he, who was greater on earth than all other men, is said to be less than the least in the kingdom of heaven.

17. Need we be surprised that, when saints are compared, some are better, some worse, since the same holds good in the comparison of sins? To Jerusalem, pierced and wounded with many sins, it is said, Lamentations 4:6 “Sodom is justified by you.” It is not because Sodom, which has sunk for ever into ashes, is just in herself, that it is said by Ezekiel, Ezekiel 16:55 “Sodom shall be restored to her former estate”; but that, in comparison with the more accursed Jerusalem, she appears just. For Jerusalem killed the Son of God; Sodom through fullness of bread and excessive luxury carried her lust beyond all bounds. The publican in the Gospel who smote upon his breast as though it were a magazine of the worst thoughts, and, conscious of his offenses, dared not lift up his eyes, is justified rather than the proud Pharisee. And Tamar in the guise of a harlot deceived Judah, and in the estimation of this man himself who was deceived, was worthy of the words, Genesis 38:26 “Tamar is more righteous than I.” All this goes to prove that not only in comparison with Divine majesty are men far from perfection, but also when compared with angels, and other men who have climbed the heights of virtue. You may be superior to some one whom you have shown to be imperfect, and yet be outstripped by another; and consequently may not have true perfection, which, if it be perfect, is absolute.

#### **420 AD**

**St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD), Church Father**

**Who Can Conceive, Not To Say Describe, What Degrees Of Honour & Glory Shall Be Awarded To Various Degrees Of Merit? Yet It Cannot Be Doubted That There Shall Be Degrees & That There Shall Be This Great Blessing, That No Inferior Shall Envy Any Superior  
City of God**

#### **Book 22 (Excerpts)**

##### **1. Of the creation of angels and men**

As we promised in the immediately preceding book, this, the last of the whole work, shall contain a discussion of the eternal blessedness of the city of God. This blessedness is named eternal, not because it shall endure for many ages, though at last it shall come to an end, but because, according to the words of the gospel, 'of His kingdom there shall be no end.' Neither shall it enjoy the mere appearance of perpetuity which is maintained by the rise of fresh generations to occupy the place of those that have died out, as in an evergreen the same freshness seems to continue permanently, and the same appearance of dense foliage is preserved by the growth of fresh leaves in the room of those that have withered and fallen; but in that city all the citizens shall be immortal, men now for the first time enjoying what the holy angels have never lost. And this shall be accomplished by God, the most almighty Founder of the city. For He has promised it, and cannot lie, and has already performed many of His promises, and has done many unpromised kindnesses to those whom He now asks to believe that He will do this also.

For it is He who in the beginning created the world full of all visible and intelligible beings, among which He created nothing better than those spirits whom He endowed with intelligence, and made capable of contemplating and enjoying Him, and united in our society, which we call the holy and heavenly city, and in which the material of their sustenance and blessedness is God Himself, as it were their common food and nourishment. It is He who gave to this intellectual nature free-will of such a kind, that if he wished to forsake God his blessedness, misery should forthwith result. It is He who, when He foreknew that certain angels would in their pride desire to suffice for their own blessedness, and would forsake their great good, did not deprive them of this power, deeming it to be more befitting His power and goodness to bring good out of evil than to prevent the evil from coming into existence. And indeed evil had never been, had not the mutable nature—mutable, though good, and created by the most high God and immutable Good, who created all things good—brought evil upon itself by sin. And this its sin is itself proof that its nature was originally good. For had it not been very good, though not equal to its Creator, the desertion of God as its light could



not have been an evil to it. For as blindness is a vice of the eye, and this very fact indicates that the eye was created to see the light, and as, consequently, vice itself proves that the eye is more excellent than the other members, because it is capable of light (for on no other supposition would it be a vice of the eye to want light), so the nature which once enjoyed God teaches, even by its very vice, that it was created the best of all, since it is now miserable because it does not enjoy God. It is He who with very just punishment doomed the angels who voluntarily fell to everlasting misery, and rewarded those who continued in their attachment to the supreme good with the assurance of endless stability as the meed of their fidelity. It is He who made also man himself upright, with the same freedom of will—an earthly animal, indeed, but fit for heaven if he remained faithful to his Creator, but destined to the misery appropriate to such a nature if he forsook Him. It is He who, when He foreknew that man would in his turn sin by abandoning God and breaking His law, did not deprive him of the power of free-will, because He at the same time foresaw what good He Himself would bring out of the evil, and how from this mortal race, deservedly and justly condemned, He would by His grace collect, as now He does, a people so numerous, that He thus fills up and repairs the blank made by the fallen angels, and that thus that beloved and heavenly city is not defrauded of the full number of its citizens, but perhaps may even rejoice in a still more overflowing population....

### **3. Of the promise of eternal blessedness to the saints, and everlasting punishment to the wicked**

Wherefore, not to mention many other instances besides, as we now see in Christ the fulfilment of that which God promised to Abraham when He said, 'In thy seed shall all nations be blessed,' so this also shall be fulfilled which He promised to the same race, when He said by the prophet, 'They that are in their sepulchres shall rise again;' and also, 'There shall be a new heaven and a new earth: and the former shall not be mentioned, nor come into mind; but they shall find joy and rejoicing in it: for I will make Jerusalem a rejoicing, and my people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people, and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her.' And by another prophet He uttered the same prediction: 'At that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust' (or, as some interpret it, 'in the mound') 'of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.' And in another place by the same prophet: 'The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and shall possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.' And a little after he says, 'His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.'... [T]hese predictions shall be fulfilled, as those also have been which unbelieving men supposed would be frustrate. For it is the same God who promised both, and predicted that both would come to pass—the God whom the pagan deities tremble before, as even Porphyry, the noblest of pagan philosophers, testifies....

### **18. Of the perfect Man, that is, Christ; and of His body, that is, the Church, which is His fulness**

To understand what the apostle means when he says that we shall all come to a perfect man, we must consider the connection of the whole passage, which runs thus: 'He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come to the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.' Behold what the perfect man is—the head and the body, which is made up of all the members, which in their own time shall be perfected. But new additions are daily being made to this body while the Church is being built up, to which it is said, 'Ye are the body of Christ and His members;' and again, 'For His body's sake,' he says, 'which is the Church;' and again, 'We being many are one head, one body.' It is of the edification of this body that it is here, too, said, 'For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ;' and then that passage of which we are now speaking is added, 'Till we all come to the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ,' and so on. And he shows

of what body we are to understand this to be the measure, when he says, 'That we may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part.' As, therefore, there is a measure of every part, so there is a measure of the fulness of the whole body which is made up of all its parts, and it is of this measure it is said, 'To the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ.' This fulness he spoke of also in the place where he says of Christ, 'And gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.' But even if this should be referred to the form in which each one shall rise, what should hinder us from applying to the woman what is expressly said of the man, understanding both sexes to be included under the general term 'man?' For certainly in the saying, 'Blessed is he who feareth the Lord,' women also who fear the Lord are included. ...

#### **21. Of the new spiritual body into which the flesh of the saints shall be transformed**

Whatever, therefore, has been taken from the body, either during life or after death, shall be restored to it, and, in conjunction with what has remained in the grave, shall rise again, transformed from the oldness of the animal body into the newness of the spiritual body, and clothed in incorruption and immortality. But even though the body has been all quite ground to powder by some severe accident, or by the ruthlessness of enemies, and though it has been so diligently scattered to the winds, or into the water, that there is no trace of it left, yet it shall not be beyond the omnipotence of the Creator—no, not a hair of its head shall perish. The flesh shall then be spiritual, and subject to the spirit, but still flesh, not spirit, as the spirit itself, when subject to the flesh, was fleshly, but still spirit and not flesh....

#### **24. Of the blessings with which the Creator has filled this life, obnoxious though it be to the curse**

But we must now contemplate the rich and countless blessings with which the goodness of God, who cares for all He has created, has filled this very misery of the human race, which reflects His retributive justice. That first blessing which He pronounced before the fall, when He said, 'Increase, and multiply, and replenish the earth,' He did not inhibit after man had sinned, but the fecundity originally bestowed remained in the condemned stock; and the vice of sin, which has involved us in the necessity of dying, has yet not deprived us of that wonderful power of seed, or rather of that still more marvellous power by which seed is produced, and which seems to be as it were inwrought and inwoven in the human body. But in this river, as I may call it, or torrent of the human race, both elements are carried along together—both the evil which is derived from him who begets, and the good which is bestowed by Him who creates us. In the original evil there are two things, sin and punishment; in the original good, there are two other things, propagation and conformation. But of the evils, of which the one, sin, arose from our audacity, and the other, punishment, from God's judgment, we have already said as much as suits our present purpose. I mean now to speak of the blessings which God has conferred or still confers upon our nature, vitiated and condemned as it is. For in condemning it He did not withdraw all that He had given it, else it had been annihilated; neither did He, in penally subjecting it to the devil, remove it beyond His own power; for not even the devil himself is outside of God's government, since the devil's nature subsists only by the supreme Creator, who gives being to all that in any form exists....

It is He, then, who has given to the human soul a mind, in which reason and understanding lie as it were asleep during infancy, and as if they were not, destined, however, to be awakened and exercised as years increase, so as to become capable of knowledge and of receiving instruction, fit to understand what is true and to love what is good. It is by this capacity the soul drinks in wisdom, and becomes endowed with those virtues by which, in prudence, fortitude, temperance, and righteousness, it makes war upon error and the other inborn vices, and conquers them by fixing its desires upon no other object than the supreme and unchangeable Good. And even though this be not uniformly the result, yet who can competently utter or even conceive the grandeur of this work of the Almighty, and the unspeakable boon He has conferred upon our rational nature, by giving us even the capacity of such attainment? For over and above those arts which are called virtues, and which teach us how we may spend our life well, and attain to endless happiness—arts which are given to the children of the promise and the kingdom by the sole grace of God which is in Christ—has not the genius of man invented and applied countless astonishing arts, partly the result of necessity,

partly the result of exuberant invention, so that this vigour of mind, which is so active in the discovery not merely of superfluous but even of dangerous and destructive things, betokens an inexhaustible wealth in the nature which can invent, learn, or employ such arts? What wonderful—one might say stupefying—advances has human industry made in the arts of weaving and building, of agriculture and navigation! With what endless variety are designs in pottery, painting, and sculpture produced, and with what skill executed! What wonderful spectacles are exhibited in the theatres, which those who have not seen them cannot credit! How skilful the contrivances for catching, killing, or taming wild beasts! And for the injury of men, also, how many kinds of poisons, weapons, engines of destruction, have been invented, while for the preservation or restoration of health the appliances and remedies are infinite! To provoke appetite and please the palate, what a variety of seasonings have been concocted! To express and gain entrance for thoughts, what a multitude and variety of signs there are, among which speaking and writing hold the first place! what ornaments has eloquence at command to delight the mind! what wealth of song is there to captivate the ear! how many musical instruments and strains of harmony have been devised! What skill has been attained in measures and numbers! with what sagacity have the movements and connections of the stars been discovered! Who could tell the thought that has been spent upon nature, even though, despairing of recounting it in detail, he endeavoured only to give a general view of it? In fine, even the defence of errors and misapprehensions, which has illustrated the genius of heretics and philosophers, cannot be sufficiently declared. For at present it is the nature of the human mind which adorns this mortal life which we are extolling, and not the faith and the way of truth which lead to immortality. And since this great nature has certainly been created by the true and supreme God, who administers all things He has made with absolute power and justice, it could never have fallen into these miseries, nor have gone out of them to miseries eternal—saving only those who are redeemed—had not an exceeding great sin been found in the first man from whom the rest have sprung.

Moreover, even in the body, though it dies like that of the beasts, and is in many ways weaker than theirs, what goodness of God, what providence of the great Creator, is apparent! The organs of sense and the rest of the members, are not they so placed, the appearance, and form, and stature of the body as a whole, is it not so fashioned, as to indicate that it was made for the service of a reasonable soul? Man has not been created stooping towards the earth, like the irrational animals; but his bodily form, erect and looking heavenwards, admonishes him to mind the things that are above. Then the marvellous nimbleness which has been given to the tongue and the hands, fitting them to speak, and write, and execute so many duties, and practise so many arts, does it not prove the excellence of the soul for which such an assistant was provided? And even apart from its adaptation to the work required of it, there is such a symmetry in its various parts, and so beautiful a proportion maintained, that one is at a loss to decide whether, in creating the body, greater regard was paid to utility or to beauty. Assuredly no part of the body has been created for the sake of utility which does not also contribute something to its beauty....

How can I tell of the rest of creation, with all its beauty and utility, which the divine goodness has given to man to please his eye and serve his purposes, condemned though he is, and hurled into these labours and miseries? Shall I speak of the manifold and various loveliness of sky, and earth, and sea; of the plentiful supply and wonderful qualities of the light; of sun, moon, and stars; of the shade of trees; of the colours and perfume of flowers; of the multitude of birds, all differing in plumage and in song; of the variety of animals, of which the smallest in size are often the most wonderful—the works of ants and bees astonishing us more than the huge bodies of whales? Shall I speak of the sea, which itself is so grand a spectacle, when it arrays itself as it were in vestures of various colours, now running through every shade of green, and again becoming purple or blue? Is it not delightful to look at it in storm, and experience the soothing complacency which it inspires, by suggesting that we ourselves are not tossed and shipwrecked? What shall I say of the numberless kinds of food to alleviate hunger, and the variety of seasonings to stimulate appetite which are scattered everywhere by nature, and for which we are not indebted to the art of cookery? How many natural appliances are there for preserving and restoring health! How grateful is the alternation of day and night! how pleasant the breezes that cool the air! how abundant the supply of clothing furnished us by trees and animals! Who can enumerate all the blessings we enjoy? If I were to attempt to detail and unfold only these few which I have indicated in the mass, such an enumeration would fill a volume. And all these are but the

solace of the wretched and condemned, not the rewards of the blessed. What then shall these rewards be, if such be the blessings of a condemned state? What will He give to those whom He has predestined to life, who has given such things even to those whom He has predestined to death? What blessings will He in the blessed life shower upon those for whom, even in this state of misery, He has been willing that His only-begotten Son should endure such sufferings even to death? Thus the apostle reasons concerning those who are predestined to that kingdom: 'He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also give us all things?' When this promise is fulfilled, what shall we be? What blessings shall we receive in that kingdom, since already we have received as the pledge of them Christ's dying? In what condition shall the spirit of man be, when it has no longer any vice at all; when it neither yields to any, nor is in bondage to any, nor has to make war against any, but is perfected, and enjoys undisturbed peace with itself? Shall it not then know all things with certainty, and without any labour or error, when unhindered and joyfully it drinks the wisdom of God at the fountainhead? What shall the body be, when it is in every respect subject to the spirit, from which it shall draw a life so sufficient, as to stand in need of no other nutriment? For it shall no longer be animal, but spiritual, having indeed the substance of flesh, but without any fleshly corruption....

### **29. Of the beatific vision**

And now let us consider, with such ability as God may vouchsafe, how the saints shall be employed when they are clothed in immortal and spiritual bodies, and when the flesh shall live no longer in a fleshly but a spiritual fashion. And indeed, to tell the truth, I am at a loss to understand the nature of that employment, or, shall I rather say, repose and ease, for it has never come within the range of my bodily senses. And if I should speak of my mind or understanding, what is our understanding in comparison of its excellence? For then shall be that 'peace of God which,' as the apostle says, 'passeth all understanding'—that is to say, all human, and perhaps all angelic understanding, but certainly not the divine. That it passeth ours there is no doubt; but if it passeth that of the angels—and he who says 'all understanding' seems to make no exception in their favour—then we must understand him to mean that neither we nor the angels can understand, as God understands, the peace which God Himself enjoys. Doubtless this passeth all understanding but His own. But as we shall one day be made to participate, according to our slender capacity, in His peace, both in ourselves, and with our neighbour, and with God our chief good, in this respect the angels understand the peace of God in their own measure, and men too, though now far behind them, whatever spiritual advance they have made. For we must remember how great a man he was who said, 'We know in part, and we prophesy in part, until that which is perfect is come;' and 'Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face.' Such also is now the vision of the holy angels, who are also called our angels, because we, being rescued out of the power of darkness, and receiving the earnest of the Spirit, are translated into the kingdom of Christ, and already begin to belong to those angels with whom we shall enjoy that holy and most delightful city of God of which we have now written so much. Thus, then, the angels of God are our angels, as Christ is God's and also ours. They are God's, because they have not abandoned Him; they are ours, because we are their fellow-citizens. The Lord Jesus also said, 'See that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always see the face of my Father which is in heaven.' As, then, they see, so shall we also see; but not yet do we thus see. Wherefore the apostle uses the words cited a little ago, 'Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face.' This vision is reserved as the reward of our faith; and of it the Apostle John also says, 'When He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.' By 'the face' of God we are to understand His manifestation, and not a part of the body similar to that which in our bodies we call by that name.

And so, when I am asked how the saints shall be employed in that spiritual body, I do not say what I see, but I say what I believe, according to that which I read in the psalm, 'I believed, therefore have I spoken.' I say, then, they shall in the body see God; but whether they shall see Him by means of the body, as now we see the sun, moon, stars, sea, earth, and all that is in it, that is a difficult question. For it is hard to say that the saints shall then have such bodies that they shall not be able to shut and open their eyes as they please; while it is harder still to say that every one who shuts his eyes shall lose the vision of God. For if the prophet Elisha, though at a distance, saw his servant Gehazi, who thought that his wickedness would escape his master's

observation and accepted gifts from Naaman the Syrian, whom the prophet had cleansed from his foul leprosy, how much more shall the saints in the spiritual body see all things, not only though their eyes be shut, but though they themselves be at a great distance? For then shall be 'that which is perfect,' of which the apostle says, 'We know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.' Then, that he may illustrate as well as possible, by a simile, how superior the future life is to the life now lived, not only by ordinary men, but even by the foremost of the saints, he says, 'When I was a child, I understood as a child, I spake as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.' If, then, even in this life, in which the prophetic power of remarkable men is no more worthy to be compared to the vision of the future life than childhood is to manhood, Elisha, though distant from his servant, saw him accepting gifts, shall we say that when that which is perfect is come, and the corruptible body no longer oppresses the soul, but is incorruptible and offers no impediment to it, the saints shall need bodily eyes to see, though Elisha had no need of them to see his servant? For, following the Septuagint version, these are the prophet's words: 'Did not my heart go with thee, when the man came out of his chariot to meet thee, and thou tookedst his gifts?' Or, as the presbyter Jerome rendered it from the Hebrew, 'Was not my heart present when the man turned from his chariot to meet thee?' The prophet said that he saw this with his heart, miraculously aided by God, as no one can doubt. But how much more abundantly shall the saints enjoy this gift when God shall be all in all? Nevertheless the bodily eyes also shall have their office and their place, and shall be used by the spirit through the spiritual body. For the prophet did not forego the use of his eyes for seeing what was before them, though he did not need them to see his absent servant, and though he could have seen these present objects in spirit, and with his eyes shut, as he saw things far distant in a place where he himself was not. Far be it, then, from us to say that in the life to come the saints shall not see God when their eyes are shut, since they shall always see Him with the spirit....

### **30. Of the eternal felicity of the city of God, and of the perpetual Sabbath**

How great shall be that felicity, which shall be tainted with no evil, which shall lack no good, and which shall afford leisure for the praises of God, who shall be all in all! For I know not what other employment there can be where no lassitude shall slacken activity, nor any want stimulate to labour. I am admonished also by the sacred song, in which I read or hear the words, 'Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord; they will be still praising Thee.' All the members and organs of the incorruptible body, which now we see to be suited to various necessary uses, shall contribute to the praises of God; for in that life necessity shall have no place, but full, certain, secure, everlasting felicity. For all those parts of the bodily harmony, which are distributed through the whole body, within and without, and of which I have just been saying that they at present elude our observation, shall then be discerned; and, along with the other great and marvellous discoveries which shall then kindle rational minds in praise of the great Artificer, there shall be the enjoyment of a beauty which appeals to the reason. What power of movement such bodies shall possess, I have not the audacity rashly to define, as I have not the ability to conceive. Nevertheless I will say that in any case, both in motion and at rest, they shall be, as in their appearance, seemly; for into that state nothing which is unseemly shall be admitted. One thing is certain, the body shall forthwith be wherever the spirit wills, and the spirit shall will nothing which is unbecoming either to the spirit or to the body. True honour shall be there, for it shall be denied to none who is worthy, nor yielded to any unworthy; neither shall any unworthy person so much as sue for it, for none but the worthy shall be there. True peace shall be there, where no one shall suffer opposition either from himself or any other. God Himself, who is the Author of virtue, shall there be its reward; for, as there is nothing greater or better, He has promised Himself. What else was meant by His word through the prophet, 'I will be your God, and ye shall be my people,' than, I shall be their satisfaction, I shall be all that men honourably desire—life, and health, and nourishment, and plenty, and glory, and honour, and peace, and all good things? This, too, is the right interpretation of the saying of the apostle, 'That God may be all in all.' He shall be the end of our desires who shall be seen without end, loved without cloy, praised without weariness. This outgoing of affection, this employment, shall certainly be, like eternal life itself, common to all.

But who can conceive, not to say describe, what degrees of honour and glory shall be awarded to the various degrees of merit? Yet it cannot be doubted that there shall be degrees. And in that blessed city there shall be this great blessing, that no inferior shall envy any superior, as now the archangels are not envied by the angels, because no one will wish to be what he has not received, though bound in strictest concord with him who has received; as in the body the finger does not seek to be the eye, though both members are harmoniously included in the complete structure of the body. And thus, along with his gift, greater or less, each shall receive this further gift of contentment to desire no more than he has.

Neither are we to suppose that because sin shall have no power to delight them, free will must be withdrawn. It will, on the contrary, be all the more truly free, because set free from delight in sinning to take unfailing delight in not sinning. For the first freedom of will which man received when he was created upright consisted in an ability not to sin, but also in an ability to sin; whereas this last freedom of will shall be superior, inasmuch as it shall not be able to sin. This, indeed, shall not be a natural ability, but the gift of God. For it is one thing to be God, another thing to be a partaker of God. God by nature cannot sin, but the partaker of God receives this inability from God. And in this divine gift there was to be observed this gradation, that man should first receive a free will by which he was able not to sin, and at last a free will by which he was not able to sin—the former being adapted to the acquiring of merit, the latter to the enjoying of the reward. But the nature thus constituted, having sinned when it had the ability to do so, it is by a more abundant grace that it is delivered so as to reach that freedom in which it cannot sin. For as the first immortality which Adam lost by sinning consisted in his being able not to die, while the last shall consist in his not being able to die; so the first free will consisted in his being able not to sin, the last in his not being able to sin. And thus piety and justice shall be as indefeasible as happiness. For certainly by sinning we lost both piety and happiness; but when we lost happiness, we did not lose the love of it. Are we to say that God Himself is not free because He cannot sin? In that city, then, there shall be free will, one in all the citizens, and indivisible in each, delivered from all ill, filled with all good, enjoying indefeasibly the delights of eternal joys, oblivious of sins, oblivious of sufferings, and yet not so oblivious of its deliverance as to be ungrateful to its Deliverer.

The soul, then, shall have an intellectual remembrance of its past ills; but, so far as regards sensible experience, they shall be quite forgotten. For a skilful physician knows, indeed, professionally almost all diseases; but experimentally he is ignorant of a great number which he himself has never suffered from. As, therefore, there are two ways of knowing evil things—one by mental insight, the other by sensible experience, for it is one thing to understand all vices by the wisdom of a cultivated mind, another to understand them by the foolishness of an abandoned life—so also there are two ways of forgetting evils. For a well-instructed and learned man forgets them one way, and he who has experimentally suffered from them forgets them another—the former by neglecting what he has learned, the latter by escaping what he has suffered. And in this latter way the saints shall forget their past ills, for they shall have so thoroughly escaped them all, that they shall be quite blotted out of their experience. But their intellectual knowledge, which shall be great, shall keep them acquainted not only with their own past woes, but with the eternal sufferings of the lost. For if they were not to know that they had been miserable, how could they, as the Psalmist says, for ever sing the mercies of God? Certainly that city shall have no greater joy than the celebration of the grace of Christ, who redeemed us by His blood. There shall be accomplished the words of the psalm, 'Be still, and know that I am God.' There shall be the great Sabbath which has no evening, which God celebrated among His first works, as it is written, 'And God rested on the seventh day from all His works which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God began to make.' For we shall ourselves be the seventh day, when we shall be filled and replenished with God's blessing and sanctification. There shall we be still, and know that He is God; that He is that which we ourselves aspired to be when we fell away from Him, and listened to the voice of the seducer, 'Ye shall be as gods,' and so abandoned God, who would have made us as gods, not by deserting Him, but by participating in Him. For without Him what have we accomplished, save to perish in His anger? But when we are restored by Him, and perfected with greater grace, we shall have eternal leisure to see that He is God, for we shall be full of Him when He shall be all in all. For even our good works, when they are understood to be rather His

than ours, are imputed to us that we may enjoy this Sabbath rest. For if we attribute them to ourselves, they shall be servile; for it is said of the Sabbath, 'Ye shall do no servile work in it.' Wherefore also it is said by Ezekiel the prophet, 'And I gave them my Sabbaths to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctify them.' This knowledge shall be perfected when we shall be perfectly at rest, and shall perfectly know that He is God.

This Sabbath shall appear still more clearly if we count the ages as days, in accordance with the periods of time defined in Scripture, for that period will be found to be the seventh. The first age, as the first day, extends from Adam to the deluge; the second from the deluge to Abraham, equalling the first, not in length of time, but in the number of generations, there being ten in each. From Abraham to the advent of Christ there are, as the evangelist Matthew calculates, three periods, in each of which are fourteen generations—one period from Abraham to David, a second from David to the captivity, a third from the captivity to the birth of Christ in the flesh. There are thus five ages in all. The sixth is now passing, and cannot be measured by any number of generations, as it has been said, 'It is not for you to know the times, which the Father hath put in His own power.' After this period God shall rest as on the seventh day, when He shall give us (who shall be the seventh day) rest in Himself. But there is not now space to treat of these ages; suffice it to say that the seventh shall be our Sabbath, which shall be brought to a close, not by an evening, but by the Lord's day, as an eighth and eternal day, consecrated by the resurrection of Christ, and prefiguring the eternal repose not only of the spirit, but also of the body. There we shall rest and see, see and love, love and praise. This is what shall be in the end without end. For what other end do we propose to ourselves than to attain to the kingdom of which there is no end?

I think I have now, by God's help, discharged my obligation in writing this large work. Let those who think I have said too little, or those who think I have said too much, forgive me; and let those who think I have said just enough join me in giving thanks to God. Amen.

Source: Augustine, Saint. *The City of God*. Translated by Dods, Marcus, George Wilson, and J. J. Smith. New York: Random House, 1950.

### **354-430 AD**

#### **St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD), Church Father**

**Albeit One Be Stronger Than Another, One Wiser Than Another, One More Righteous Than Another, One Holier Than Another; In Father's House Are Many Mansions; None Shall Be Estranged From That House; A Mansion For Each According To His Deserving**  
**Homilies on the Gospel according to St. John**

#### **Homilies 67 and 68 on John 14:1—8**

##### **Homily 67**

Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you, that I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

1. We must lift ourselves up, my brethren, to God with greater intentness, that as the words of the holy Gospel have now sounded in our ears, we may also in whatever sort be able to take them in with the mind. For the Lord Jesus saith, Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God, and believe also in Me. That they might not as men fear death, and therefore be troubled, He consoles them, assuring them that He is also God. Believe, saith He, in God, and believe in Me. For it follows, that if ye believe in God, ye ought also to believe in Me: which would not follow, if Christ were not God. Believe in God, and believe in Him to Whom it is nature, not robbery, to be equal with God: for He emptied Himself, yet not losing the form of God, but

taking the form of a servant. Ye fear death for this form of a servant: let not your heart be troubled; the form of God shall raise that to life again.

2. But what is this that follows, In My Father's home are many mansions, but, that they were also afraid for themselves? Wherefore it was meet to be said to them, Let not your heart be troubled. For which of them would not be In the Life Eternal which is common to all the saved, afraid, when to Peter, the more confident and forward, it was said, The cock shall not crow until thou have denied Me thrice? As if then they must perish from Him, with good reason were they troubled; but when they are told, In the house of My Father are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you, that I go to prepare a place for you; they are refreshed from their perturbation, assured and confident that even after perils of temptations they shall dwell where Christ is, with God. For albeit one be stronger than another, one wiser than another, one more righteous than another, one holier than another; in the Father's house are many mansions; none of them shall be estranged from that house; where there shall be a mansion for each according to his deserving. True, they all equally receive that penny which the Householder, commands to be given to all them which have wrought in the vineyard; in that, making no distinction who have laboured less and who more: by which penny of course is signified eternal life, where none lives more than other, because living hath no diverse measure in eternity. But the many mansions signify the diverse dignities of merits in the one life eternal. For there is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead. As the stars, the saints have allotted unto them diverse mansions of diverse glory: as those in the firmament, so they in the kingdom; but as touching the one penny, none is separated from the kingdom: and so shall God be all in all, that, since God is love, by love it shall come to pass, that what they severally have shall be common to all. For so is each one himself the lover, when he loves in the other what himself hath not. So shall there not be any invidiousness of unequal glory, since the unity of charity shall reign in all.

3. Therefore they are to be rejected from a Christian heart, who imagine that this saying of the many mansions means, that without the kingdom of heaven there will be some condition wherein may dwell the blessed innocents who have departed this life without baptism, seeing that without it they shall not be able to enter into the kingdom of heaven. This faith is not faith, because it is not the true and catholic faith. What? ye foolish people and blinded with carnal imaginations, whereas ye would deserve to be reprobated, if ye should separate from the kingdom of heaven the mansion, ~~ I do not say of Peter or of Paul or of any of the Apostles, but of any soever baptized little one, do ye not think ye deserve to be reprobated, that ye separate therefrom the House of God the Father? For the Lord saith not, In the whole world, or, In the whole creation, or, In the Life or Bliss everlasting, are many mansions, but, In My Father's house are many mansions. Is not this the house where we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? Is not this the house, of which we sing to the Lord, Blessed are they that dwell in Thine house; P9.84,4. for ever and ever they shall praise Thee? And will ye then dare to separate from the kingdom of heaven, not the house of any baptized brother, but the house of God the Father Himself, to Whom all we the brethren say, Our Father, Which art in heaven; or dare so to divide it, that some of its mansions shall be in the kingdom of heaven, others out of the kingdom of heaven? God forbid! forbid it, that they who wish to dwell in the kingdom of heaven, should wish to dwell with you in this foolishness; forbid it, I say, that whereas every house of reigning sons cannot be elsewhere than in the kingdom, of the royal house itself there should be some part not in the kingdom.

### **Homily 68**

1. That we owe you, beloved brethren, and that we must now pay you that which we had deferred, we acknowledge: namely, how these two sayings can be understood to be not contrary the one to the other: that, whereas the Lord had said, In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you that I go to prepare a place for you — where He shews plainly enough, that in saying this to them He affirmed that there are already many mansions there, and that there is no need to prepare any — again He saith, And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again and will receive you unto Myself, that where I am ye may be also. How go and prepare a place, if already there are many mansions? Had it not been so, He



would have said, I go to prepare. Or, if it is yet to be prepared, why should He not with good reason have said, I go to prepare? Is it so, that these mansions both are in being, and yet are to be prepared? For were they not in being, He would have said, I go to prepare. And yet, because though they are in being, they are yet to be prepared, it is not as they are that He goes to prepare them; but if He go away and prepare them as they are to be, then at His coming again He will receive His own unto Himself, that where He is, they may be also. Then in what sense is it that the mansions in the Father's house, not others but the same, both without doubt already are as they are not to be prepared, and not yet are as they are to be prepared? In what sense suppose we this to be, but as the Prophet also saith of God that He hath done what is yet future? For He saith not, Who is about to do the things that are future, but, Who hath done the things that are future. Therefore, both hath done, and is about to do them. For neither are they done if He hath not done them, nor are they future if He shall not do them. He did them therefore by predestinating, is about to do them by working. Just as concerning the disciples, at what time He chose them, the Gospel sufficiently declares; namely, at that time when He called them: and yet the Apostle saith, He chose us before the foundation of the world: by predestinating, to wit, not by calling. But whom He predestinated them He also called: chose, by predestinating before the foundation of the world; chose, by calling before the consummation of the world. So likewise the mansions, He both hath prepared and is preparing; and not others, but those which He hath prepared the same He is preparing, Who hath done the things that are future: the same which He hath prepared by predestinating He is preparing by working. Already therefore they are, in predestination: were it not so, He would have said, I will go and prepare, i. e. will predestinate. But, because they do not yet exist in working, He saith, And if I go away, and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself.

2. But, in some sort, He prepares the mansions (or, dwellings) by preparing dwellers for the dwellings. For, in fact, seeing He hath said, In My Father's house are many mansions, what take we the house of God to be but the temple of God? But what that is, let the Apostle be interrogated and make answer: For the temple of God is holy, which temple iCor.5, are ye. This is also the kingdom of God, which the Son is to deliver to the Father: whence saith this same Apostle, The beginning, Christ; afterward, they that are Christ at His coming: then the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; i. e. whom He hath redeemed by His blood, He shall have delivered up to His Father beholding Him also. This is the kingdom of heaven, of which it is said, The kingdom of heaven is like a man which sowed good seed in his field. Now the good seed, these are the children of the kingdom: and albeit now 33 43. they have the tares mixed with them, the King Himself in the end shall send His Angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all offences. Then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The kingdom shall shine in the kingdom, when to the kingdom shall have come Matt. 6, the kingdom, which now we pray for and say, Thy kingdom come. Therefore now it is already called the kingdom, but as yet it is in process of being called together: for were it not called kingdom, it should not be said, They shall gather out of the kingdom all offences. But it doth not yet reign, this same kingdom. Consequently it is in such sort a kingdom already, that, when from it all offences shall be gathered, then it shall come to be a kingdom: so as to have not only the name of kingdom, but also the power of reigning. For to this kingdom, standing at the right hand, it shall be said Mat.25:34, in the end, Come, ye blessed of My Father, receive ye the kingdom: i. e. Ye who were a kingdom, yet did not reign, come, reign; that what ye were in hope, ye may be able also to be in reality. This house, therefore, of God, this temple of God, this kingdom of God, and kingdom of heaven, is yet in building, yet in fashioning, yet in preparing, yet in being gathered together. In that, there will be mansions, so as the Lord is as yet preparing them: in that, already they are, so as the Lord hath predestinated them already.

8. But what meaneth it, that to prepare He went away, since doubtless we are that which He was to prepare: which thing He will not do, if He leave us? I take Thy meaning, Lord, as I am able: in truth thou signifies! this, that, in order Rom. i, to the preparing of these mansions, the just must live by faith. 2 Cor 5 that He be not seen: be hidden, that He may be believed on. For then hath one a place in preparing, if he be living by faith. Believed, let Him be desired, that desired, He may be had: the desire of love is the preparing of a mansion. So, Lord, prepare that which Thou preparest: for Thou preparest us for Thee, and Thee for us: since Thou preparest place both for Thee in us and for us in Thee. For Thou hast said, Abide in Me, and I in you. In what degree each shall be partaker of Thee, one less, another more, this shall be the diversity of

rewards in proportion to the diversity of merits: this shall be the multitude of mansions, according to the inequality of the dwellers therein, who nevertheless all alike have eternity of life and endlessness of bliss. What meaneth it that Thou goest? What meaneth it that Thou comest? If I understand Thee aright, neither whence Thou goest, nor whence Thou comest, departest Thou: Thou goest by being unseen, comest by appearing. But unless Thou abide by ruling that we may make progress in well living, how shall there be a place prepared where we may abide by enjoying? Let it be enough to have said thus much concerning the words of the Gospel which have been read, as far as to where the Lord saith, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself. But what that means which follows, that where I am, ye may be also; and whither I go ye know, and the way ye know this, after the question then ensuing, put by the disciple, as if we also asked by him, we shall better hear, and more seasonably handle.

### **354-430 AD**

**St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD), Church Father**

**After The Resurrection There Shall Be Two Distinct Kingdoms, One Of Eternal Happiness, The Other Of Eternal Misery; Among Both There Will Be Degrees Of Happiness And Misery On The Holy Trinity; Doctrinal Treatises; Moral Treatises**

Chapter 111.— After the Resurrection There Shall Be Two Distinct Kingdoms, One of Eternal Happiness, the Other of Eternal Misery.

After the resurrection, however, when the final, universal judgment has been completed, there shall be two kingdoms, each with its own distinct boundaries, the one Christ's, the other the devil's; the one consisting of the good, the other of the bad,—both, however, consisting of angels and men. The former shall have no will, the latter no power, to sin, and neither shall have any power to choose death; but the former shall live truly and happily in eternal life, the latter shall drag a miserable existence in eternal death without the power of dying; for the life and the death shall both be without end. But among the former there shall be degrees of happiness, one being more pre-eminently happy than another; and among the latter there shall be degrees of misery, one being more enduringly miserable than another.

### **354-430 AD**

**St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD), Church Father**

**Yet Star Differeth From Star In Glory; So Also Resurrection Of Dead. These Are Different Merits Of Saints; If By That Penny Heaven Were Signified, Have Not All Stars In Common To Be In Heaven?**

**Miscellaneous Treatise On Holy Virginit**

**(published in English in 1852)**

xxvi. 26. What then, say they, is the meaning of that penny, Saints, equal in eternal life, differ in glory. which is given in payment to all alike when the work of the the vineyard is ended? whether it be to those who have laboured from the first hour, or to those who have laboured one hour?

What assuredly doth it signify, but something, which all shall have in common, such as is life eternal itself, the kingdom of heaven itself, where shall be all, whom God hath predestinated, called, justified, glorified? For it behoveth that this corruptible put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality. . This is that penny, wages for all. Yet star differeth from star in glory; so also the resurrection of the dead. These are the different merits of the Saints. For, if by that penny the heaven were signified, have not all the stars in common to be in the heaven? And yet, there is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, another of the stars. If that penny were taken for health of body, have not all the members, when we are well, health in

common; and, should this health continue even unto death, is it not in all alike and equally? And yet, God hath set the members, each one of them, in the body, as He would; that neither the whole be an eye, nor the whole hearing, nor the whole smelling: and, whatever else there is, it hath its own property, although it have health equally with all. Thus because life eternal itself shall be alike to all, an equal penny was assigned to all; but, because in that life eternal itself the lights of merits shall shine with a distinction, there are many mansions in the house of the Father: and, by this means, in the penny not unlike, one lives not longer than another; but in the many mansions, one is honoured with greater brightness than another.

27. Therefore go on, Saints of God, boys and girls, males and females, unmarried men and women; go on and persevere unto the end. Praise more sweetly the Lord, Whom ye think on more richly: hope more happily in Him, Whom ye serve more instantly: love more ardently Him, Whom ye please more attentively. With loins girded, and lamps burning, wait for the Lord, when He cometh from the marriage.

### **344 – 407 AD**

**St. John Chrysostom (344 – 407 AD), Eastern Church Father**

**There Being Not Only Difference Between Sun, Moon, Stars, But Also Between Stars; Some Have Larger, Others Less Glory. What Do We Learn From Hence? That Although They Be All In God's Kingdom, All Shall Not Enjoy Same Reward**

**Homilies on First Corinthians, Homily 41**

#### **1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 35 and 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 36**

But some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come? Thou foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest is not quickened, except it die.

1. Gentle and lowly as the apostle is to a great degree every where, he here adopts a style rather pungent, because of the impiety of the gainsayers. He is nothowever content with this, but he also employs reasons and examples, subduing thereby even the very contentious. And above he saith, "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead;" but here he solves an objection brought in by the Gentiles. And see how again he abates the vehemence of his censure; in that he said not, "but perhaps ye will say," but he set down the objector indefinitely, in order that, although employing his impetuous style with all freedom, he might not too severely wound his hearers. And he states two difficulties, one touching the manner of the resurrection, the other, the kind of bodies. For of both they on their part made a question, saying, "How is that which hath been dissolved raised up?" and, "with what manner of body do they come?" But what means, "with what manner of body?" It is as if they had said, "with this which hath been wasted, which hath perished, or with some other?"

Then, to point out that the objects of their enquiry are not questionable but admitted points, he at once meets them more sharply, saying, "Thou foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest is not quickened, except it die." Which we also are wont to do in the case of those who gainsay things acknowledged.

And wherefore did he not at once appeal to the power of God? Because he is discoursing with unbelievers. For when his discourse is addressed to believers, he hath not much need of reasons. Wherefore having said elsewhere, "He shall change the body of your humiliation, that it may be fashioned like to the body of his glory," (Philippians chapter 3, verse 2) and having indicated somewhat more than the resurrection, he stated no analogies, but instead of any demonstration, brought forward the power of God, going on to say, "according to the working whereby He is able to subject all things to Himself." But here he also urges reasons. That is, having established it from the Scriptures, he adds also in what comes after, these things over and above, with an eye to them who do not obey the Scriptures; and he saith, "O foolish one, that which Thou sowest:" i.e., "from thyself thou hast the proof of these things, by what thou doest every day, and doubttest thou yet? Therefore do I call thee foolish because of the things daily done by thine own self thou art

ignorant, and being thyself an artificer of a resurrection, thou doubtest concerning God." Wherefore very emphatically he said, "what Thou sowest," thou who art mortal and perishing.

And see how he uses expressions appropriate to the purpose he had in view: thus, "it is not quickened," saith he, "except it die." Leaving, you see, the terms appropriate to seed, as that "it buds," and "grows," and "is dissolved," he adopts those which correspond to our flesh, viz. "it is quickened," and, "except it die;" which do not properly belong to seeds, but to bodies.

And he said not, "after it is dead it lives," but, which is a greater thing, "therefore it lives, because it dies." Seest thou, what I am always observing, that he continually gives their argument the contrary turn? Thus what they made a sure sign of our not rising again, the same he makes a demonstration of our rising. For they said, "the body rises not again, because it is dead." What then doth he, retorting their argument, say? "Nay, but unless it died, it could not rise again: and therefore it rises again, because it died." For as Christ more clearly signifies this very thing, in the words, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth by itself alone: but if it die, it beareth much fruit:" (John chapter 12, verse 24) thence also Paul, drawing this example, said not, "it doth not live," but, "is not quickened;" again assuming the power of God and showing that not the nature of the ground, but God Himself, brings it all to pass.

And what can be the reason that he did not bring that forward, which was more akin to the subject: I mean, the seed of mankind? (For our generation too begins from a sort of decay, even as that of the corn.) Because it was not of equal force, but the latter was a more complete instance: for he wants a case of something that perished entirely, whereas this was but a part; wherefore he rather alleges the other. Besides, that proceeds from a living body and falls into a living womb; but here it is no flesh, but the earth into which the seed is cast, and into the same it is dissolved, like the body which is dead. Wherefore on this account too the example was more appropriate.

### **[3.] Ver. 37. "And he who soweth, soweth not that body that shall be."**

For the things before spoken meet the question, "how they are raised;" but this, the doubt, "with what manner of body they come." But what is, "thou sowest not that body which shall be?" Not an entire ear of corn, nor new grain. For here his discourse no longer regards the resurrection, but the manner of the resurrection, what is the kind of body which shall rise again; as whether it be of the same kind, or better and more glorious. And he takes both from the same analogy, intimating that it will be much better.

But the heretics, considering none of these things, dart in upon us and say, "one body falls and another body rises again. How then is there a resurrection? For the resurrection is of that which was fallen. But where is that wonderful and surprising trophy over death, if one body fall and another rise again? For he will no longer appear to have given back that which he took captive. And how can the alleged analogy suit the things before mentioned?" Why, it is not one substance that is sown, and another that is raised, but the same substance improved. Else neither will Christ have resumed the same body when He became the first-fruits of them that rise again: but according to you He threw aside the former body, although it had not sinned, and took another. Whence then is that other? For this body was from the Virgin, but that, whence was it? Seest thou to what absurdity the argument hath come round? For wherefore shows He the very prints of the nails? Was it not to prove that it is that same body which was crucified, and the same again that rose from the dead? And what means also His type of Jonah? For surely it was not one Jonah that was swallowed up and another that was cast out upon dry land. And why did He also say, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up?" For that which was destroyed, the same clearly He raised again. Wherefore also the Evangelist added, that "He spake of the temple of His body." (John chapter 2, verse 19 and John chapter 2, verse 21)

What is that then which he saith, "Thou sowest not the body that shall be?" i.e. not the ear of corn: for it is the same, and not the same; the same, because the substance is the same; but not the same, because this is more excellent, the substance remaining the same but its beauty becoming greater, and the same body rising

up new. Since if this were not so, there were no need of a resurrection, I mean if it were not to rise again improved. For why did He at all pull down His house, except He were about to build it more glorious?

This now, you see, he said to them who think that it is utter corruption. Next, that none again might suspect from this place that another body is spoken of, he qualifies the dark saying, and himself interprets what he had spoken, not allowing the hearer to turn his thoughts from hence in any other direction. What need is there then of our reasonings? Hear himself speaking, and explaining the phrase, "Thou sowest not the body that shall be." For he straightway adds, "but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other kind;" i.e., it is not the body that shall be; not so clothed, for instance; not having a stalk and beard, but "a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other kind."

**Ver. 38. "But God giveth it a body even as it pleased Him."**

"Yes," saith one, "but in that case it is the work of nature." Of what nature, tell me? For in that case likewise God surely doeth the whole; not nature, nor the earth, nor the rain. Wherefore also he making these things manifest, leaves out both earth and rain, atmosphere, sun, and hands of husbandmen, and subjoins, "God giveth it a body as it pleased Him." Do not thou therefore curiously inquire, nor busy thyself with the how and in what manner, when thou hearest of the power and will of God.

"And to each seed a body of its own." Where then is the alien matter which they speak of? For He giveth to each "his own." So that when he saith, "Thou sowest not that which shall be," he saith not this, that one substance is raised up instead of another, but that it is improved, that it is more glorious. For "to each of the seeds," saith he, "a body of its own."

[4.] From hence in what follows, he introducing also the difference of the resurrection which shall then be. For do not suppose, because grain is sown and all come up ears of corn, that therefore there is also in the resurrection an equality of honor. For in the first place, neither in seeds is there only one rank, but some are more valuable, and some inferior. Wherefore also he added, "to each seed a body of its own."

However, he is not content with this, but seeks another difference greater and more manifest. For that thou mayest not, when hearing, as I said, that all rise again, suppose that all enjoy the same reward; he laid before even in the preceding verses the seeds of this thought, saying, "But each in his own order." But he brings it out here also more clearly, saying,

**Ver. 39. "All flesh is not the same flesh."**

For why speak I, saith he, in respect of seeds? In respect of bodies let us agitate this point, concerning which we are discoursing now. Wherefore also he addeth, and saith,

"But there is one flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of birds, and another of fishes."

**Ver. 40. "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another."**

**Ver. 41. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory."**

And what means he by these expressions? Wherefore from the resurrection of the body did he throw himself into the discourse of the stars and the sun? He did not throw himself out, neither did he break off from his purpose; far from it: but he still keeps to it. For whereas he had established the doctrine concerning the resurrection, he intimates in what follows that great will be then the difference of glory, though there be but one resurrection. And for the present he divides the whole into two: into "bodies celestial," and "bodies

terrestrial." For that the bodies are raised again, he signified by the corn: but that they are not all in the same glory, he signifies by this. For as the disbelief of the resurrection makes men supine, so again it makes them indolent to think that all are vouchsafed the same reward. Wherefore he corrects both. And the one in the preceding verses he had completed; but this he begins now. And having made two ranks, of the righteous and of sinners, these same two he subdivides again into many parts, signifying that neither righteous nor sinners shall obtain the same; neither righteous men, all of them, alike with other righteous, nor sinners with other sinners.

Now he makes, you see, first, one separation between righteous and sinners, where he says, "bodies celestial, and bodies terrestrial:" by the "terrestrial" intimating the latter, and by the "celestial," the former. Then farther he introduces a difference of sinners from sinners, saying, "All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of fishes, another of birds, and another of beasts." And yet all are bodies; but some are in more, and some in lesser vileness. And that in their manner of living too, and in their very constitution.

And having said this, he ascends again to the heaven, saying, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon." For as in the earthly bodies there is a difference, so also in the heavenly; and that difference no ordinary one, but reaching even to the uttermost: there being not only a difference between sun and moon, and stars, but also between stars and stars. For what though they be all in the heaven? yet some have a larger, others a less share of glory. What do we learn from hence? That although they be all in God's kingdom, all shall not enjoy the same reward; and though all sinners be in hell, all shall not endure the same punishment. Wherefore he added,

**Ver. 42. "So also is the resurrection of the dead."**

"So," How? with considerable difference. Then leaving this doctrine as sufficiently proved, he again comes to the proof itself of the resurrection and the manner of it, saying,

[5.] "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption." And observe his consideration. As in the case of seeds, he used the term proper to bodies, saying, "it is not quickened, except it die:" so in the case of bodies, the expression belonging to seeds, saying, "it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption." He said not, "is produced," that thou mightest not think it a work of the earth, but is "raised." And by sowing here, he means not our generation in the womb, but the burial in the earth of our dead bodies, their dissolution, their ashes. Wherefore having said, "it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption," he adds,

**Ver. 43. "It is sown in dishonor." For what is more unsightly than a corpse in dissolution? "It is raised in glory."**

"It is sown in weakness." For before thirty days the whole is gone, and the flesh cannot keep itself together nor hold out for one day. "It is raised in power." For there shall nothing prevail against it for all the future.

Here is why he stood in need of those former analogies, lest many on hearing of these things, that they are "raised in incorruption and glory and power," might suppose that there is no difference among those who rise again. For all indeed rise again, both in power and in incorruption; and in this glory of their incorruption yet are not all in the same state of honor and safety.

**Ver. 44. "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."**

What sayest thou? Is not "this" body spiritual? It is indeed spiritual, but that will be much more so. For now oftentimes both the abundant grace of the Holy Ghost flies away on men's committing great sins; and again, the Spirit continuing present, the life of the flesh depends on the soul: and the result in such a case is a void,

without the Spirit. But in that day not so: rather he abides continually in the flesh of the righteous, and the victory shall be His, the natural soul also being present.

For either it was some such thing which he intimated by saying, "a spiritual body," or that it shall be lighter and more subtle and such as even to be wafted upon air; or rather he meant both these. And if thou disbelieve the doctrine, behold the heavenly bodies which are so glorious and (for this time) so durable, and abide in undecaying tranquillity; and believe thou from hence, that God can also make these corruptible bodies incorruptible and much more excellent than those which are visible.

**[6.] Ver. 45. "So also it is written, (Genesis chapter 2, verse 7) the first man Adam became a living soul: the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit."**

And yet the one indeed is written, but the other not written. How then said He, "it is written?" He modified the expression according to the issue of events: as he is wont continually to do: and indeed as it is the way of every prophet. For so Jerusalem, the prophet said, should be "called a city of righteousness;" (Isaiah chapter 1, verse 26) yet it was not so called. What then? Did the prophet speak false? By no means. For he is speaking of the issue of events. And that Christ too should be called Immanuel; (Isaiah chapter 7, verse 14) yet was he not so called. But the facts utter this voice; so also here, "the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit."

And these things he said that thou mayest learn that the signs and pledges both of the present life and of that which is to come have already come upon us; to wit, of the present life, Adam, and of the life to come, Christ. For since he sets down the better things as matters of hope, he signifies that their beginning hath already come to pass, and their root and their fountain been brought to light. But if the root and the fountain be evident to all, there is no need to doubt of the fruits. Wherefore he saith, "The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit." And elsewhere too, He "shall quicken your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Romans chapter 7, verse 11) It is the Spirit's work then to quicken.

Further, lest any should say, "why are the worse things the elder? and why hath the one sort, to wit, the natural, come to pass not merely as far as the first-fruits, but altogether; the other as far as the first-fruits only?"-he signifies that the principles also of each were so ordered.

**Ver. 46. "For that is not first," saith he, "which is spiritual, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual."**

And he saith not, why, but is content with the ordinance of God, having the evidence from the facts testifying to that most excellent oeconomy of God, and implying that our state is always going forward to the better; at the same time by this also adding credibility to his argument. For if the lesser have come to pass, much more ought we to expect the better.

[7.] Since then we are to enjoy so great blessings, let us take our station in this array, and bewail not the departed, but rather those that have ended their life ill. For so the husbandman, when he sees the grain dissolving, doth not mourn; rather, as long as he beholds it continuing solid in the ground he is in fear and trembling, but when he sees it dissolved rejoices. For the beginning of the future crop is its dissolving. So let us also then rejoice when the corruptible house falls, when the man is sown. And marvel not if he called the burial "a sowing;" for, in truth, this is the better sowing: inasmuch as that sowing is succeeded by deaths and labors and dangers and cares; but this, if we lived well, by crowns and rewards; and that, by corruption and death but this by incorruption and immortality, and those infinite blessings. To that kind of sowing there went embraces and pleasures and sleep: but to this, only a voice coming down from heaven, and all is at once brought to perfection. And he that rises again is no more led to a life full of toil, but to a place where anguish and sorrow and sighing are fled away.

If thou requirest protection and therefore mournest thy husband, betake thyself to God, the common Protector and Saviour and Benefactor of all, to that irresistible alliance, to that ready aid, to that abiding shelter which is every where present, and is as a wall unto us on every side.

"But your intercourse was a thing desirable and lovely." I too know it. But if thou wilt trust sound reason with this grief, and wilt consider with thyself who hath taken him away, and that by nobly bearing it thou offerest thy mind as a sacrifice to our God, even this wave will not be too strong for thee to stem. And that which time brings to pass, the same do thou by thy self-command. But if thou shalt yield to weakness, thine emotion will cease indeed in time, but it will bring thee no reward.

And together with these reasons collect also examples, some in the present life, some in the Holy Scriptures. Consider that Abraham slew his own son, and neither shed a tear nor uttered a bitter word. "But he," you say, "was Abraham." Nay, thou surely hast been called to a nobler field of action. And Job grieved indeed, but so much as was proper for a father who loved his children and was very solicitous for the departed; whereas what we now do, is surely the part of haters and enemies. For if when a man was taken up to court and crowned, thou wert smiting thyself and lamenting, I should not say that thou wast a friend of him who was crowned, but a great enemy and adversary. "Nay," say you, "not even as it is do I mourn for him, but for myself." Well, but this is not the part of an affectionate person, to wish for thine own sake that he were still in the conflict and subject to the uncertainty of the future, when he might be crowned and come to anchor; or that he should be tossed in mid ocean, when he might have been in port.

[8.] "But I know not whither he hath gone," say you. Wherefore knowest thou not, tell me? For according as he lived well or otherwise, it is evident whither he will go. "Nay, on this very account I lament," say you, "because he departed being a sinner." This is a mere pretext and excuse. For if this were the reason of thy mourning for the departed, thou oughtest to have formed and corrected him, when he was alive. The fact is thou dost every where look to what concerns thyself, not him.

But grant that he departed with sin upon him, even on this account one ought to rejoice, that he was stopped short in his sins and added not to his iniquity; and help him as far as possible, not by tears, but by prayers and supplications and alms and offerings. For not unmeaningly have these things been devised, nor do we in vain make mention of the departed in the course of the divine mysteries, and approach God in their behalf, beseeching the Lamb Who is before us, Who taketh away the sin of the world;-not in vain, but that some refreshment may thereby ensue to them. Not in vain cloth he that standeth by the altar cry out when the tremendous mysteries are celebrated, "For all that have fallen asleep in Christ, and for those who perform commemorations in their behalf." For if there were no commemorations for them, these things would not have been spoken: since our service is not a mere stage show, God forbid! yea, it is by the ordinance of the Spirit that these things are done.

Let us then give them aid and perform commemoration for them. For if the children of Job were purged by the sacrifice of their father, why dost thou doubt that when we too offer for the departed, some consolation arises to them? since God is wont to grant the petitions of those who ask for others. And this Paul signified saying, "that in a manifold Person your gift towards us bestowed by many may be acknowledged with thanksgiving on your behalf." (2 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 11) Let us not then be weary in giving aid to the departed, both by offering on their behalf and obtaining prayers for them: for the common Expiation of the world is even before us. Therefore with boldness do we then intreat for the whole world, and name their names with those of martyrs, of confessors, of priests. For in truth one body are we all, though some members are more glorious than others; and it is possible from every source to gather pardon for them, from our prayers, from our gifts in their behalf, from those whose names are named with theirs. Why therefore dost thou grieve? Why mourn, when it is in thy power to gather so much pardon for the departed?



[9.] Is it then that thou art become desolate and hast lost a protector? Nay, never mention this. For thou hast not surely lost thy God. And so, as long as thou hast Him, He will be better to thee than husband and father and child and kinsman: since even when they were alive, He it was who did all things.

These things therefore think upon, and say with David, "The Lord is my light and my Saviour, whom shall I fear? (Ps. xxvii. 1) Say, Thou art a Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows: "(Psalms chapter 68, verse 5) and draw down His aid, and thou shalt have Him to care for thee now more than before, by how much thou art in a state of greater difficulty.

Or hast thou lost a child? Thou hast not lost it; say not so. This thing is sleep, not death; removal, not destruction; a journeying from the worse unto the better. Do not then provoke God to anger; but propitiate Him. For if thou bearest it nobly, there will thence accruesome relief both to the departed and to thyself; but if the contrary, thou dost the more kindle God's anger. For if when a servant was chastised by his master, thou didst stand by and complain, thou wouldest the more exasperate the master against thyself. Do not then so; but give thanks, that hereby also this cloud of sadness may be scattered from thee. Say with that blessed one, "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." (Job chapter 1, verse 21) Consider how many more well-pleasing in His sight have never received children at all, nor been called fathers. "Nor would I wish to have been so," say you, "for surely it were better not to have had experience than after having tasted the pleasure to fall from it." Nay, I beseech thee, say not so, provoke not thus also the Lord to wrath: but for what thou hast received, give Him thanks; and for what thou hast not to the end, give Him glory. Job said not that which thou sayest un-thankfully, "it were better not to have received," but both for the one he gave thanks, saying, "The Lord gave;" and for the other he blessed God, saying, "The Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord for ever." And his wife he thus silenced, justifying himself against her, and uttering those admirable words, "Have we received good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?" And yet after this a fiercer temptation befel him: yet was he not even thus unnerved, but in like manner bore it nobly and glorified God.

This also do thou, and consider with thyself that man hath not taken him, but God who made him, who more than thyself cares for him and knows what is good for him: who is no enemy nor liar-in-wait. See how many, living, have made life intolerable to their parents. "But seest thou not the right-hearted ones?" say you. I see these too, but even these are not so safe as thy child is. For though they are now approved, yet it is uncertain what their end will be; but for him thou hast no longer any fear, nor dost thou tremble lest anything Should happen to him or he experience any change.

These things also do thou consider respecting a good wife and guardian of thine house, and for all things give thanks unto God. And even if thou shalt lose a wife, give thanks. Perhaps God's will is to lead thee to continence, He calls thee to a nobler field of conflict, He was pleased to set thee free from this bond. If we thus command ourselves, we shall both gain the joy of this life and obtain the crowns which are to come, &c. &c.

## **430 AD**

**St. John Cassian (360 – 435 AD), Scythian Monk, Founder of Religious Order in Gaul, Transmitter of Egyptian Spirituality**

**Different Grades Of Perfection; No Uniform Crown Of Perfection Can Be Offered To All Men, Because All Have Not Same Virtue, Or Purpose, Or Fervour, & So Divine Word Has In Some Way Appointed Different Ranks & Different Measures Of Perfection Itself**

**Conferences**

[The First Conference Of Abbot Chaeremon: On Perfection](#)

Although many of the saints who are taught by your example can scarcely emulate the greatness of your perfection, with which you shine like great luminaries with marvellous brightness in this world, yet still you, O holy brothers Honoratus and Eucherius, are so stirred by the great glory of those splendid men from whom we received the first principles of monasticism, that one of you, presiding as he does over a large monastery of the brethren, is hoping that his congregation, which learns a lesson from the daily sight of your saintly life, may be instructed in the precepts of those fathers, while the other has been anxious to make his way to Egypt to be edified by the sight of these in the flesh, that he might leave this province that is frozen as it were with the cold of Gaul, and like some pure turtle dove fly to those lands on which the sun of righteousness looks and to which it approaches nearest, and which abound with the ripe fruits of virtues. As a matter of course the greatness of my love wrings this from me; viz., that considering the desire of the one and the labour of the other, I should not decline the danger and peril of writing, if only to the one there may be added authority among his children, and from the other may be removed the necessity for so risky a journey. Further since neither the Institutes of the Cœnobia which we wrote to the best of our ability in twelve books for Bishop Castor of blessed memory, nor the ten Conferences of the fathers living in the desert of Scete, which we composed somehow or other at the bidding of Saints Helladius and Leontius the Bishops, were able to satisfy your faith and zeal, now in order that the reason for our journey may be also known, I have thought that seven Conferences of the three fathers whom we first saw living in another desert, might be written in the same style and dedicated to you, in which whatever has been in our previous works perhaps obscurely explained or even omitted on the subject of perfection, may be supplied. But if even this is not enough to satisfy the holy thirst of your desires, seven other Conferences, which are to be sent to the holy brethren living in the islands of the Stœchades, will, I fancy, satisfy your wants and your ardour.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Abbot Chæremon's statement that faults can be overcome in three ways.**

Then the blessed Chæremon: There are, said he, three things which enable men to control their faults; viz., either the fear of hell or of laws even now imposed; or the hope and desire of the kingdom of heaven; or a liking for goodness itself and the love of virtue. For then we read that the fear of evil loathes contamination: "The fear of the Lord hates evil." Proverbs 8:13 Hope also shuts out the assaults of all faults: for "all who hope in Him shall not fail." Love also fears no destruction from sins, for "love never fails;" 1 Corinthians 13:8 and again: "love covers a multitude of sins." 1 Peter 4:8 And therefore the blessed Apostle confines the whole sum of salvation in the attainment of those three virtues, saying "Now abides faith, hope, love, these three." 1 Corinthians 13:13 For faith is what makes us shun the stains of sin from fear of future judgment and punishment; hope is what withdraws our mind from present things, and despises all bodily pleasures from its expectation of heavenly rewards; love is what inflames us with keenness of heart for the love of Christ and the fruit of spiritual goodness, and makes us hate with a perfect hatred whatever is opposed to these. And these three things although they all seem to aim at one and the same end (for they incite us to abstain from things unlawful) yet they differ from each other greatly in the degrees of their excellence. For the two former belong properly to those men who in their aim at goodness have not yet acquired the love of virtue, and the third belongs specially to God and to those who have received into themselves the image and likeness of God. For He alone does the things that are good, with no fear and no thanks or reward to stir Him up, but simply from the love of goodness. For, as Solomon says, "The Lord has made all things for Himself." Proverbs 16:4 For under cover of His own goodness He bestows all the fullness of good things on the worthy and the unworthy because He cannot be wearied by wrongs, nor be moved by passions at the sins of men, as He ever remains perfect goodness and unchangeable in His nature.

## **Chapter 7**

### **By what steps we can ascend to the heights of love and what permanence there is in it.**

If then any one is aiming at perfection, from that first stage of fear which we rightly termed servile (of which it is said: "When you have done all things say: we are unprofitable servants," Luke 17:10) he should by advancing a step mount to the higher path of hope— which is compared not to a slave but to a hireling, because it looks for the payment of its recompense, and as if it were free from care concerning absolution of

its sins and fear of punishment, and conscious of its own good works, though it seems to look for the promised reward, yet it cannot attain to that love of a son who, trusting in his father's kindness and liberality, has no doubt that all that the father has is his, to which also that prodigal who together with his father's substance had lost the very name of son, did not venture to aspire, when he said: "I am no more worthy to be called your son;" for after those husks which the swine ate, satisfaction from which was denied to him, i.e., the disgusting food of sin, as he "came to himself," and was overcome by a salutary fear, he already began to loathe the uncleanness of the swine, and to dread the punishment of gnawing hunger, and as if he had already been made a servant, desires the condition of a hireling and thinks about the remuneration, and says: "How many hired servants of my father have abundance of bread, and I perish here with hunger. I will then return to my father and will say unto him, 'Father I have sinned against heaven and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your son: make me as one of your hired servants.'" Luke 15:17-19 But those words of humble penitence his father who ran to meet him received with greater affection than that with which they were spoken, and was not content to allow him lesser things, but passing through the two stages without delay restored him to his former dignity of sonship. We also ought immediately to hasten on that by means of the indissoluble grace of love we may mount to that third stage of sonship, which believes that all that the father has is its own, and so we may be counted worthy to receive the image and likeness of our heavenly Father, and be able to say after the likeness of the true son: "All that the Father has is mine." John 16:15 Which also the blessed Apostle declares of us, saying: "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." 1 Corinthians 3:22 And to this likeness the commands of our Saviour also summon us: "Be," says He, "perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:48 For in these persons sometimes the love of goodness is found to be interrupted, when the vigour of the soul is relaxed by some coldness or joy or delight, and so loses either the fear of hell for the time, or the desire of future blessings. And there is indeed in these a stage leading to some advance, which affects us so that when from fear of punishment or from hope of reward we begin to avoid sin we are enabled to pass on to the stage of love, for "fear," says one, "is not in love, but perfect love casts out fear: for fear has torment, but he who fears is not perfect in love. We therefore love because God first loved us." 1 John 4:18-19 We can then only ascend to that true perfection when, as He first loved us for the grace of nothing but our salvation, we also have loved Him for the sake of nothing but His own love alone. Wherefore we must do our best to mount with perfect ardour of mind from this fear to hope, from hope to the love of God, and the love of the virtues themselves, that as we steadily pass on to the love of goodness itself, we may, as far as it is possible for human nature, keep firm hold of what is good.

## **Chapter 8**

### **How greatly those excel who depart from sin through the feeling of love.**

For there is a great difference between one who puts out the fire of sin within him by fear of hell or hope of future reward, and one who from the feeling of divine love has a horror of sin itself and of uncleanness, and keeps hold of the virtue of purity simply from the love and longing for purity, and looks for no reward from a promise for the future, but, delighted with the knowledge of good things present, does everything not from regard to punishment but from delight in virtue. For this condition can neither abuse an opportunity to sin when all human witnesses are absent, nor be corrupted by the secret allurements of thoughts, while, keeping in its very marrow the love of virtue itself, it not only does not admit into the heart anything that is opposed to it, but actually hates it with the utmost horror. For it is one thing for a man in his delight at some present good to hate the stains of sins and of the flesh, and another thing to check unlawful desires by contemplating the future reward; and it is one thing to fear present loss and another to dread future punishment. Lastly it is a much greater thing to be unwilling to forsake good for good's own sake, than it is to withhold consent from evil for fear of evil. For in the former case the good is voluntary, but in the latter it is constrained and as it were violently forced out of a reluctant party either by fear of punishment or by greed of reward. For one who abstains from the allurements of sin owing to fear, will whenever the obstacle of fear is removed, once more return to what he loves and thus will not continually acquire any stability in good, nor will he ever rest free from attacks because he will not secure the sure and lasting peace of chastity. For where there is the disturbance of warfare there cannot help being the danger of wounds. For one who is in the midst of the conflict, even though he is a warrior and by fighting bravely inflicts frequent and deadly wounds on his foes,

must still sometimes be pierced by the point of the enemy's sword. But one who has defeated the attack of sins and is now in the enjoyment of the security of peace, and has passed on to the love of virtue itself, will keep this condition of good continually, as he is entirely wrapped up in it, because he believes that nothing can be worse than the loss of his inmost chastity. For he deems nothing dearer or more precious than present purity, to whom a dangerous departure from virtue or a poisonous stain of sin is a grievous punishment. To such an one, I say, neither will regard for the presence of another add anything to his goodness nor will solitude take anything away from it: but as always and everywhere he bears about with him his conscience as a judge not only of his actions but also of his thoughts, he will especially try to please it, as he knows that it cannot be cheated nor deceived, and that he cannot escape it.

## **Chapter 9**

### **That love not only makes sons out of servants, but also bestows the image and likeness of God.**

And if to anyone relying on the help of God and not on his own efforts, it has been vouchsafed to acquire this state, from the condition of a servant, wherein is fear, and from a mercenary greed of hope, whereby there is sought not so much the good of the donor as the recompense of reward, he will begin to pass on to the adoption of sons, where there is no longer fear, nor greed, but that love which never fails continually endures. Of which fear and love the Lord in chiding some shows what is befitting for each one: "A son knows his own father, and a servant fears his lord: And if I be a Father, where is My honour: and if I be a Lord, where is my fear?" Malachi 1:6 For one who is a servant must needs fear because "if knowing his lord's will he has done things worthy of stripes, he shall be beaten with many stripes." Luke 12:47 Whoever then by this love has attained the image and likeness of God, will now delight in goodness for the pleasure of goodness itself, and having somehow a like feeling of patience and gentleness will henceforth be angered by no faults of sinners, but in his compassion and sympathy will rather ask for pardon for their infirmities, and, remembering that for so long he himself was tried by the stings of similar passions till by the Lord's mercy he was saved, will feel that, as he was saved from carnal attacks not by the teaching of his own exertions but by God's protection, not anger but pity ought to be shown to those who go astray; and with full peace of mind will he sing to God the following verse: "You have broken my chains. I will offer to You the sacrifice of praise;" and: "except the Lord had helped me, my soul had almost dwelt in hell." And while he continues in this humility of mind he will be able even to fulfil this Evangelic command of perfection: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute you and slander you." Matthew 5:44 And so it will be vouchsafed to us to attain that reward which is subjoined, whereby we shall not only bear the image and likeness of God, but shall even be called sons: "that you may be," says He "sons of your Father which is in heaven, Who makes His sun to rise on the good and evil, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust:" and this feeling the blessed John knew that he had attained when he said: "that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because as He is so are we also in this world." 1 John 4:17 For in what can a weak and fragile human nature be like Him, except in always showing a calm love in its heart towards the good and evil, the just and the unjust, in imitation of God, and by doing good for the love of goodness itself, arriving at that true adoption of the sons of God, of which also the blessed Apostle speaks as follows: "Every one that is born of God does not sin, for His seed is in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God;" and again: "We know that every one who is born of God sins not, but his birth of God preserves him, and the wicked one touches him not?" And this must be understood not of all kinds of sins, but only of mortal sins: and if any one will not extricate and cleanse himself from these, for him the aforesaid Apostle tells us in another place that we ought not even to pray, saying: "If a man knows his brother to be sinning a sin not unto death, let him ask, and He will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he should ask for it." But of those which he says are not unto death, from which even those who serve Christ faithfully cannot, with whatever care they keep themselves, be free, of these he says: "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us;" and again: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." 1 John 1:8, 10 For it is an impossibility for any one of the saints not to fall into those trivial faults which are committed by word, and thought, and ignorance, and forgetfulness, and necessity, and will, and surprise: which though quite different from that sin which is said to be unto death, still cannot be free from fault and blame.

## **Chapter 10**

### **How it is the perfection of love to pray for one's enemies and by what signs we may recognize a mind that is not yet purified.**

When then any one has acquired this love of goodness of which we have been speaking, and the imitation of God, then he will be endowed with the Lord's heart of compassion, and will pray also for his persecutors, saying in like manner: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34 But it is a clear sign of a soul that is not yet thoroughly purged from the dregs of sin, not to sorrow with a feeling of pity at the offenses of others, but to keep to the rigid censure of the judge: for how will he be able to obtain perfection of heart, who is without that by which, as the Apostle has pointed out, the full requirements of the law can be fulfilled, saying: "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ," Galatians 6:2 and who has not that virtue of love, which "is not grieved, is not puffed up, thinks no evil," which "endures all things, bears all things." 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 For "a righteous man pities the life of his beasts: but the heart of the ungodly is without pity." And so a monk is quite certain to fall into the same sins which he condemns in another with merciless and inhuman severity, for "a stern king will fall into misfortunes," and "one who stops his ears so as not to hear the weak, shall himself cry, and there shall be none to hear him."

## **Chapter 11**

### **A question why he has called the feeling of fear and hope imperfect.**

Germanus: You have indeed spoken powerfully and grandly of the perfect love of God. But still this fact disturbs us; viz., that while you were exalting it with such praise, you said that the fear of God and the hope of eternal reward were imperfect, though the prophet seems to have thought quite differently about them, where he said: "Fear the Lord, all you His saints, for they that fear Him lack nothing." And again in the matter of observing God's righteous acts he admits that he has done them from consideration of the reward, saying: "I have inclined my heart to do your righteous acts forever, for the reward." And the Apostle says: "By faith Moses when he was grown up, denied himself to be the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to be afflicted with the people of God than to have the pleasure of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure of the Egyptians; for he looked unto the reward." Hebrews 11:24-26 How then can we think that they are imperfect, if the blessed David boasted that he did the righteous acts of God in hope of a recompense, and the giver of the Law is said to have looked for a future reward and so to have despised the adoption to royal dignity, and to have preferred the most terrible affliction to the treasures of the Egyptians?

## **Chapter 12**

### **The answer on the different kinds of perfection.**

Chæremon: In accordance with the condition and measure of every mind Holy Scripture summons our free wills to different grades of perfection. For no uniform crown of perfection can be offered to all men, because all have not the same virtue, or purpose, or fervour, and so the Divine Word has in some way appointed different ranks and different measures of perfection itself. And that this is so the variety of beatitudes in the gospel clearly shows. For though they are called blessed, whose is the kingdom of heaven, and blessed are they who shall possess the earth, and blessed are they who shall receive their consolation, and blessed are they who shall be filled, yet we believe that there is a great difference between the habitations of the kingdom of heaven, and the possession of the earth, whatever it be, and also between the reception of consolation and the fullness and satisfaction of righteousness; and that there is a great distinction between those who shall obtain mercy, and those who shall be deemed worthy to enjoy the most glorious vision of God. "For there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for star differs from star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." 1 Corinthians 15:41-42 While therefore in accordance with this rule holy Scripture praises those who fear God, and says "Blessed are all they that fear the Lord," and promises them for this a full measure of bliss, yet it says again: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear: for fear has torment. But he that fears is not yet perfect in love." 1 John 4:18 And again, though it is a grand thing to serve God, and it is said: "Serve the Lord in fear;" and: "It is a great thing for you to be called My servant;" and: "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He comes, shall find so doing," yet it is said to the Apostles: "I no longer call you servants, for the servant knows not what his Lord

does: but I call you friends, for all things whatsoever I have heard from my Father, I have made known unto you.” John 15:14-15 And once more: “You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you.” John 15:13 You see then that there are different stages of perfection, and that we are called by the Lord from high things to still higher in such a way that he who has become blessed and perfect in the fear of God; going as it is written “from strength to strength,” and from one perfection to another, i.e., mounting with keenness of soul from fear to hope, is summoned in the end to that still more blessed stage, which, is love, and he who has been “a faithful and wise servant” Matthew 24:45 will pass to the companionship of friendship and to the adoption of sons. So then our saying also must be understood according to this meaning: not that we say that the consideration of that enduring punishment or of that blessed recompense which is promised to the saints is of no value, but because, though they are useful and introduce those who pursue them to the first beginning of blessedness, yet again love, wherein is already fuller confidence, and a lasting joy, will remove them from servile fear and mercenary hope to the love of God, and carry them on to the adoption of sons, and somehow make them from being perfect still more perfect. For the Saviour says that in His Father's house are “many mansions,” John 14:2 and although all the stars seem to be in the sky, yet there is a mighty difference between the brightness of the sun and of the moon, and between that of the morning star and the rest of the stars. And therefore the blessed Apostle prefers it not only above fear and hope but also above all gifts which are counted great and wonderful, and shows the way of love still more excellent than all. For when after finishing his list of spiritual gifts of virtues he wanted to describe its members, he began as follows: “And yet I show unto you a still more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and though I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I can remove mountains, and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.” You see then that nothing more precious, nothing more perfect, nothing more sublime, and, if I may say so, nothing more enduring can be found than love. For “whether there be prophecies, they shall fail, whether there be tongues, they shall cease, whether there be knowledge, it shall be destroyed,” but “love never fails,” and without it not only those most excellent kinds of gifts, but even the glory of martyrdom itself will fail.

### **Chapter 13**

#### **Of the fear which is the outcome of the greatest love.**

Whoever then has been established in this perfect love is sure to mount by a higher stage to that still more sublime fear belonging to love, which is the outcome of no dread of punishment or greed of reward, but of the greatest love; whereby a son fears with earnest affection a most indulgent father, or a brother fears his brother, a friend his friend, or a wife her husband, while there is no dread of his blows or reproaches, but only of a slight injury to his love, and while in every word as well as act there is ever care taken by anxious affection lest the warmth of his love should cool in the very slightest degree towards the object of it. And one of the prophets has finely described the grandeur of this fear, saying: “Wisdom and knowledge are the riches of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure.” Isaiah 33:6 He could not describe with greater clearness the worth and value of that fear than by saying that the riches of our salvation, which consist in true wisdom and knowledge of God, can only be preserved by the fear of the Lord. To this fear then not sinners but saints are invited by the prophetic word where the Psalmist says: “O fear the Lord, all you His Saints: for they that fear Him lack nothing.” For where a man fears the Lord with this fear it is certain that nothing is lacking to his perfection. For it was clearly of that other penal fear that the Apostle John said that “He who fears is not made perfect in love, for fear has punishment.” 1 John 4:18 There is then a great difference between this fear, to which nothing is lacking, which is the treasure of wisdom and knowledge, and that imperfect fear which is called “the beginning of wisdom,” and which has in it punishment and so is expelled from the hearts of those who are perfect by the incoming of the fullness of love. For “there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.” 1 John 4:18 And in truth if the beginning of wisdom consists in fear, what will its perfection be except in the love of Christ which, as it contains in it the fear which belongs to perfect love, is called not the beginning but the treasure of wisdom and knowledge? And therefore there is a twofold stage of fear. The one for beginners, i.e., for those who are still subject to the yoke and to servile terror; of which we read: “And the servant shall fear his Lord;” and in the gospel: “I no longer call you servants, for the servant knows not what his Lord does;” and therefore “the servant,” He tells us, “abides not in the house for ever, but the Son abides

for ever.” For He is instructing us to pass on from that penal fear to the fullest freedom of love, and the confidence of the friends and sons of God. Finally the blessed Apostle, who had by the power of the Lord's love already passed through the servile stage of fear, scorns lower things and declares that he has been enriched with good things by the Lord, “for God has not given us” he says “a spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 1:7 Those also who are inflamed with a perfect love of their heavenly Father, and whom the Divine adoption has already made sons instead of servants, he addresses in these words: “For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” Romans 8:15 It is of this fear too, that the prophet spoke when he would describe that sevenfold spirit, which according to the mystery of the Incarnation, full surely descended on the God man: “And there shall rest upon Him the Spirit of the Lord: the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of knowledge and of true godliness,” and in the last place he adds as something special these words: “And the Spirit of the fear of the Lord shall fill Him.” Isaiah 11:2-3 Where we must in the first place notice carefully that he does not say “and there shall rest upon Him the Spirit of fear,” as he said in the earlier cases, but he says “there shall fill Him the Spirit of the fear of the Lord.” For such is the greatness of its richness that when once it has seized on a man by its power, it takes possession not of a portion but of his whole mind. And not without good reason. For as it is closely joined to that love which “never fails,” it not only fills the man, but takes a lasting and inseparable and continual possession of him in whom it has begun, and is not lessened by any allurements of temporal joy or delights, as is sometimes the case with that fear which is cast out. This then is the fear belonging to perfection, with which we are told that the God-man, who came not only to redeem mankind, but also to give us a pattern of perfection and example of goodness, was filled. For the true Son of God “who did no sin neither was guile found in His mouth,” 1 Peter 2:22 could not feel that servile fear of punishment.

#### **400 – 500 AD?**

#### **Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Church Father**

**Celestial Hierarchy Of Three Heavens, Each Separated Into Three Additional Groups; From This Order, In Due Degree, Second, & From Second, Third, And From Third Our Hierarchy Religiously Conducted To Beginning Above Beginning, & End Of All Good Order**

#### **The Celestial Hierarchy**

#### **Chapter 3**

#### **What is Hierarchy and what the use of Hierarchy**

Hierarchy is, in my judgment, a sacred order and science and energy—assimilated, as far as permissible, to the likeness of God, and conducted to the illuminations granted to itself from God, in due order, with a view to the Divine imitation. Now the Divine attractiveness, as being uncompounded, as good, as source of initiation, is altogether free from any dissimilarity. But it imparts its own proper light to each according to their fitness, and perfects in most Divine initiation in proportion to the unvarying likeness of those who are being initiated into harmony with itself. The scope, then, of Hierarchy is the assimilation and oneness with God, holding Him as the Leader of all religious science and energy, looking unflinchingly to His most Divine comeliness, and moulding itself as far as possible, and perfecting its own followers as Divine images, as mirrors luminous and without flaw, receptive of the primal light and the Divine ray, and devoutly filled with the radiance committed to itself, but, on the other hand, spreading this radiance ungrudgingly to those after it, in accordance with the Divinely-fixed regulations. For it is not permitted to the initiators in Divine things, nor to those who are being religiously initiated, to practise anything whatever beyond the sacred regulations of their own function. Nor even must they attempt otherwise, if they desire to attain its deifying splendour, and if they regard it in a religious light, and mould themselves after the example of each of the holy minds. He, then, who mentions Hierarchy describes a certain, altogether Holy Order, an image of the Divine Beauty, which performs the mysteries of its own illumination in due order and with religious science, derived from the Hierarch and which is assimilated to its own proper author as far as permissible.

For each of those who have been called into the Hierarchy find their perfection in being carried to the Divine initiation in their own proper degree; and, what is more Divine than all, as the oracles say, in becoming a fellow-worker with God, and in shewing the Divine energy dwelling in itself, manifested as far as possible to others. For it is an Hierarchical regulation that some are purified and that others purify; that some are enlightened and others enlighten; that some are perfected and others perfect. So that each one will accomplish the Divine imitation in his own several manner. The Divine Blessedness, then, to speak after the manner of men, is unstained by any dissimilarity, but is filled with invisible light—perfect, and needing no perfection; cleansing, illuminating and perfecting. Yea, rather it is a holy purification and illumination and perfection—above purification, above light, pre-eminently perfect, self-perfection, and cause of every Hierarchy, but elevated pre-eminently above every holy thing. It is necessary then—as I think that those who are being purified should be entirely perfected, so as to be without stain—that those who are being illuminated should be filled with the Divine Light, conducted to the habit and faculty of contemplation in all purity of mind; that those who are being initiated should be separated from the profane, and become recipients of that science which makes perfect the holy men who are initiated into the highest mysteries.

Further, that those who purify should impart from their own abundance of purity their own proper holiness; that those who illuminate, as being luminous intelligences, whose function it is to receive and to impart light, and who are joyfully filled with holy gladness, that these should impart, in proportion to their own overflowing light, to those who are worthy of enlightenment. But that those who make perfect, as being skilled in the impartation of perfection, should perfect those who are being initiated, through the holy instruction, in the science of holy men who have been initiated in the higher mysteries. Thus each rank of the Hierarchical Order is led in its own degree to the Divine cooperation by performing, through grace and God-given power, those mysteries which are essentially and super-essentially in the Godhead, and are accomplished by It supernaturally, and are manifested to us through our Hierarchy for its imitation of the God-loving minds to the highest permissible extent.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Concerning the Seraphin and Cherubin and Thrones, and concerning their Hierarchy, which is first.**

We, whilst admitting this as the arrangement of the Hierarchies, affirm that every appellation of the celestial minds denotes the Godlike characteristic of each; and those who know Hebrew affirm that the holy designation of the Seraphin denotes that they are fiery or burning; but that of Cherubin, a fulness of knowledge and stream of wisdom. Naturally, then, the first of the heavenly Hierarchies is ministered by the most exalted Beings, holding, as it does, a rank which is higher than all, by the fact that it is established immediately around God, and that the first-wrought Divine manifestations and perfections pass earlier to it, as being nearest. They are called, then, Burning and Thrones, and Stream of Wisdom—by a name which explains their Godlike dispositions.

The appellation of Seraphin plainly teaches their ever moving around things Divine, and constancy, and warmth, and keenness, and the seething of that persistent, indomitable, and inflexible perpetual motion, and that vigorous transformation of the subordinate, by precept and example, as giving new life and rekindling them to the same heat; and purifying through fire and burnt offering, and the light-like and light-shedding characteristic which can never be concealed or consumed, and remains always the same, which destroys and dispels every kind of obscure darkness.

But the appellation of the Cherubin denotes their knowledge and their vision of God, and their readiness to receive the highest gift of light, and their power of contemplating the Divine comeliness in its first revealed power, and their being filled with the impartation which maketh wise, and their ungrudging communication to those next to them by pouring forth the wisdom given to themselves.

The appellation of the most exalted and pre-eminent Thrones denotes their manifest exaltation above every grovelling inferiority, and their celestial tendency towards higher things; and their unswerving separation from all remoteness; and their invariable and firmly-fixed settlement around the veritable Highest, with the



whole force of their powers; and their capacity for receiving the approaches of the Godhead, through the absence of all passion and earthly tendency, and their bearing God; and the ardent expansion of themselves for the Divine receptions.

This, then, is the explanation of their names, so far as we can give it; but we ought to say what we think their Hierarchy is.

For I suppose we have sufficiently shown above that the purpose of every Hierarchy is an unswerving devotion to the imitation of the Divine Likeness, and that every Hierarchical function is set apart for the sacred reception and distribution of an undefiled purification, and Divine Light and perfecting science.

But now I pray that I may speak worthily of the most exalted minds—how their Hierarchy is exhibited through the oracles.

One must consider, then, that the Hierarchy belongs properly, and is in every respect like, to the first Beings, who are established after the Godhead, who gave them Being, and who are marshalled, as it were, in its very vestibule, who surpass every unseen and seen created power. Now, so far as they are pure, we must regard them, not as though they have been freed from unholy stains and blemishes, nor as though they were unreceptive of earthly fancies, but as far exalted above all stain of inferiority and every transient holiness in accordance with the highest degree of purity— established above the most Godlike powers, and clinging unflinchingly to their own self-moved and same-moved order in their invariable love of God, conscious in no respect whatever of any declivity to a worse condition, but having the invariable fixity of their own godlike identity— never liable to fall, and always unmoved.

Again, so far as they are contemplative, we must not regard them as contemplating sensible signs intellectually, nor as being led to the Divine by the varied texture of holy representations written for our meditation, but as being filled with all kinds of unearthly knowledge of higher light, and satiated, as permissible, with the beautifying and princely beauty superessential and thrice manifested. Thus, deemed worthy of Communion with Jesus, they do not stamp the deifying similitude in the bodily forms of divinely-pictured images, but as being in very truth near to Him in first enjoyment of the knowledge of His deifying illuminations.

Further, because the imitation of God is given to them in the highest possible degree, they participate, so far as possible, in His God-wrought and philanthropic virtues, in the power of a first manifestation. But, so far as they are perfected, we must not think of them as being illuminated with a sacred subtlety according to analytic science, but as being filled with a first and pre-eminent deification, as following from the most exalted science of the Divine operations which Angels can possibly possess. For, not through other holy Beings, but from the very Godhead, are they directed in spiritual things, by their elevation to Itself immediately, by their power, and order, and rank surpassing all.

They are both planted near the All-Holy without any shadow of turning, and are conducted for contemplation to the unearthly, immaterial, and spiritual comeliness as far as possible, and to the reasons which make known the Divine operations, and as being first around God they are instructed from the source of mystery itself, and supremely directed in Divine mysteries. This, then, the theologians distinctly shew that the subordinate Orders of the heavenly Beings are taught by the superior, in due order, the deifying sciences, and that those who are higher than all are illuminated from the Godhead itself, as far as permissible, in revelations of the Divine mysteries. For they introduce some of them as being religiously instructed by those of a higher rank, that He, Who was raised to Heaven as befits man, is the Lord of the heavenly Powers and King of Glory. Others, as putting the question to Jesus Himself, and as desiring to learn exactly the nature of His Divine work on our behalf, and Jesus, as instructing them directly, and shewing to them at first hand the work of His goodness out of love to man. "For I, He says, am pondering over righteousness and judgment of Salvation." Now I am astonished that even the first of the Beings in Heaven, and so far above all others,

should reverently strive after the Divine illuminations, as though they were intermediate Beings. For they do not ask directly, "Wherefore are Thy garments red?" but they first raise the difficulty among themselves, thus shewing that they desire to learn, and crave the deifying knowledge, but not impeding the Divine illumination given to them after a Divine procedure. The first Hierarchy, then, of the heavenly minds is purified, and enlightened, and perfected by being religiously directed by the Author of initiation Himself, by its elevation to Himself immediately, and by being filled, according to its degree, with the most holy purification of the unapproachable Light of the most perfect source of initiation, and being unstained by any inferiority and full of primal Light, and perfected by its participation in first-given knowledge and science. But to sum up, I may say this, not inappropriately, that the reception of Divine Science is both purification, and enlightenment, and perfecting—purifying, as it were, from ignorance, by the knowledge of the more perfect revelations imparted to it according to its fitness, but enlightening by the self-same Divine knowledge, through which it also purifies that order which did not before contemplate the things which are now made manifest through the higher illumination; and perfecting further, by the self-same Light the abiding science of the mysteries made clearly manifest.

This, then, according to my most accurate knowledge, is the first rank of the heavenly Beings which encircle and stand immediately around God, and without symbol, and without interruption, dances around His eternal knowledge in the most exalted and ever-moving stability; viewing with pure eyes many and blessed contemplations, but illuminated with unique and immediate splendours; filled with a Divine nourishment—numerous indeed in its first-given profusion, but one in the unvariegated and unifying oneness of the Divine Food.

It is thus deemed worthy of much participation and co-operation with God, by the assimilation to Him, as far as possible, in excellent habits and energies. They thus know many Divine things pre-eminently, and participate in Divine science and knowledge to the utmost. Wherefore the Word of God has transmitted their hymns to those on earth, in which are Divinely shewn the excellency of its most exalted illumination. For some of them, to speak after the manner of men, proclaim as the "voice of many waters," "Blessed is the glory of the Lord, from His place." But others cry aloud that frequent and most august word of God, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth," "The whole earth is full of His glory." These most excellent hymnologies of the super-celestial minds, we have already unfolded to the best of our ability in the Treatise concerning the Divine hymns, and have spoken sufficiently concerning them in that Treatise, from which, by way of remembrance, it is enough to produce so much as is necessary to our present purpose, namely, "That the first Order, having been instructed in theological science from the Divine Goodness itself, as a Hierarchy reflecting that Goodness, transmitted it to the Order next after itself." To speak briefly, it teaches this—"That the august Godhead—itsself both above praise and all praiseworthy—is rightly eulogised by the minds who receive God, so far as He is permitted to be known and sung For they, according to the oracles, as images of God, are the Divine places of the Divine repose. Yea further, they affirm that He is alone, and One of three-fold subsistence, sending forth His most kindly forethought to all created things, from the supercelestial minds to the lowest of the earth; as Prince above principality and cause of all creation, and grasping all things supernaturally in His resistless embrace.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Concerning Lordships and Powers and Authorities, and concerning their middle Hierarchy.**

Let us now pass to the middle order of the heavenly minds, gazing as far as we may, with celestial vision, upon those Lordships and the truly terrible visions of the Divine Authorities and Powers. For each appellation of the minds above us denotes those characteristics by which they Divinely imitate the Divine Likeness. I think, then, that the explanatory name of the Holy Lordships denotes a certain unslavish tendency to higher things, free from all grovelling subserviency, which does not submit in any way whatever to one single imperious force dissimilar to itself, as befits the freedom of unbending Lordship; superior to every kind of cringing slavery, indomitable to every lower tendency, and elevated above every dissimilarity, ever seeking the true Lordship, and source of Lordship; and moulding as an image of goodness, itself and those after it, to His Lordly Likeness, turning itself wholly to none of the things that vainly seem, but to the Lordly

Being, and ever sharing in the Lordly Likeness of God. The appellation of the Holy Powers denotes the possession to the highest possible extent of a certain masculine and unflinching manliness towards all those Godlike energies within themselves — not feebly weak, for the reception of any of the Divine illuminations vouchsafed to it— vigorously conducting itself to the Divine imitation; not forsaking the Godlike movement through its own cowardice, but unflinchingly looking to the superessential and powerful making Power; and becoming an image of this, as far as is permissible, in the likeness of His power, and powerfully turning itself to this as Source of Power, but issuing forth to those next in degree, in its gift of Power and in its likeness to God. But the appellation of the Holy Authorities denotes their being of the same rank as the Divine Lordships and Powers, their beautiful and unconfused good order with regard to the Divine receptions, and the marshalling of the celestial and spiritual Authority, not using their authoritative powers imperiously for base purposes, but conducting themselves in the highest possible degree towards Divine things in due order, and conducting those after them benignly; and being assimilated, as far as permissible to the Authority giving Source of Authority, and making this visible, as is possible to Angels, in the well-ordered regulations of the Authority giving power. The middle order of the heavenly minds, having these Godlike characteristics, is purified and illuminated in the manner described, through the Divine illuminations vouchsafed to it at second hand, which pass through the first Hierarchical Order, and through this middle as a secondary manifestation. Without dwelling upon that message, which is said to pass through one angel to another, let us take it as a symbol of a message delivered from afar, and obscured in its passage so as to become a secondary revelation. For, as men skilled in our initiation say, the knowledge of Divine things, manifested directly to ourselves, is more perfect than the Divine contemplations imparted through others. Thus, I think, with regard to the angelic ranks, the immediate participation in knowledge of those elevated to the nearest proximity to God, is more clear than that of those who are initiated through the instrumentality of others. Wherefore, by our sacerdotal tradition, the first minds are named, perfecting, illuminating, and purifying Powers, of the subordinate on the ground that these are conducted through them to the superessential Origin of all things; and are placed in possession, as far as is permissible to them, of the consecrating purifications, and illuminations, and perfections. For this is absolutely fixed by the Divinely-established law of consecration, that through the first, the second should partake of the Divine illuminations.

This you will find declared by the theologians in many ways. For when the Divine and Paternal Love towards man had chastened in a remarkable manner, His people Israel, with a view to their spiritual salvation, and had delivered them to terrible and savage nations for correction, by every kind of providential training to better things, He both liberated them from their misery, and led them back, through His compassion, to their former state of comfort. Then, one of the theologians, Zechariah, saw in a vision one of the first Angels, as I think, around God (for the name of Angels is common, as I said, to them all), who learned from God Himself the comforting words, as we say, concerning this matter. But he saw another Angel, of inferior rank, advancing to meet the first Angel, for the purpose of receiving and explaining an illumination. Then, from him, instructed as from a Hierarch, and charged to reveal to the theologian, that Jerusalem should be abundantly occupied by a multitude of people. But another theologian, Ezekiel, says that this was righteously ordained by the glorious Godhead itself, exalted above the Cherubin. For the Paternal Love towards man, whilst conducting Israel through an education to better things, by a righteousness worthy of God, decided to separate the guilty from the guiltless. This is revealed to one first after the Cherubin — He who was bound about the loins with a sapphire, and wore displayed the hierarchical robe coming down to the feet as a symbol of Hierarchical Office. But the other Angels, who bore the battle-axe, the Divine Government compels to be instructed from the former, as to the Divine judgment in this matter. For, to one, He said that he should go through the midst of Jerusalem, and place the sign upon the forehead of the just men. But to the others, "Go into the city after him and strike, and spare not your eyes, but to every one upon whom is the sign draw not near."

What would any one say concerning the Angel who said to Daniel, "The word has gone forth?" or concerning him of the first Order, who took the fire from the midst of the Cherubin; or what is more remarkable than this, foreshowing the good order that reigns amongst the Angels, the Cherubin casts the fire into the hands of him wearing the sacred stole; or concerning him who called the most Divine Gabriel, and

said to him, "Make this man understand the vision," or whatever else is recorded by the holy theologians concerning the Godlike Order of the celestial Hierarchies, to which the good order of our Hierarchy, after being assimilated to the greatest possible extent, will bear the likeness of the angelic comeliness, as it were, in reflection, taking its whole form from this, and conducted to the superessential source of order in every Hierarchy.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Concerning the Principalities, Archangels and Angels, and concerning their Hierarchy which is last.**

There remains for our religious contemplation an Order which completes the Angelic Hierarchies, which is composed of the Godlike Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. I think it necessary, first to declare the meaning of their sacred appellations. For the appellation of the heavenly Principalities denotes their ruling and guiding after the Divine example with religious order most befitting the Princely Powers, and their being wholly turned to the Principality above Principality, and their directing others in a princely fashion, and their being moulded to the distinguished Principality itself, the Maker of Princedom, and that they make manifest their superessential Source of order by the regularity of their princely powers.

The Order of the Holy Archangels is of the same rank with the heavenly. Principalities. For there is one Hierarchy and rank, as I said, of themselves and the Angels. But since there is not a Hierarchy which does not possess first and middle and last powers, the holy order of Archangels occupies the middle position in the Hierarchy between the extremes. For it belongs alike to the most holy Principalities and to the holy Angels. To the Principalities because it is turned in a princely fashion to the super-essential Prince, and is moulded to it as far as possible, and unites the Angels after the fashion of its own well-regulated and marshalled and invisible Leadership. But it belongs to the Angels because it is of the prophetic Order, receiving in a sacerdotal fashion the Divine illumination from the first powers, and conveys the same to the Angels after the example of God, and through Angels manifests them to us in proportion to the sacred aptitude of each one of the godly persons illuminated. For the Angels, as we have already previously said, complete the whole series of celestial minds as being the last Order of the heavenly Beings, who possess the Angelic characteristic. Yea, rather, they are more properly named Angels by us than those of higher degree. Especially because their Order is occupied in making known, and is more particularly concerned with the things of the world.

For the very highest Order, as being placed in the first rank near the Hidden One, we must consider as directing in spiritual things in a more hidden fashion than the Order next to itself. But the second Order, which is composed of the holy Lordships and Powers and Authorities, directs the Hierarchy of the Principalities and Archangels and Angels more clearly indeed than the first Hierarchy, but more hiddenly than the Order after it. We must bear in mind that the more revealing Order of the Principalities, Archangels, and Angels presides through each other over the Hierarchies amongst men, in order that the instruction, and conversion, and communion, and union with God may be in due order, and, in short, that the procession from God vouchsafed in a manner becoming His goodness to all the Hierarchies, and passing to all in common, may be in a most sacred regularity. Hence, the Word of God has assigned our Hierarchy to Angels, naming the distinguished Michael as Ruler of the Jewish people, and others over other nations. For the Most High established borders of nations according to number of Angels of God. But if anyone should say, "How then were the people of the Hebrews alone conducted to the Divine illuminations?" we must answer that we ought not to throw the blame of the other nations wandering after those which are no gods, upon the faithful superintendence of the Angels. But they themselves, by their own declension, fell away from the faithful conduct towards the Divine, through self-conceit and self-will, and through their irrational reverence for things which appeared to themselves worthy of God.

Even the Hebrew people are testified to have suffered the same thing; for He says, "Thou hast cast away knowledge of God, and hast gone after thine own heart." For neither have we a life governed by necessity, nor, on account of the free will of those who are objects of providential care, are the Divine rays of the providential illumination blunted. But the inaptitude of the mental visions makes the overflowing gift of

Light, which comes from paternal goodness, either altogether unparticipated or impenetrable to their resistance, or makes the participations of the one fontal ray, diverse, small or great, obscure or brilliant, although that ray is one and simplex, and always the same, and ever overflowing. For even over the other nations, from whom even we have emerged to that boundless and bounteous sea of Divine Light, which is expanded for the ready reception of all, there were not placed certain alien gods. But there is one Prince of all, and to Him the Angels who religiously direct each nation conduct those who follow them. Let us consider Melchizedek<sup>4</sup> as being a Hierarch, most dear to God; not of gods which are not, but of Him Who is truly most high God. For the godly wise not only speak of him as being dear to God, but also as Priest in order that they may clearly shew to the wise that not only was he himself turned to the true God, but further, that he became as Hierarch, a guide to others, in that wisdom which leads to the true and only Godhead.

Let me also recall this to your Hierarchical judgment—that both to Pharaoh,<sup>5</sup> from the Angel who presided over the Egyptians, and to the Babylonian Prince, from his own Angel, the watchful and ruling care of the Providence and Lordship over all was made known in visions. And leaders who were worshippers of the true God were appointed over those nations. For the interpretation of things shaped by angelic visions was made known from God through Angels to holy men akin to the Angels—Daniel and Joseph. For there is one Prince and Providence over all.

And never must we think that the Godhead guides Jews by lot, but that Angels, independently, or as of equal rank, or as in opposition, or that certain other gods preside over the other nations. But that particular phrase of the Divine Word, must be accepted according to its very religious intention; not as though God had divided government amongst men with other gods or Angels, and had been elected by lot to the government and leadership of Israel, but in this sense—that, whereas there is one and the same forethought of the Supreme over all, which has assigned all men for their salvation to the elevating guidance of their own Angels, yet Israel, almost alone in comparison with the rest, turned itself to the Light-gift, and recognition of the true Lord. Hence the Word of God, in order to shew that Israel himself elected for the worship of the true God, says this, "He became<sup>1</sup> the Lord's portion." But as shewing that he was distributed equally with the other nations, to one of the holy Angels, for the recognition through him of the one Prince over all, he said, "That Michael<sup>2</sup> was the Leader of the Jewish people." From this it is evident that there is one Providence for the whole, pre-eminently established above all powers, unseen and seen, and that all the Angels who preside over each nation elevate as far as possible those who follow them with a willing mind, to Itself as their proper Head.

## **Chapter 10**

### **A Repetition and Summary concerning the Angelic Order.**

We have concluded, then, that the most exalted order of the minds around God, whilst being sanctified by the perfecting illumination, is purified, and illuminated, and perfected by a gift of light, at once more hidden and more manifest—more hidden, indeed, as being more intellectual, and more simplifying, and more unifying—more manifest, as being a first gift and a first manifestation, and more complete, and more shed forth to it as being more transparent. But from this order again, in due degree, the second, and from the second, the third, and from the third our Hierarchy is religiously conducted to the Beginning above beginning, and End of all good order, according to the self-same law of well-ordered regularity, in Divine harmony and proportion. But all Angels are interpreters of those above them.

The very highest, indeed, of God, Who moves them, but the rest in due order of those who have been moved by God. For, to such an extent has the super-essential harmony of all things provided for the religious order, and the regulated conduct of each of the rational and intellectual beings, that each rank of the Hierarchies has been placed in sacred order, and we observe every Hierarchy distributed into first and middle and last Powers.

But to speak accurately, He divided each order itself, by the same Divine harmonies, on which account the theologians say that the most Divine Seraphin cry one to another, indicating distinctly, as I think, by this, that

the first impart their theological knowledge to the second. I might add this not inappropriately, that each celestial and human mind has within itself its own special first and middle and last rank and power, corresponding to the foresaid peculiar instructions of the several Hierarchical illuminations made known in due order, in accordance with which each one participates, so far as is lawful and permissible to himself, in the most spotless purification, the most copious light, the pre-eminent perfection. For there is nothing that is self-perfect, or absolutely without need of perfecting, except the self-perfect and pre-eminently perfect One.

**300 AD—600 AD (1983 Translation by Mueller and Robins in OTP, vol. 1)**

**Pseudepigraphical work in name of Ezra**

**Elect Are Those Who Go Into Eternal Rest On Account Of Confession, Penitence, Largesse In Almsgiving; What Do Just Do In Order That They May Not Enter In Judgment? Just As Servant Who Performed Well For His Master Will Receive Liberty, So Too Will Just In Kingdom Of Heaven**

**Vision of Ezra (Christian Apocalypse)**

Date: 4th - 7th century A.D.

Ezra prayed to the Lord, saying “Grant me courage, O Lord, that I might not fear when I see all the judgments of the sinners.” And there were granted to him seven angels of hell who carried him beyond the seventieth grade in the infernal regions. And I saw fiery gates, , and seventy-two foot-soldiers outside the gates and I was entering through this flame and at these gates he saw two lions lying there from whose mouth and nostrils and eyes proceeded the most powerful flames. The most powerful men were entering and passing through the fire, and it did not touch them. And Ezra said, “Who are they, who advance so safely?” The angels said to him, “They are the just whose repute has ascended to heaven, who gave alms generously, clothed the naked, and desired a good desire.”

And others were entering that they might pass through the gates, and dogs were ripping them apart and fire was consuming them. And Ezra said, “Who are they?” The angels said, “They denied the Lord, and sinned with women on the Lord’s Day.” And Ezra said, “Lord, have mercy on the sinners!”

And they led him lower beyond the fiftieth grade, and he saw in that place men standing in torments. Some were throwing fire in their faces, others, however, were whipping them with fiery scourges. And the earth cried aloud, saying, “Whip them and refuse to have mercy on them, because they worked impiety upon me.” And Ezra said, “Who are they, tho are in such torments daily?” The angels said, “They swelled with married women; the married women are those who adorned themselves not for their husbands, but that they might please others, desiring an evil desire.” Ezra said. “Lord, have mercy on the sinners!”

And again they brought him to the south, and he saw a fire, and poor ones and also women hanging, and angels were whipping them with fiery clubs. And Ezra said, “Lord have mercy on the sinners! Who are they?” And the angels said, “They dwelled with their mothers, desiring an evil desire.” And Ezra said, “Lord, have mercy on the sinners!”

And they led (him) downward in the infernal regions, and he saw a caldron in which were sulfur and bitumen, and it was roiling just like the waves of the sea. And the just were entering, and in the midst of it they were walking over the fiery waves, praising greatly the name of the Lord, just like those who walk over dew of cold water. And Ezra said, “Who are they?” The angels said, “They are the ones who daily were making better confession before God and the holy priests, freely bringing alms (and) resisting sins.” And the sinners came, wishing to pass over, and the angels of hell came and submerged them in the fiery stream. And from the fire they cried out, saying, “Lord, have pity on us!” But he did not have pity. A voice was heard, but a body was not seen because of the fire and the anguish. And Ezra said, “Who are they?” The angels said, “They were brought down by lust all their days, they did not receive strangers, they did not give alms; they

took unjustly the things of others for them selves; they had an evil desire; therefore, they are in anguish.” And Ezra said, “Lord, have mercy on the sinners!”

And he walked as before and he saw in an obscure place and immortal worm, its magnitude he was not able to reckon. And in front of its mouth stood many sinners, and when it drew a breath, like flies they entered into its mouth; then when it exhaled, they all exited a different color. And Ezra said, “Who are they?” And they said. “They were full of every bad thing and they went about without confession or penitence.”

And he saw a person witting on a fiery throne, and his counselors stood around him in the fire, and they served him from the fire and out of every side. And Ezra said, “Who is that?” And the angels said, “That man, whose name is Herod, was king for a long time, who, in Bethlehem of Judea, slew the infant males on account of the Lord.” And Ezra said, “Lord judge a right judgment!”

And he walked and saw men who were bound and the angels of hell were pricking their eyes with thorns. And Ezra said, “Who are they?” The angels said, “They showed strange paths to those wandering.” Ezra said, “Lord, have mercy on the sinners!” And he saw virgins with five-hundred-pound neck irons on, as if near death, coming to the west. And Ezra said, “Who are they?” And the angels said, “They violated their virginity before marriage.” And there was a multitude of old men, lying prostrate, and over them molten iron and lead being poured. And he said, “Who are they?” And the angels said, “They are the doctors of the Law who confuses baptism and the law of the Lord, because they were teaching with words, but they did not spur on to work; and in this they are judged.?” And Ezra said, “Lord have mercy on the sinners!”

And he saw visions of a furnace, against the setting sun, burning with great fire, into which were sent many kings and princes of this world; and many thousands of poor people were accusing them and saying, “They, through their power. Wounded us and dragged free men into servitude.” And he saw another furnace, burning with pitch and sulfur, into which sons were cast who acted wretchedly at the hands of their parents and caused injury by means of their mouth. And he saw in a most obscure place another furnace burning, into which many women were cast. And he said, “Who are they?” And the angels said, “They had sons in adultery and killed them” And those little ones themselves accused them, saying, “Lord, the souls which you gave to us these (women) took away.” And he said, “Who are they?” And the angels said, “They killed their sons.” And Ezra said, “Lord, have mercy on the sinners!”

Then Michael and Gabriel came and said to him, “Come into heaven!” And Ezra said, “As my Lord lives, I may not come until; I see every judgment of sinners.” And they led him downward in to the infernal regions beyond the fourteenth level. And he saw lions and little dogs lying around fiery flames. And the just came through them and they crossed over into Paradise. And he saw many thousands of the just and their habitations were the most splendid of any time.

And after he saw this, he was lifted up into heaven, and he came to a multitude of angels, and they said to him, “Pray to the Lord for the sinners,” And they put him down within the sight of the Lord. And he said, “Lord, have mercy on the sinners!” And the Lord said, “Ezra, let them receive according to their works.” And Ezra said, “Lord, you have shown more clemency to the animals. Which eat the grass and have not returned you praise, than to us; they die and have no sin; however, you torture us, living and dead.” And the Lord said, “In my image I have formed man and I have commanded that they not sin and they sinned; therefore they are in torments. And the elect are those who go into eternal rest on account of confession, penitence, and largesse in almsgiving.” And Ezra said, “Lord, what do the just do in order that they may not enter into judgment?” And the Lord said to him “(just as) the servant who performed well for his master will receive liberty, so too (will) the just in the kingdom of heaven.” Amen..

And after he saw this, he was lifted up into heaven, and he came to a multitude of angels, and they said to him, 'pray to the Lord for the sinners.' And they put him down within the sight of the Lord. And he said, 'Lord, have mercy on the sinners!' And the Lord said, 'Ezra, let them receive according to their works.' And

Ezra said, 'Lord, you have shown more clemency to the animals, which eat the grass and have not returned you praise, than to us; they die and have no sin; however, you torture us, living and dead.' And the Lord said, 'In my image I have formed man and I have commanded that they may not sin and they sinned; therefore they are in torment. And the elect are those who go into eternal rest on account of confession, penitence, and largesse in almsgiving.' And Ezra said, 'Lord, what do the just do in order that they may not enter in judgment?' And the Lord said to him, '(Just as) the servant who performed well for his master will receive liberty, so too (will) the just in the kingdom of heaven.' Amen. ((J.R. Mueller and G.A. Robins, "Vision of Ezra," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1, edited by James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983), 590)

**521 AD: Translated By Thomas Kollampampil 2008**  
**Jacob of Sarug (451 -521 AD), Syriac Church Father**  
**Jacob of Sarug's Homilies on the Resurrection**  
**The Metrical Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug**

General Editor Managing Editor  
Sebastian P. Brock George A. Kiraz  
Fascicle 5

**Jacob of Sarug's Homilies on the Resurrection**  
Translated With Introduction By Thomas Kollampampil  
Gorgias Press 2008

**Homily on the Great Sunday of the Resurrection**

**Supplication For The Grace To Speak Of The Lord's Victory**

On the great day of yours, in which the whole creation rejoices,  
allow me to speak abundantly about your resurrection.  
On the feast that gladdened both the angels and the disciples  
make me also joyful by your gift to sing about you.  
O Valiant One who ascended brilliant from within the tomb;  
Let me speak about you, concerning your victory filled with wonder.  
On your great feast heaven is glad and earth exults  
because in you heaven and earth, that were at enmity, were reconciled.

**The Sunday Of Resurrection: The Day Of Light, Life And Renewal**

This is the day in which the generations that were worn out were renewed  
and in the resurrection they came into existence after they had fallen.  
It is the first day in which the creation took beginning  
and behold, again from it life began to be transmitted.  
On this day<sup>3</sup> the world began to be established  
and now behold, on it again it began to be renewed.  
On this day the Lion's whelp crouched over death  
and torn it into pieces in its den and brought out the prey gathered by it.  
On this day Light has shone forth amidst darkness  
and the resurrection stood holding the beginning of the new world.  
Today Life began to tread under foot the region of death  
and set up mile-stones on the fearful road so that it should not fail again.  
This is the feast in which the walls of Sheol were uprooted;  
because the slaughtered King entered into it [Sheol] and subjugated it and forced a passage through them  
[the walls of Sheol].  
Today is the first (of days) in which the First-Born rose up from among the dead



so that the race of His mother might be raised up into the land of His Father.  
 On this day the crucifiers who guarded the tomb were ashamed,  
 because the Mighty-One rose up and the bars of Sheol<sup>5</sup> did not withstand in His presence.  
 This is the day that carries all good tidings  
 so that it should console the sorrowful disciples who were mourning.  
 On this feast the disciples left behind their hiding places.  
 Then the perturbed (disciples) seized by exultation made haste to the tomb, the bridal chamber.  
 Today the lambs which were scattered have gathered together,  
 because the Shepherd has risen up and the wolves fled and the herdsmen gathered themselves.  
 On this day (there was) mourning for the band of Caiaphas,  
 and exultation for the company of Simon, which had been sorrowful.  
 On this day the heart of the women disciples became joyful  
 because they saw as a Gardener the One who makes everything grow (risen) from the sepulchre  
 Today the banner of life has been set up in the place of death  
 and the clamour of watchers and the apostles was heard on it.  
 Today the ranks trampled Sheol, which was broken through  
 and its walls fell, and the way for the groups came into being.  
 On this day let us ask death, where is your sting?  
 Or, where is the victory of Sheol which has been conquered?  
 On this feast the head of the apostolic group is exalted  
 because they [the Apostles] saw the slaughtered Teacher raised up as He promised.  
 Today the Scribes armed themselves with calumny  
 because the Valiant One rose up and they falsely accused Him (saying), "He is stolen away."  
 On this day the company of Annas put on mourning,  
 and consolation entered the beloved company of John.  
 On this day let teaching stand up with confidence,  
 because He is the head and fulfilment of preaching.

### **The New Creation And Life In The Resurrection**

The resurrection of the Son is a new creation<sup>8</sup> to the whole world,  
 and the world is new on account of it [the resurrection] and hence it the world] is beyond sufferings.  
 From His resurrection life reigned over mortals,  
 and we have truly stripped off the old order by His death.  
 The Mighty One rose up and He made us, those who were thrown down, rise up with Him.  
 He descended alone, but with many He ascended from the tomb.  
 The day before yesterday Scribes were mocking at Him [saying], "Save Yourself,"  
 and today the watchers are kissing His tomb which He has left and gone out.  
 Yesterday the Dead One was lying concealed and silent in the habitation of Sheol  
 but today He is alive and gives life to the dead and raises all to life.  
 The day before yesterday, lance, gall and vinegar and crucifixion,  
 but today glory and clamour of the watchers with praise.  
 The day before yesterday the Only-Begotten placed His soul in the hands of His Father  
 but today He assumed it [the soul] for He has authority as He commands all.  
 Yesterday He had mounted the wood of crucifixion,  
 but today there is strength, resurrection of the dead and power.  
 The day before yesterday Simon repeatedly renounced (saying) that he does not know Him  
 but today he runs to see His tomb because He was raised up.  
 The Friday of the sufferings prepared ambushes for the apostolic group;  
 but on Sunday, a new vision and cheerfulness.  
 Yesterday the King was held in sleep in Sheol,  
 but today He woke up and stood like a man who has shaken off his wine.  
 The other day there were sufferings and sorrow for the women disciples

but today exultation because they were seeing Him as the Gardener.  
On the sorrowful Sabbath that Free-Born was among the dead,  
but on Sunday He was escorted about by the companies of watchers.  
Friday scattered the apostolic group in desolation,  
but today has given joy to, and gathered together the company of the disciples.  
Yesterday the apostles were lying in concealment,  
but today they went out to see the resurrection with wonder.  
The other day (they had) to flee, to be scattered, and to hide themselves,  
but today to run, to be gathered together and to bring the tidings.

### **The False Accusers And The Rejectors Of The Truth**

The guards who guarded the tomb of the Lion's Whelp were ashamed,  
because He had roared in the region of the dead and its foundations trembled.  
The priests are despicable in as much as they accused falsely the truth about the story of the Son,  
and neither did they believe in Him that He is the Son of God when He rose up.  
If they were diligent to seek out the truth,  
once He had risen, how did they accuse Him iniquitously?  
Why did they give money to the guards to say that He was stolen away,  
and that (fact) which happened, they did hide, lest it should be spoken of?  
The guards shouted, "His disciples came and stole Him."  
but (the fact that) the angels came down, why was this (matter) suppressed like the other?  
And if they did not believe the apostles who were true,  
about the angels who visited His tomb, why were they doubtful?  
Why was a bribe offered to the guards,  
and they were ordered not to reveal what had happened?  
They are deceitful and calumny is found in them,  
and all of them stand against the truth in perversion.  
They rejected the Son falsely along the whole course of His activity  
because they were against Him (both) before He suffered and after He was risen.  
They were saying to Him, "Save yourself and we shall believe in you,"  
but when they heard that He was alive, they played false and rejected, failing to believe (Him).  
"If you are the Son of God, descend from the Cross,"  
the fact that He rose up from the tomb is greater (than the other), but still they hate Him.  
They bound the Son and carried Him and placed Him in the house of the departed;  
but the Mighty One rose up and broke the gates of Sheol.  
They had rolled in a big stone in front of Him out of their hatred,  
but a watcher stood there, rolled it away and overturned it and reproved them.

### **Sons Of Light, The True Witnesses Of The Resurrection**

From the reading let us learn the story of the Son of God;  
and let us despise the infidels who crucified Him, seeing how much they accused Him falsely.  
There are true witnesses for His resurrection and it is proper for them  
to speak about His resurrection with great wonder.  
Let the radiant sons of light come with their discourses.  
Let the apostles of truth speak of His story as they perceived it.  
Let the voices of the sons of thunder come abundantly  
and impart the story of the Son to the earth with their trumpets.  
As they have seen let them narrate to us how He rose up,  
because it is fair for them to tell the truth for they are aware of it.  
From John let the Church hear about the resurrection  
of the Chief Shepherd who gathered His sheep that were scattered.  
Today let that disciple swift in running speak;

because he beheld His resurrection, let him narrate it just as he saw it.  
From a reading of him we shall grasp the order of the truths,  
and how they came to pass, let him tell of them, in their various manners.

### **Mary Magdalene's Visit To The Tomb Of The Lord**

On the Sunday, while still dark, Mary went out,  
and saw the tomb, with the stone removed and its door opened.  
And she hurried and came to John and Simon  
and with sadness announced what she had seen.  
"They have carried away my Lord and I do not know where they have placed Him;  
He is not in the tomb, and who has stolen Him, I am not aware of."  
The Mighty One rose from the tomb with great power;  
and Mary thought that people had stolen Him as though He were weak.  
O blessed woman, who is able to steal away Light or conceal the great Ocean and not be uncovered?  
Who was concealing the Sun in his lap and people do not see Him,  
or confines all the brilliance in the palm of his hands secretly?  
Who was able to carry the Flame in his bosom,  
and change it to a place in concealment and is not unmasked?  
Nobody has stolen the Mighty One of the ages, do not be afraid.  
He broke His bonds and conquered death and rose up from the tomb.  
"They have carried away my Lord and I do not know where they have placed Him."  
The disciples heard and hurried to see where they have taken (Him).

### **Simon And John, Holiness And Virginity, Running To The Tomb**

Simon went out on the road of the tomb with John, and the beloved young (disciple) overtook the old one full of splendour.  
The disciples ran to seek the Great One among the dead,  
but they were not aware of the fact that He had risen valiantly.  
Swift turbulence took hold of them on account of their trembling,  
for they reckoned the Mighty One to be stolen away as they had been told.  
John ran overtaking Simon and reached the tomb:  
the young virgin (surpassing) that holy head of the disciples.  
Holiness and virginity have taken up running, but the swift wings of virginity were first.  
The undefiled flew swiftly and overtook  
but he [the undefiled]<sup>4</sup> did not enter until the one full of sanctity came.  
John arrived at the door of the tomb of the Bridegroom, the King,  
but he did not enter until the perfect Simon came.  
He was looking for the one who was carrying the keys of the treasury to come,  
so that he should first open and enter as the steward. John stood like a wise man but did not enter,  
so that the due order of proclamation might not be confused.  
He waited for the head of the disciples to come, who had been left behind by him,  
so that he, the first, should see and give witness to his resurrection.  
Simon Peter [Kepha], head of the foundations, came and entered before  
him, so that he should be placed as the first upon the building of the apostolic tradition.  
The young one in spirit had kept the order for the honourable elder  
so that he should become the first, as the foundation for the proclamation.  
Then Simon came and reached the tomb and entered first  
and then entered John too following Simon.

### **The Exchange Of 'The Garments Of The Dead' For 'The Garments Of Glory'**

The glorious friends of the bridegroom entered where the Bridegroom slept.  
They saw the couch of His sleep, which was vacant

because He had left it behind and gone out.

The Lord of the marriage feast had been raised valiantly,

and when they sought Him they did not see I-Him on His couch.

They saw the linen clothes placed in the tomb, because they were not needed to be worn after the Resurrection.

He was clothed with the glory of the Resurrection from within the tomb and He left behind Him the garments of the dead as well as their trappings.

In the new world, no one arises with his clothes;

He has something else to put on, for which he is worthy.

There are garments of glory for the Resurrection, which are kept for it and from them is provided to the one who attains to it to put on.

The garments of the earth remain on the earth, on the dust, and the body clothes itself in glory and rises up from perdition.

Great is the glory of the garments of the children of Resurrection; they are clothed neither in linen nor in wool after the Resurrection.

Our Lord left behind His clothes in the tomb when He came out in order to demonstrate the totality of His resurrection in the due order to those who are worthy of it.

### **The Linen Clothes, A Sign To The Disciples And An Object Of Fright For Death**

The disciples entered and saw the linen clothes as they had been placed, which He had left when He went out alive from the tomb.

The Sleeping One woke up and rose up from the sleep in which He had been encompassed, and He shed off from himself the garments of the dead in the abode of Sheol.

He rose up gently, laid aside the linen clothes in which He was wrapped, and He clothed himself with the garments of glory from the house of His Father and went out.

They saw the linen clothes and the headband that was on His head, which was rolled and placed, not with the linen clothes but apart.

As from sleep the Valiant One shook himself without dismay and quietly He had loosened His face which was girded round.

He removed the sorrowful veil of the dead with which He was wrapped, and He rolled up the headband and set it aside where He had slept.

He folded up the headband and set it apart as He was going out, so that He might show that He was not terrified by destruction.

His sleep fled and He uncovered His face that was covered up and He placed His clothes in the region of the dead in which He was reclining.

He was not agitated when He was going out of the darkness, because His linen clothes too He folded up quietly and left them.

He constituted it as an object of fright for death in the garments that He left, so that on seeing them it [death] might tremble at the Resurrection."

The nail of life He fixed in Sheol and went out from it, so that its [Sheol's] gates" might be shaken everyday at its fall.

In the middle of the tomb He left His clothes and went out and departed; so that all who should come and see might believe that He had risen.

He left His garments so that they might be a sign for His disciples that He was raised up and had conquered death and risen up from the tomb.

### **The Victorious Resurrection Of The Mighty One**

He left behind in the tomb the infirmity which entered with Him and clothed manly strength in the rising up as a result of the Resurrection.

The burden of sufferings He set aside from Him together with the linen clothes, and without corruption He rose up from the tomb in great power.

He stripped off the wounds and the stripes on His back with which He was clothed,  
and the borrowed garments which Joseph<sup>15</sup> gave Him when He entered.  
He gave rest to the pains which He carried on Golgotha,  
Because the wearied one had slept, and taken rest and was woken up with manly power.  
He set aside from Him the great burden of the crucifixion,  
sufferings, and pains and the wounds and rose up as the Mighty One.  
He took away from himself the mantle of the dead that had entered with Him  
and rolled it up and placed it so that it might remain there in the tomb.  
He removed from His face the spittle and mocking together with the headband,  
and He cast off from himself sufferings and dishonour and rose up victorious.  
The Father visited Him and gave Him (His) hand in the darkness.  
Then He did not leave Him to see corruption in the abode of Sheol.  
He slept from the sufferings, and left the weariness of crucifixion,  
and He had taken rest in the sleep and woke up suddenly with manly might in the Resurrection.  
His face was uncovered which had been covered as if (He were) weak  
and like a mighty man He trampled death under foot there in its place.

### **The Believing Disciples As The Advocates Of The Truth**

The disciples saw that the Slaughtered One was not there in the tomb  
and they believed that He had risen, and they became confirmed in the things revealed.  
They saw the covering of borrowed garments placed aside by Him,  
and they had perceived that He had clothed himself in glory and manly power.  
They saw the resurrection and they became confirmed on account of its effects;  
and they clothed themselves in power so that they might become mouth-pieces for His proclamation.  
They saw that the region of death had been trodden under foot at the Resurrection of the dead.  
Then they returned to become witnesses in the world about the Resurrection.  
They saw that birthpangs had struck Sheol and it gave birth to Life  
and they accepted upon themselves to become advocates of the Truth to the new world.  
They returned from the tomb with confidence to their companions  
while the proclamation about His victory was resounding within them.  
The lambs spoke about the Shepherd together with their brethren  
(saying), "He has risen up with power"; let us have no fear of the robbers.  
Consolation rose up among the disciples and it made them joyful,  
because they were confirmed in the Resurrection of the Slaughtered Master.  
The story of Life imparted its voice into the apostolic group.  
The tidings of death were put out by the Resurrection that was proclaimed.  
The Resurrection of the Son set the peoples free from error.  
Blessed is the Slaughtered One who gave us life through His crucifixion.  
End of the homily on the Resurrection of our Lord.

### **521 AD**

**Jacob of Serug (451 AD-521 AD)**

**Homily "On That Chariot That Ezekiel The Prophet Saw"**

**2002 article by Alexander Golitzin, Marquette University**

**The Image And Glory Of God In Jacob Of Serug's Homily, "On That Chariot That Ezekiel The Prophet Saw"**

Based on a paper given at the North American Patristics Society Conference, May 1998, at Loyola, Chicago,  
and under review for St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly

### **The Homily on the Chariot**

The homily is very long, indeed, between thirteen and fourteen hundred lines and running to over sixty pages in Paulus Bedjan's edition of Jacob's homilies [22]. If length is any indication of the importance a writer accords his topic, then Jacob very clearly thought Ezekiel's vision rated quite special attention. I myself believe, although this would have to be the subject of another paper, that he is directing his words to certain among his listeners who were attracted by the idea of ascending to the heavenly throne, like Enoch in the old apocalypses, and, if one friend of mine who is more versed than I in matters Jacobean is correct in understanding his audience as primarily monks [23], then we are in fact in the presence of those ancient currents of ascetical mysticism which are of particular interest to me. As I just noted, however, Jacob sets his face against the notion of ascent, and his opposition to this tradition comprises what I would venture to call the secondary theme, or even the subtext, of his homily. The latter's first concern, though, is to link the chariot vision with the divine economy in Christ.

With these preliminary remarks in mind, let me proceed to a sketch of the homily and then to a few concluding remarks. The whole huge piece revolves around three fundamental texts: Ezekiel 1, especially verses 26-28; Genesis 1, again particularly verses 26-27; and, as noted above, Phillipians 2:6-7. The link between all three is the Syriac term, dmuta or "likeness". In Jacob's Syriac Bible, the Peshitta, this is the single word which is used to render at once its Hebrew equivalent, demut, found in both Gen. 1:26 and Ezk. 1:26 and 28, and the morphe, "form", of Phil. 2:6-7. Jacob is the only the patristic author I know of to dwell at such length on the linkage of these three texts, though he is obviously helped by the translation he used.

### **Divine Transcendence, the Imago Dei, and Macrocosm/Microcosm**

The homily opens with what is for Jacob a typically apophatic note, stressing the mystery of God's transcendence, the "hidden One" Who is "seated on the unsearchable chariot" and is infinitely above the angels, the "assemblies of the sons of light" (543-4) [24]. Again typically, Jacob begs for the gift of "a new mouth" in order to offer fitting praise: "Lord most high, my mouth is insufficient for Your praise: make a new mouth for me that it may proclaim Your song" (544:18-19) [25] It is at this point that the first note of the imago dei appears, that is, that it is precisely the office of the human tongue -- or, indeed, as we might say, of the mind -- to offer up worship. While God could have made the dumb creation sing His praises, this task has been set aside specifically for the speech-endowed image. As Jacob writes:

Let everything created abide in what is its own, as at its creation:  
The sea for fish and the earth that it may bear the sons of men.  
And the image with speech, that it may be stirred all the day to Your praise.  
The very pulse of my created being requires Your praise (546:2-8) [26].

In the next section of over a hundred lines, Jacob moves in effect to a paraphrase and meditation on the opening lines of Genesis. After dwelling again at length on God's infinity and unsearchability (546:12-7:18), he moves on to consider the divine power, haila, and sign, remza, which uphold and govern the universe after bringing it into being from nothing (547:18-552:2) [27]. God's power carries the cosmos like the force of a man's arm sustains a stone thrown into the air (552:3-3:19). This similitude allows Jacob to bring into play the ancient theme of the human being as microcosm: "The Power abides in the creation", he writes, "like a soul [abides] in its members" (553:20 and ff.) [28]. Here I should add that, at least on occasion, the term "power" is more than simply a way for Jacob of speaking about God ad extra. It sometimes overlaps with the Second Person of the Trinity [29]. Put another way, I take him as engaging in something very like the old Logos theology of the Apologists and Alexandrines, with the Word of God acting as the divine immanence and power at work in creation, indeed, as almost a kind of world soul [30]. Microcosmos and macrocosmos, or anthropos and makranthropos, reflect one another, and Jacob thus goes on to speak of the human intellect, hauna, specifically as the "image [tsalma] of the Great Being" (556:2 ff.) [31]. Both, the image and the original, are not confined by their respective bodies:

Heaven does not contain the Lord, although He dwells in it,

Nor does the body contain the intellect, though it soujourns in it. (556:10-11)

If the body does not contain the intellect, it still seems to be the appointed place for the latter to gather itself and meet God. I venture this thought, which Jacob does not elaborate on in this homily (or in any other of his works that I have read), because it is a fundamental theme in the Christian spiritual tradition to which I think he belonged, and for which there were many precedents in both Syriac and Greek Christian literature. We shall come back, briefly, to this note later on in the essay. For now, however, there is the matter of Ezekiel's markabto.

### **Ezekiel and the Chariot Vision: A Great Mystery**

The fallen intellect's penchant for travelling outside the bounds in which it ought to remain -- "If your intellect obeys you", Jacob writes, "confine it to the place of the body, that it may gaze within" (557:9-10) -- provides our homilist with the opening for his discussion of Ezekiel's vision. In the prophet's case, the heavens were truly opened. Trembling, Jacob says, he beheld the fiery angels and

The high throne...and, glorious upon the backs  
Of the ministering cherubim of fire who bear it,  
The wondrous Glory ...the Son of the Creator,  
Who is seated there on the high place...(558:15-19)

Let me pause here to note the clear identification of the Second Person with the divine Glory that Ezekiel sees on the chariot throne of the theophany, "in appearance as the likeness of a man" (Ezk 1:26, kmar'eh demut adam). In this instance, the Syriac word for "glory" that Jacob uses is shubha, but he deploys the more technical terms, shekinta (the Aramaic equivalent of the Rabbinic shekinah), iqara (the Aramaic term which usually renders the Hebrew kavod, "glory", in the Peshitta), and rabbuta (majesty or, more literally, "greatness") in other passages of the homily, just as we have seen him identify the Word, at least occasionally, with the haila or power [32]. At this point Jacob sounds a theme that he will come back to, the secondary one or subtext I noted above. The vision of the heavenly throne and its ministering angels, he writes, which the "questing intellect" seeks is dreadful and terrible while, on the other hand, "the table of the King is full of blessing for whomever reclines at it" (559:15-16). Not for us humans, in other words, is the vision of the chariot assigned the angels, but rather the altar of the Eucharist -- though perhaps also suggested here is the idea that the human being is him- or herself to become a "table of blessings" for others [33].

Ezekiel is then interrogated about his vision, and Jacob paraphrases the biblical passage at length, dwelling with particular gusto on the strange forms of the "living creatures", the haywata (Hebrew hayyot), who carry and accompany the throne, and who appear so prominently in some Old Testament pseudepigrapha as well as in the Jewish merkabah literature [34], together with the appearance of the Glory (here iqara) as a man seated on the sapphire throne (560:5-563:2). How then, Jacob wonders at considerable length, are we to interpret this extraordinary vision, unique in the prophetic books (563:3-568:13)? Not, he insists, by "prying into that Lamp [i.e., the Son] of the Great Light". The vision, the forms which the angels take on within it, and the appearance of the Lamp and Glory as a man, properly overwhelm rational thought. Only learned fools would seek to explain it in the terms of the worldly wise. So, our preacher says, he will "not promise an explanation, but rather wonder" before the paradox of "the Word of God mounted on the cherubim" even when it is He, the Son, Who is in truth the One Who carries both them and all creation (568:14-569:17).

### **The Mystery of the Incarnate Word Who Came to Reconcile Heaven and Earth**

Although he promises no explanation, Jacob does, of course, set out to deliver one. It comes in two parts. In part one, we start by touching on the very important -- and ancient -- theme of the tie between the worship of heaven and earth. Jacob begins with the worship of heaven. The chariot is explained as having been created for the sake of the angels, since otherwise God, Who in Himself is hidden even from them, would have given the sons of light cause for confusion and alarm. I think the passage worth quoting at some length:

And they would have been looking in all directions in order to see Him.  
And the assembly of the choirs on high would have been scattered by this,  
And the powers would have disintegrated without any order [taksis],  
And debates would have multiplied even there [i.e., on high], with this one  
saying to that one:

"Where is He? Where is the exalted One who is hidden, that we may praise  
Him in His place?" [cf. Ezk 3:12]

For this reason He harnessed the chariot and made the place known  
...and depicted a place for his Presence/Glory [shekinta], that there it might dwell,  
And He made it like a chariot, that on it He might be carried in state,  
That the whole vision of the heavenly ones might be concentrated, caught up,  
and tied

To that one place where His banner is set...

And lightning and fearful radiance issue from the chariot,  
to assemble the heavenly ones to great praise...

They all cry out to one another at the entry to His place.

All the choirs gather and stand at the gate of the King...

[and the angels] all look toward that secondary place...

And are soothed by it, and shout praise before His Glory [iqara].

(570:6-571:19) [35]

The angels would have been without means for praise had God not provided them with the "place" of the markabta, which is thus a fundamental part -- I would read it as the so-to-speak sanctuary or nave -- of the heavenly temple or palace (haikla, equivalent of the Hebrew hekhhal). Here again, we touch on traditions that extend back into the Second Temple era [36].

Our preacher then links the worship in the "place" on high to earth when he suggests that Ezekiel was granted his vision of the heavenly liturgy because he was in exile, mourning the loss of the Temple on Zion and of its services, and grieved by the proud display of Israel's foes. Thus the vision assures him that, "even if God's ministry in the land of Judah had ceased: See! His praise thunders richly among the cherubim!" (572:9-4:6, here 573:21-22). The sight of, in effect, the most sacred furniture of the celestial temple -- thus consider the likely relationship between the kapporet, "mercy seat", of the Ark and the chariot throne of the vision [37] -- comforts the prophet for the (temporary) loss of its terrestrial copy. Jacob will return in order to expand at greater length on this note of the linkage between the worship of heaven and earth, and of the "place" where God is to be sought and found.

For now, however, it is the prophetic vocation of the son of Buzi which draws Jacob's attention. In his understanding, all biblical prophecy touches on "the mysteries [raze] of the Son of God" (574:10). The use of the term, "mysteries", here refers not to some esoteric doctrine of Jesus, which Dr. Bondi seems to think is the case in her section on Jacob's "secret Jesus", but rather to the divine economy accomplished in Christ [38]. Mystery, raza, in this homily, as in all of Jacob's work, together with Aphrahat and Ephrem before him, is an Aramaic word taken from the lexicon of apocalyptic literature, where it signaled the secrecy of the divine counsel which is revealed to the seer, as, for example, in Daniel 2:18 ff. In the Pauline and deutero-Pauline epistles, such as most notably in Eph. 1:9 and Col. 1:26, its Greek translation, mysterion, is deployed to signal Christ, Who is God's intent or purpose for us and for all creation, the hitherto hidden goal and summation of the divine plan. This is then the sense in which it is used by the Syrian writers, who deploy it to signify the hidden meaning of the Old Testament. It is the justification for what Origen would call the "mystical" or "spiritual" sense of the Hebrew scriptures, or what we might call, simply, the christological reading [39]. It is therefore through the Son of God, Jacob says, that the Father spoke to all the prophets, and it is the same Son who is Himself the content of their message: "the mystery [raza] of all the mysteries [raze] of prophecy" (574:11-16). Ezekiel's vision is no exception to this rule: it was Christ whom the prophet saw



on the chariot, just as Daniel had seen Him "borne on the clouds". Here we arrive at the literal and architectural center of the homily, the point where all three texts I noted earlier converge. Quoting Jacob:

Daniel saw Him borne on the clouds [Dan 7:13], and coming  
As a man to judge the kings and their empires.  
Ezekiel, too, sees Him on the high throne, [He Who] was also God,  
That likeness [dmuta, here obviously rendering morphe] of the servant that He assumed within the womb [of Mary]  
Was whispered on the wings of the heavenly beings (575:11-16).

The manifestation of the Son and Glory of God in human form signals the paradox and promise of the Incarnation, and, in Jacob's insistence on that paradox of the one Son, we can also discern a certain echo of the Christological controversy of the era. Our preacher is nothing if not insistent on the unity of God and man in Christ, as opposed to those -- dyophysites like Nestorius and his ilk -- who divide and "number" the one Son. The "appearance as a man" and, simultaneously, "as God in great splendor", is "the way", he tells us, "that was trodden by the Son of God, both divinely and humanly, though He is One" (576:12-13). Turning then to interpret the fire above and below the loins of the human figure in Ezekiel's vision (Ezk 1:27), Jacob asks:

Why was it necessary for the prophet to repeat [the description of] the vision,  
Then To say "above" and repeat [the same] about [what is] below in his prophecy?  
He wanted to show the higher and lower [aspects] of the Son of God,  
How that supernal Being had become earthly,  
And that He had become a mediator [cf. I Tim 2:5], because He stood in the  
midst between the [two] sides [i.e., heaven and earth]  
In order to make peace [cf. Eph 2:14] between those and high and those below.  
Thus He girded himself with peace in the prophecy,  
For he [i.e., Ezekiel] saw something in the likeness of a [rain]bow in the clouds accompanying Him,  
A sign of the peace that He would come and make with those below. (576:18- 577:4)

Here Jacob links the rainbow shown to Noah as sign of peace after the destruction of the Flood (Gen 9:11-16) with the rainbow shades of the theophany in Ezk 1:28. Both signal the peace, shaina, which the one Son wills to effect between the realms of heaven and earth, angels and human beings, and thus, more importantly, His overcoming of the estrangement between God and humanity that had resulted from the Fall:

And that strife which the serpent had started among the trees [of Eden]  
He [the Son] will remove, and the quarrel will cease that had been inflamed.  
And the hidden Father and the great Adam, who were at enmity,  
Will be reconciled in the Son who stands as the mediator.  
The whole Gospel of Christ, Jacob concludes, is thus depicted in the chariot vision (578:3-15).

### **Kenosis and the Imago Dei vs. Jewish (and Christian?) Mystical Anthropomorphism**

#### **Reconciling Prophets with Apostles: the Incarnation as Explanation of the Prophecy**

The second half of the homily is devoted to the elaboration of this central point, often in fascinating and moving fashion. Space allows me only to touch on a few significant moments before moving on to Jacob's and then my own conclusions. The first is, again, another clear allusion to, and borrowing from, Phil. 2:6-7.

"Look closely at Him now [on the chariot]", Jacob tells the prophet:  
... Who is splendid in His great glory,  
And acknowledge that this is He when He has lowered Himself to poverty...  
With this type that you have been shown upon the chariot,

The land sees His humility as He delivers it.  
By these faces, which He has now asked that you be shown,  
In them you will see Him when He has taken on a body in truth.  
To this condition your Lord came down when He emptied Himself,  
That the world might see Him in the form [dmuta] of a servant.  
This is He who shall come in the flesh, openly [or, manifestly],  
That in Him the human race may be set free from slavery.  
The revelation depicted the whole path of the Son of God,  
And it taught Ezekiel the mystery [of the Incarnation] through that  
chariot. (583:3-18)

If it were not a revelation of the Incarnation, Jacob continues, then the prophet's vision would have been simply ignored and, even, inexplicable:

Our Lord manifested Himself in the world when He came to it,  
And illumined the face of prophecy, with the result that everyone recognized  
it [i.e., prophecy, as true]...  
For if God had not appeared as a man,  
Ezekiel would not have been renowned for these riches,  
And people would not have comprehended the scroll of his prophecy...  
Yet now, because the Son of God came to the world,  
Ezekiel is glorified who saw His mystery (584:3-4, 10-14).  
Without the coming of Christ, the human figure on the chariot would have been cause for a genuine,  
theological scandal, and rightly criticized for giving shape to God who is infinite, without any limit or form:  
And it would have been asked, "why did he see Him as a man  
"Who, without any likeness, is glorious in the hiddenness of His high place?"  
"What is this, that he saw the cherubim in great splendor,  
"And yet [saw] the Lord of the cherubim as a man?  
"This appearance is [too] small to be about God,  
"That a throne should hold Him Whose Glory even the heavens do not contain".  
(585:2-7) [40]

I think that Jacob is also taking deliberate aim here at a contemporary, anthropomorphic interpretation not only of Ezekiel's vision, but of the God of the revelation, and we will see him addressing this issue quite openly in a moment. Right now, though, and with regard to the section of his homily under discussion here, I should like to underline a second reconciliation -- or, rather, a harmony -- that he wishes to establish, and that runs through his other works as well: the agreement of the Old Testament prophecy with the New Testament preaching of the Apostles, and, with that agreement, the justice of the Church's claim to the inheritance of Israel:

Because the prophecy depicted His [Christ's] type,  
The apostleship also gave the truth of His body to the world.  
It is proclaimed [both] by the prophecy and the apostleship  
That He Who was, is He Who is embodied.

While those younger in the Spirit [the Apostles] declared that He had become a man,  
The elders [i.e., the prophets], too, witnessed that they had seen Him as a man.  
From the testimony of prophecy and of the apostleship,  
Who is it who flees, except an enemy of the faith? (586:21-587:11) [41]

**A Polemical Exchange with Jewish Anthropomorphism: The Incarnate Word as the True and Original Image of God**

The phrase, "enemy of the faith", leads Jacob naturally -- in his own mind, at least -- to an interesting, polemical section addressed to an unnamed Jew, in which I think we catch allusions to the traditions attaching to the mystical vision of the body of God in rabbinic circles, the shi'ur qomah, or "measurement of the stature (of the divine body)", texts which are associated with the merkavah literature [42]. For Jacob, the interpretation of Ezekiel's vision in accordance this latter tradition is unacceptable for several reasons. By refusing to acknowledge Christ as the meaning of the prophet's Chariot, his Jewish opponent is led first of all into absurdities. The Father's transcendent "hiddenness" is compromised and reduced to human form:

If you do not affirm that the Son of God became a man,  
[then] it was the hidden Father [that] Ezekiel saw on the chariot  
like a human being, if it was not the form of His Only [-Begotten] One...

This leads to a series of sarcastic questions about a literalist reading of the Chariot and its angels:

Well then, were the wheels joined at the axle in order to proceed,  
And were the wings really flying, as you are saying?  
And [was] the throne the prophet saw made of stone,  
And did the whole matter end [with the words] "on the throne like a man"?  
(588:7-589:2)

The last question, whether the prophet's vision was all about seeing a humanlike figure on the cherubic throne, is surely directed against the merkavah tradition, for whose Jewish adepts this was in fact the point and the goal of their proposed mystical ascent to heaven. Jacob instead insists that Ezekiel's chariot was -- and is -- not the end of the story. First of all, I think it clear that he is aware of this Jewish tradition, and, as is arguable from elsewhere in his writings, that he is to some extent in actual conversation with contemporary Jews. His seven Homilies against the Jews, for example, display a broad knowledge of traditions current among them, and in one case feature what appears to be a direct appeal to, as it were, the "Jew in the street" over the heads of the latter's rabbinic teachers:

The scribes of your people have hidden the reality from you;  
and your teachers have not openly spoken the truth.  
Consciously or unconsciously, they have hidden the reality,  
and they do not show from the texts [of Scripture] the image of the Son.  
Ask them!...

Say, "O, Rabbi! Show me...  
O Jew! Ask these questions of your teachers.  
Ask, and see what they say about Jesus!  
Judaism [yehoudayuta] is full of lies! [43]

Perhaps there were occasional, Jewish listeners who were drawn to hear the famous preacher, or, perhaps, this is rhetorical display for an exclusively Christian audience, though the latter explanation does not entirely persuade me. The appeal I just quoted seems quite immediate. In any case, and relative to my point about anthropomorphism, Jacob is, secondly, aware of this as both an exegetical option, and -- in the case of the merkavah texts -- as the stated goal of mystical experience. At a couple of points in our homily he himself plays on the shi'ur qomah tradition, as in the lines: "Ezekiel saw the likeness [dmuta] on the chariot/ As a man [a(i)k bar nasha] higher than the summit of the heavens" (591:19-20) [44]. The most striking instance and demonstration of his familiarity with the idea of the vast dimensions of the divine body, however, occurs in his prose homily on the Epiphany. Here he presents John the Baptist as having come to announce that "the Great Body [gushma rabba] has arrived to make itself visible", and to "infuse earnestly into her ears [i.e., of the Church as bride] the grandeur of the Lord [rabbuta d-marya] as well as his own [i.e., John's] smallness". Jacob concludes the relevant section of this homily with the following:

He [the Baptist] wanted to show the bride the loftiness of the stature [rawma d-qumta] of the Bridegroom while instructing her, and said

The sandals of your Betrothed are exalted above my head. As I extend my hands, I am not able to reach their laces...the beauty of His stature [shuphra d-qumteh] is well above my head...as the height is above the abyss, as heaven above the earth. [45]

The repetition here, which I take to be deliberate, of qumta, the precise Syriac equivalent of the Hebrew qomah, is itself striking, and moreso the accompanying image of Christ's enormous size, with the Baptist shorter than the arch of the Lord's foot, a point which the former then underlines by declaring that the difference between their respective sizes is more absolute than even that startling comparison: Christ's hugeness is to John's littleness "as the height is above the abyss, as heaven is above the earth" (cf., perhaps, Isa 66:1?). Perhaps most telling of all is the setting of these passages within the language of bride and bridegroom, which I would read as at least a partial and, again, deliberate echo of the Song of Songs. If so, this would underline Jacob's conscious play on the Jewish literature of the shi'ur qomah, since the latter tradition specifically linked the mystical vision of the divine body with the bride's enraptured description of the limbs of her beloved in Song of Songs 5:10-16 [46].

But if Jacob knows about these traditions, and is not above playing with them, he still insists on reading the appearance of the human form in Ezekiel's vision as a prophecy of the Son who is coming to be born of the Virgin:

[It is] for this that the chariot came down to the earth,  
That through prophecy it might represent the descent of its Lord.  
And the glorious throne and blue of chastity that [Ezekiel] saw there  
[Is] the womb of Mary, which He [the Lord] kept closed in order to bear  
the Son of God.

Also, that likeness which was seen upon the throne  
[Is] the Son of God who came in the flesh as a man. (589:15-18)

It is of some note, I think, that the blue of the prophet's sapphire throne, which is itself surely an echo of the blue of the pavement beneath the divine throne in the theophany of Ex 24:10, denotes Mary Theotokos. This might suggest the reason for the traditional color -- blue -- most often associated with her in Christian iconography. Certainly Jacob is himself quite clear that the whole "throne and seat upon the chariot...[is] an image of the Virgin Mother" (590:6-7) [47], and we might in our turn recall that "throne" and "chariot" (and even "mountain" -- recalling the theophany at Sinai?) are, both of them, images of the Theotokos regularly deployed in Orthodox hymnography [48].

It is this insistence on God incarnate which is the key to Jacob's argument with the Jew, and therewith to his correction of the merkabah and shi'ur qomah traditions. The divine body is certainly a reality, but it is the body of the Word made flesh, who is also, however, and precisely as incarnate, the prototype of Adam. Here we arrive at Jacob's subsequent reiteration of the theme of the imago dei. All the wonders of Ezekiel's chariot throne, he writes, including the fiery spirits in their strange and terrible forms, the "fire of burning" and the wheels of flame, the crystal and the sapphire, all the heavenly assemblies, are dominated by a human form. The Lord of the angels, Jacob points out, was seen by Ezekiel "as a man". Here, in lines which recall Irenaeus of Lyons centuries earlier, we find Jacob's statement that Adam was created in the likeness of the incarnate Word:

Before creation the Father had drawn the image [tsalma] of His Son,  
And depicted Him, and showed Him how He would shine forth on all the earth.  
The Father gazed at the likeness [dmuta] of His Son, and molded Adam.

Since He was going to give [the Son] to the world, He delineated Him beforehand.  
For this cause He said, "Let Us make man in Our image [tsalma, Gen 1:26]",  
In this same likeness [dmuta] in which Mary gave birth to the Only[-Begotten] One.  
The Father willed to send Him into the world as a man,  
And drew beforehand His form [tsurta], the Great Image [tsalma rabba], in Adam.  
Ezekiel saw the likeness [dmuta] on the chariot  
Like a human being, [seated] above the backs of the heavenly beings. (591:11-20) [49]

Here again we should note the play of the three central texts which I pointed to earlier as the core of the homily: Gen 1:26-7, Ezk 1:26-28, and Phil 2:6-7, with the first two finding their explanation and coherence in the third, the proclamation of the self-emptying and Incarnation of the Son.

### **Visio dei: The Glory and the Image -- Polemic against an Archaic Christian Mysticism?**

I might add that, in view of what we saw above concerning the microcosmos and macrocosmos, anthropos and makranthropos, it makes a kind of humorous sense for Jacob to have remarked earlier on that the "Word sits on the throne [before Ezekiel] in order to get accustomed /To human dimensions" (577:17-18). While he is obviously toying in a playful way with the shi'ur qomah traditions, it is also true that the imagery of the Power as makranthropos, i.e., of the Word investing the cosmos like the soul in a human body, "downsizing", as it were, in order to be incarnate is both ancient and frequent, particularly among Syriac-speaking Christians. We find it, for example, in the Odes of Solomon, in Aphrahat and Ephrem, and in the Syrian-influenced Macarian Homilies [50]. It might well comprise the original force of the kenosis passage of Phil 2:6-7 itself [51]. To be sure, Jacob, as a faithful -- not to say emphatic -- adherent of the Creed of Nicea-Constantinople and the homooousion, is obliged to understand the notion of "the Great One making himself small" in a metaphorical sense, not a literal one, but he is still just as clearly drawing on very old traditions of the imago dei in its relation to the divine Glory, the kevod YHWH [52]. Then, too, the notion that the Second Person particularly, as in the old Logos christology, is already in a sense vested with a body, that is, with the cosmos itself, lends extra force to the imagery here.

With regard to a "mythological", that is, literal reading of the divine body, I must add that I am not so sure that Jacob's debate is exclusively with Jewish exegesis and mysticism. I think, rather, that his remarks were also (or even primarily?) directed to some among his Christian audience who may well have been tempted by -- or, more accurately, who had never abandoned and continued to affirm -- an anthropomorphic understanding of the divine form, as well as a mysticism of ascent similar to the merkavah lore [53]. Criticism of anthropomorphism, perhaps especially in an ascetico-mystical context, together with the insistence on an interiorized reading of the ascent to heaven motif from apocalyptic literature, run together like a kind of crimson thread from the second and third centuries in Clement and Origen of Alexandria, through such fourth-century, monastic writers as Evagrius Ponticus and the Macarian Homilist, and all the way to the fourteenth-century, Byzantine Hesychasts. I have touched on this polemical current in other articles [54], so I shall not dwell on it here, save to note, first, that I find it impossible to believe that all this smoke does not point to some kind of fire. Second, we have only to glance at a couple of Jacob's immediate neighbors and contemporaries around the turn of the sixth century to see that he was not alone in his concerns. The Syrian mystic, Stephen bar Sudaili, presents us with a kind of curious, Christian variant of rabbinic-era, hekhhalot mysticism, while the much better known body of writings, written under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite, directly addresses the issues of both anthropomorphism and of ascent. Let it suffice me here to quote some phrases from the fourth chapter of Dionysius' famous little treatise, The Mystical Theology:

The Cause of all... has neither a body [soma], nor shape [schema], nor form [eidosis]...neither is He a place [topos], nor seen...nor perceived [by the senses]...  
nor is He troubled by material passions...nor is He in need of light...nor does He have, nor is He any of the things which are perceived by the senses. [55]

All four of the Greek terms that I have highlighted are at issue, given their Syriac equivalents (respectively: gushma, eskhema, dmuta/tsurta, and atra), in Jacob's homily. All four (or five) -- body, form, likeness/shape, and place -- are also arguably important from the time of the Second Temple apocalypses, and they are decidedly so in the hekhalot and shi'ur qomah texts. The association of God with light, also highlighted in my text from Dionysius, is likewise fundamental to the earliest biblical theophanies, and it carries right on being so in subsequent Jewish and Christian mystical writings [56]. So far as Jacob is concerned, however, the merkavah is not the last word in divinity. Rather, he insists to his listeners that it is of little or no consequence. God transcends the chariot which, as we saw above, is merely an act of divine condescension for the needs of the angels, the sanctuary of their (created) heavenly temple. But, as for the godhead itself, that "citadel of light" which is the "place" and being of the triune mystery, the "holy of holies" of the divine essence:

There is no chariot there, either to ascend to, or to seek out,  
Nor are there wheels, nor creatures in their [different] kinds  
Where the Trinity dwells in great splendor. (601:1-3) [57]

Secondly, and specifically in reference to the matter of light and fire, Jacob recalls Dionysius' more famous apophaticism:

The place is empty, for it is filled with divinity...

And had [angelic]fire ascended to it, [that fire] would have been burnt up by  
His Breath...

It is not for the spirits or luminaries to be surrounded by Him,  
And neither radiance nor honor enters to live with Him.

Nor does the glory of anything created come nigh Him.

The place is sublime...

The Trinity transcends the word of everything that speaks,  
The divinity is in a place far from all inquirers,

The Father begetting and the Son begotten and the living Spirit:

The Being Whose place no one knows, save He alone. (601:9-602:5) [58]

Thus, a few pages later, we find an express prohibition directed against a mysticism of ascent to the divine chariot: "O Sinner! In your seeking, do not look for Him on high!" (606:3). The prohibition against making a heavenly journey suggests to me that some of Jacob's audience were interested in doing just that.

### **The "Place" of our Encounter with God: the Altar of the Church**

A last highlight, before we move to my concluding remarks, concerns the "place" where Christians ought to be looking to encounter the splendor of divinity. This is, again, Jacob's subtext, and as well a reprise of the theme of a linkage between heavenly and earthly liturgies, of the mutual reflection of the celestial and terrestrial temples, that we saw him sketch in his initial explanation of the prophet's vision. In a wonderful passage, he takes up Ezk. 10, with its image of the "angel in white linen" approaching the chariot in order to receive coals of fire from the hand beneath the throne, which the angel then scatters over Jerusalem as a sign of the judgement ordained for the city. This picture, Jacob tells us, is a type of the Eucharist (and note the reference he works in to the temple vision in Isaiah 6:1-6):

The Son of God is all the beauty of prophecy,

And without Him there is neither prophecy nor revelation.

In the coals of fire are depicted the pearls of His body,

And in the chariot [is a portrait of] the holy altar of divinity...

These coals of fire that are in the chariot depict His body.

They were placed in it both for retribution and for forgiveness.

One [of them] was given to Isaiah, to forgive his iniquity,

And [others] were scattered in Jerusalem for punishment.

The liturgy of heaven and the worship of the Church are therefore one and the same:  
Within the Chariot [were] holy coals of fire,  
In the holy altar [are] precious pearls.  
On the altar is the body, and on the chariot fire abides,  
Since both above [in heaven] and below [on earth] there is a single mystery  
[or, perhaps, sacrament] of the Only [-Begotten] One. (596:2-14) [59]

The angel himself is "a type of the [Christian] priest clothed with the form [tsurta] of the Son of God", while the hand beneath the chariot is an image of the Holy Spirit. It is the Latter Who is the agent of the Eucharistic change, as Jacob makes clear in an extended passage on the meaning of the consecratory epiklesis:

It is not the [human] priest who has authority to sacrifice the Only [-Begotten] One,  
And to lift Him up before His Father as a sacrifice for sinners.  
Rather, the Holy Spirit comes forth from the Father,  
And descending, He overshadows [shra] and dwells [shken] within the bread,  
and makes it the Body...  
And the Spirit Who is within stretches out to the priest who is outside,  
Like the cherub stretched out to the man who was in white linen,  
And [the priest] takes from Him the propitiatory fire in the hollow of his hand,  
And, taking it out, he gives flowing wealth to all the world. (597:5-18) [60]

At this point, Jacob moves on to link together the worship of both the Old and the New Covenants with that of heaven. He rightly notes the expressly sacerdotal imagery of Ezekiel's angel in white linen:

The priests of the People [i.e., Israel] were clothed in [white] linen within the  
Holy of Holies [cf. Lev 16:2-14, the liturgy of Yom Kippur],  
Just as the angel at the chariot was clothed in [white] linen.  
It was not the angel who took his cue from the priest who was clothed,  
But rather [it was] the priest who was made like that angel.

Which is to say, that the Old Covenant Tabernacle and Temple were also an image of heaven. Thus Jacob continues with a reference to Exodus 25:9 ff., that is, to God's revelation on Sinai of the heavenly "pattern" (in Hebrew, tabnit, and in the Peshitta -- again! -- dmuta) of worship:

Moses saw the whole form [tsurta] of these mysteries,  
And he came down [from Sinai] to trace it in the tabernacle and its furnishings.  
And, just as Moses saw, so Ezekiel saw [them] as well...  
The mystery of the Church was prior to both Moses and Ezekiel,  
And on it the angels, too, longed to gaze. (598:18-599:8)

Our preacher depends here on a tradition that was already old by the time of Christ, which is that, at the time of the revelation on Sinai, Moses was accorded a vision of -- or, in some accounts, an actual ascent to -- heaven where he was shown the celestial temple and liturgy [61]. Likewise, the reference here to the Church as antedating both Ezekiel and Moses is, first of all, dependent on another, related tradition: that Paradise was designed as a temple, and that Adam's original calling was to be priest. We find the idea implicitly in the accounts of the Hebrew scriptures themselves in the relationship obtaining between Genesis, Exodus (on the making of the tabernacle), and I Kings (the design and consecration of Solomon's temple). The idea then becomes explicit as early as Jubilees in the second century B.C., and it is quite prominent in Jacob's own beloved Ephrem, particularly in the latter's Hymns on Paradise [62]. As Jacob himself puts it in another homily:

God made the gift of priesthood to men

In order that they might be consecrated by means of it.  
In His love for peace [shaina], He bestowed this gift on them  
And exalted them, so that they might offer Him their sacrifices.  
In order to mingle them with Himself in His glory [shubha] and majesty  
[rabbuta],  
He established them in His spiritual ministry [teshmeshta]. [63]

The imagery of "mingling" is typical of Syriac-speaking Christians from the earliest texts we have in that language, and here it obviously denotes what the Greek Fathers refer to as deification, theosis, the gift of participation in God's uncreated glory. Adam did not fulfill this vocation. He did not make "peace", shaina, but Christ, as we have seen Jacob emphasize, did: "This deed our Lord came down and accomplished on the earth" [64]. Paradise, Sinai and Temple, heaven and the Church's worship, are all of them joined in Christ, who thus is the bond between both the beginning and the end, and between those on high and those below. I think it also worth noting that we find several of the terms I have dwelt on, particularly in the preceding section on mystical ascent and anthropomorphism, repeated here in reference to the liturgy of heaven and earth: body, form, likeness, and place. This is not accidental. The true "body of God" is here, on the altar. The "form of God" -- i.e., the incarnate Word -- is depicted in the celebrating priest; who reveals, together with the rest of us in solemn assembly, the "likeness" of heaven, and so the "place" of the divine rest [65].

Thus we arrive at the force of Jacob's concluding remarks. He follows his prohibition against heavenly ascent, which I cited at the close of the last section, with the following affirmation:

He has come to you, to your place. Look at Him! for He is with you  
At the altar as [at] a meeting-place with you, so that you may see Him as He  
rests upon the table,  
And from the particles of His body all creation is satisfied. (606:4-7)

This is why we are not to go looking for a way to climb up to heaven, nor be jealous of the angels' service of the merkavah. If anything, Jacob suggests, they should be jealous of us! The Presence, the shekinah, is right here:

All the wealth of the heavenly beings has descended to the earth  
In Immanuel, Who is [both] with us, and is our God.  
The hidden altar, which is ministered to in mystery --  
Look! [It] is revealed, and is [lit. "stands"] among earthly angels [i.e., us]...  
Look! in the ministry of the holy altar, at the time of the Mysteries,  
Are marshalled the [heavenly] powers, standing with their cries of "Holy".  
We lack nothing that the angels have.  
If the eye of our soul were as limpid as the prophet's,  
the shining throng of their hovering  
All the mysteries that were hidden among the angels  
Come to pass in her [i.e., the Church], and it is she  
who is the schoolmistress of the heavenly beings. (609:7-8)

There is therefore a greater thing among us now than Ezekiel's chariot throne.  
If in heaven the cherubim "bear Him upon their backs with wonder",  
in the Church on earth we may "hold Him fast in the hollows" of our hands (609:13-14).

**600 AD**  
**Rabbinic Author**  
**Heavenly Rewards and Heavenly Canopies with Different Numbers of Pearls**



### Ruth Rabbah 3

3. It is said, That which is crooked cannot be made straight; and that which is wanting cannot be numbered (Eccl. 1, 15). In this world, he who is crooked can be made straight, and he who is straight can become crooked, but in the hereafter he who is crooked cannot be made straight, nor he who is straight crooked. 'And that which is wanting cannot be numbered.' Consider two wicked men who associated with one another in this world. One of them repented of his evil deeds before his death while the other did not, with the result that the former stands in the company of the righteous while his fellow stands in the company of the wicked. And beholding him he says, 'Woe is me, is there then favour shown here? We both of us committed robberies, we both of us committed murders together, yet he stands in the company of the righteous and I in the company of the wicked!' And they [the angels] reply to him and say, 'You fool! You were despicable after your death and lay for three days, and did not they drag you to your grave with ropes? The maggot is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee (Isa. xiv, II). And your associate understood and repented of his evil ways, and you, you also had the opportunity of repenting and you did not take it.'

He thereupon says to them, Permit me to go and repent!' And they answer him and say, You fool! Do you know that this world is like the Sabbath and the world whence you have come is like the eve of the Sabbath? If a man does not prepare his meal on the eve of the Sabbath, what shall he eat on the Sabbath? And do you not know also that the world is like the sea, and the world whence you have come is like the dry land? If a man does not prepare his food on the dry land, what shall he eat at sea? And do you not know also that this world is like the wilderness and the world whence you have come like cultivated land? If a man does not prepare his food on cultivated land, what shall he eat in the wilderness?' What does he do? He folds his hands and eats his flesh [in anguish], as it is said, The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh (Eccl. iv, 5), and he says, 'Permit me to look upon my associate in his glory,' and they answer him, 'You fool! We have been commanded by the Almighty that the wicked shall not stand by the side of the righteous, nor the righteous by the side of the wicked; neither impure with pure nor pure with impure.' To what does this commandment refer? To this gate, as it is said, This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter into it (Ps. cxviii, 20).

4. Once R. Hiyya Rabbah and R. Simeon b. Halafta were sitting studying the law in the Great College of Tiberias on the eve of Passover (some say on the eve of the Great Fast), and they heard the sound of people murmuring. Said one' to the other, What are these people doing?' He answered: 'He who has [money] is purchasing [his needs for the Festival] and he who has not is going to his employer that he may give it to him.' ale said, 'If so, I will also go to my Master that he should give me.' He went out and prayed in the Iltis" of Tiberias, and he beheld a hand holding out to him a pearl. He went and took it to our teacher who said to him: Whence have you this? It is priceless. Take these three dinars and go and make preparations in honour of the day, and after the Festival we shall advertise it, and whatever price we obtain for it, you shall have.' He took the three dinars and went and made his purchases and went home. Said his wife to him: Simeon! Have you turned thief? All your possessions do not amount to a hundred manehs, and whence then have you all these purchases?' He immediately related to her the incident, whereupon she said: Do you then desire that your canopy' should contain one pearl less than that of your fellow in the World to Come? ' He said to her: What then is to be done? ' She said to him, 'Go and return your purchases to their owners and the dinars to their owner and the pearl to its owner.' When our teacher heard of it, he was grieved, and he sent and brought her to him, and said to her, How much anguish have you caused this righteous man? ' She retorted, 'Do you then desire that his canopy should have one pearl less than yours in the world to come? ' He said to her, 'And even if it does lack it, cannot we make it up?' She answered him, 'Rabbi, in this world we are vouchsafed to see thy face, but [in the World to Come] did not Resh Lakish say: Every righteous man has his own chamber? '6 And he admitted that she was right. And not only so, but it is the custom of celestial beings to give but not to take back. [Nevertheless, the pearl was returned] and this latter miracle was greater than the former. When [R. Simeon]took it his hand was below and when he gave it back his hand was above, as a man who lends to his fellow'

**600 AD; Wolf Leslau, Translator (1951)**

**Pseudepigraphical work in name of Baruch**

**Michael Will Blow Trumpet For Third Time, & All Dead Will Be Resurrected In Twinkling Of An Eye; Glory Of Some Will Be Greater Than Sun, Others Will Stand Up In Honor, Still Others In Misery; King Of Heaven & Earth Will Come & Reward All Men According To Their Deeds**

**Fifth Baruch (Ethiopic Apocalypse of Baruch)**

Blessed be God, the Lord of Israel.

We shall write that which God has revealed to the blessed, holy, and praised Abba Baruch. When he was thirty-five years of age his parents took him to Jerusalem and put him in service with the High Priest, named Eskendros. The High Priest associated him with the doorkeepers of Jerusalem, and he remained in service for thirty years. He prayed as follows: "Let me not see the destruction of Jerusalem." After the thirty-fifth year had gone by he went to draw water. He drew water and covered it with a fig leaf. A deep sleep overcame him and so he slept. Then God raised up Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, at the time of Manasseh, the king of Judah. He captured Jerusalem and destroyed all its monuments, led away its priests and prophets, captured Zion, took the precious stone that Solomon had made for it, and took captive its men and animals.

A great angel named Sutu'el appeared. He exalted Baruch heavenward and let him see all the hidden and manifest things. He brought him into the Heavenly Jerusalem, and let him see established and high thrones, decorated places, shining crowns of various appearances, and white robes of various shapes.

I, Baruch, asked the angel who conducted me, and said to him: "Whose is this dwelling?" He answered and said to me: "It belongs to the martyrs who have despised and hated this ephemeral world, who have delivered themselves up to death for the sake of justice and [eternal] life, to those whose heads were cut and whose blood was shed."

Then he showed me the aspect of the Heavenly Jerusalem. I said to him: "(Was it made) before or after the creation?" He said to me: "Before the creation of Adam. The names of all the just, from Adam up to the end of the world, are written on this golden column."

Then he brought me into the middle (where the) column (was) and there I saw high and shiny seats, and robes whiter than milk, the sun, the moon, and the stars. The place was full of fruit. I asked the angel who conducted me and said to him: "Who enters through this gate?" He who guided me answered and said to me: "Blessed are those who enter through this gate. (Here) the husband remains with his wife and the wife remains with her husband."

Then he showed me a golden bed, a couch of precious stones, garments, and purses. I said to my guide: "Are they for those who remained in their virginity from their youth?" He said to me: "Yes, for those who guarded their virginity from their youth."

Then he took me to a great city and brought me into this city. There I saw many plants, numbering four thousand and seven, full of fruit. I said to my guide: "Who are those who enter into this house?" He answered and said to me: "Those who despised and hated the ephemeral world will enter through this gate that Adam built of old in this city. Many will hope for it, but few will enter through it."

Then he brought me to a stream of oil. I said to my guide: "Who will enter through this gate?" "Those who despised and hated this ephemeral world from their youth until the end of their lives; those who, having taken the pure monastical garment, were continent and of pure flesh and spirit."

Then he brought me across this stream of oil and showed me a stream of milk, greater than the sea and the deep waters. I asked my guide and said to him: "Who will enter into this Stream of -milk?" He answered and said to me: "This stream is for the children who were chosen while still in their mothers' wombs, and for all who were killed by iniquity, too. They will dwell in the end of days in the shadow of this stream of milk, together with their children. It is not for the children alone but also for the hermits, who were chosen in their mothers' wombs for the Heavenly Kingdom and did not mate with women from the day they put on the monastical cloth of chastity."

Then he brought me to a city which was white and shining, decorated with gold, hyacinth, and pearls, filled with fruit and plantations of almonds, nuts, and pomegranates. And I asked my guide: "Who are those who will enter into this city?" He said to me: "The kings and governors who observed justice; who did regard no man, rich or poor, small or big; those who loved the orphans, priests, and temples; and those who dressed them as well as the widows in fine raiment; those who loved justice and gave alms to the poor and indigent; those who fed the hungry and gave to the thirsty to drink. This then is the dwelling of the kings and governors."

Then he brought me to a place facing this one, and the city. I saw was brighter than the sun, the moon, and the stars ten million times over, decorated with pearls and filled with fruit and plants. I said to my guide: "Whose is this beautiful residence?" He answered and said to me: "Blessed is the man who will enter into this residence. It is for the mighty of the earth who killed no one, who were given not to idolatry, who confounded not one soul with another, who practiced neither magic nor sorcery. This then is their residence."

Then he took me opposite this place on a golden ship and brought me to the place of the City of God, and showed me all the kingdoms of glory that do not pass away but grow and are glorified a million times. I said to my guide: "What is the name of this city?" He said to me: "The City of God." I said to him: "Who will enter into this city?" My guide said to me: "The meek who kept no vengeance in their hearts, who made peace with their neighbors, who did not repay evil to the villain who had done them evil, who blessed those who cursed them, who shared their bread with the hungry, their cup with the thirsty, their clothes with the naked, who redeemed the captives with their wealth and lent of their gold to the poor. This is their residence."

He took me away from this gate and brought me to another city named Aqraba, which means the "Land of the Living." There I saw Enoch and Elijah writing down the deeds of the just of the earth.

In the days of this man the Holy Spirit will descend without cloud like rain for seven days and will be like oil. Without it man will not be purified from his sins and the drops of God's mercy will not be spread over the earth. In those days peace will reign and there will be no hatred, no agitation, and no robbery, but love, joy, offerings, and rejoicing. If someone asks but wood from his neighbor, he willingly will lend or give him all his wealth. In those days the fear of God will abound and the many churches that have previously been destroyed in the world will be rebuilt. Everything will be accomplished on the order of the king. Believers will abound and belief will be strong. In those days the priests will walk according to the prescribed laws and the ordinances of justice as did Melchizedek, Moses, and Aaron, the holy priests. Like them they will please God during their lifetimes. In those days love will abound as well as peace, joy, exultation, and knowledge of the Lord. In those days there will be no sorrow or distress, no hunger or thirst, no murder or controversy. In those days people will have one feeling and one thought, and they will walk in the straight path of grace.

Then I saw a stream of honey, that flowed like the water of the sea. I asked my guide: "Who will enter into this stream?" He answered me: "The blessed prophets who prophesied of the good that would come at the end."

Then he showed me, opposite that stream of honey, a stream of wine (that was) like a torrent of sea water. I asked my guide: "Who will enter into this stream?" He said to me: "Those who despised the world, who were given to hospitality, and who loved their neighbors as themselves."

Then the angel took me to the east and showed me a golden column on which was engraved an inscription in a thin writing brighter than the sun, the moon, and the stars of the sky. I asked him: "What is this golden column and what is this writing on it that has the likeness of the sun, the moon, and the shining stars?" He answered me: "The names of the just are written for eternal life on this golden column, where they wax not old or corrupt." I said to him: "Are the names alone engraved upon it; are not the features of the face engraved upon it, too?" He answered and said: "All the features of the faces of the just are engraved for eternal life on this golden column, where they neither wax old nor become corrupt. They are engraved with a golden pen; the deeds of the sinners are engraved with an iron pen." I asked my guide: "Whose is this city?" He said to me: "The Land of the Living. Those in it are Enoch and Elijah, who write God's commandments, and who live there forever."

Then he took me to another area and I saw at its gates big trees full of fruit. Many hermits were scattered there, suffering from great hunger and thirst. A stream was also in this place. When they wished to eat from the tree it ascended to the sky, and when they rose in order to eat it descended to the earth. When they wished to drink from the stream it vanished and entered into the heart of the earth, and when they despaired of drinking the stream came out and reappeared to them. Sorrowfully I asked the angel who conducted me, and said to him: "Whose is this city and who are these men?" He answered and said to me: "This city belongs to the hermits. They were perfect in fasting, adoration, prayer, and purity of the body but they were boastful and haughty." I said to him: "Did their haughtiness prevent them from entering into the Heavenly Kingdom?" He said to me: "The root of sin is haughtiness and loftiness."

Then he showed me a city a thousand thousand times brighter than the sun, the moon, and the stars, full of fruit trees yielding thousands of blessed fruits every hour. There were also shining raiment, crowns adorned and bright, golden belts, garments of precious stones, clothes, and shoes at the right and the left, branches of olive trees and branches of palm trees, the odor of which ravishes the heart and the taste of which makes the soul go forth from the body. Its beginning and end are not perceived. None knows it but God. Even the angels of God know it not, and the priests do not use it to burn incense. I asked him: "Whose is this residence?" He said to me: "It is the residence of the hermits." I said to him: "Will not all of them enter into this dwelling?" He said: "No." I said to him: "Who, then, are those who will enter into this residence?" He said to me: "Those who did not mate with women after they retired from this world; those who did not smite their neighbors with their slander; those who did not ride on mules; those who did not carry seats and sit on them; those who did not acquire gold and silver, the goods of this world, and who did not like them; those who despised and hated this world; those who did not love office; who did not lie on a bed or on a couch in this world; who did not claim to be eating, in fact, there is no joy for the hermits upon this earth, their pleasure begins when their soul leaves this world; those who did not like vain glory, who did not accept gold or silver or precious clothes from kings and princes, who did not set crowns upon their heads, and who did not take bribes to the disadvantage of the innocent. All these will enter into this residence."

Having heard this I praised the Lord.

Then he took me to the west. There I saw a column of fire on which was writing by a pen of fire. The writing was thin and compact and the column of fire was greater than the column of gold. I asked him: "What is that written on the column of fire?" He said to me: "The names of the sinners."

Opposite that column I saw virgins clothed in darkness, and the guide said to me: "These are mad virgins who were avaricious." I said to him: "Do they stay in this land of suffering, because of their avarice?" He said to me: "Yes."

Then I saw a stream of fire, with many men seated upon thrones of fire. I asked him: "Who are those who undergo such punishment?" He said to me: They are priests." I said to him: "Why are they punished so severely?" He said to me: "This is the punishment of priests and High Priests who introduced improper things into the temple and accepted bribes for the priesthood." I said to him: "As a matter of fact they introduced improper things into the sanctuary for bribes: children of the divorced, stutterers, the dumb and the deaf, the blind, the broken-handed, and the leprous, children of Kedar, the rich but not the poor. Therefore these priests are punished."

Then he showed me a big sea of fire, by which many people were being swallowed. I said to him: "Who are these that are being punished so severely?" He said to me: "Priests and teachers." I said to him: "Why are they punished?" He said to me: "Because they alone ate the firstlings in the sanctuary; they alone ate the tithe of the sanctuary; they ate the funeral meal of the poor and buried them not with honor; they walked not in the path of life; they taught not the glory of the Sabbath, saying, 'Honor it,' and introduce not into the dwellings donkeys, mules, oxen, sheep goats, or even hens: As for the teachers, they did not rebuke their children, neither sons nor daughters. Therefore will they be punished."

Then he showed me an abyss of fire, full of people who scoured burning charcoals with their hands and drew the streams of fire with their fingers. The streams of fire swallowed them entirely so that none could recognize their mouths or lips. I said to him "Who are these who are punished like this?" He said to me "Those who have lost their virginity in deserted places, without their parents giving them in marriage."

I also saw an abyss and a big pit of fire, and people without number were in it. The fire devoured some of them up to their knees, others up to their breasts, others up to their necks, others up to their mouths, and still others entirely. I said to him: "Who are these who undergo such severe punishment?" He said to me: "Those swallowed up to the knees uttered vehement words in the sanctuary. Those swallowed up to the reins fornicated with women in the house of God. Those swallowed up to their breasts slandered their neighbors in the sanctuary. Those devoured up to their necks spoke after their offering to God without cooling off the bread or the water. Those devoured entirely fornicated with man as with woman."

Then I saw an abyss and a pit of fire the depth of which was equal to eleven thousand and seven cubits. I said to him: "Who are these who go down into this stream?" He said: "Those who fornicated with a woman in childbed or with a woman in her uncleanness or with an ignominious woman; those who married the wife of one who died or the wife of a brother; those who fornicated with a daughter or with a sister or with the daughter of a brother; those who fornicated with domestic animals or with wild beasts. This is their punishment."

Then I saw big rocks of fire, and there I saw many men scattered through the fire. I said to him: "Who are these who are punished in this abyss of fire and in these rocks of fire?" He said to me: "Those who worshiped stones. Therefore their punishment is by stones of fire."

Then I saw big trees, all of fire. Many men were suspended from them, and serpents of fire and dogs of fire devoured them. I said to him: "Who are these who undergo this terrible punishment?" He said to me: "Priests, and widows who, being pregnant, drank medicines to kill the conceived being. The killed beings cried unto God saying: 'O Lord, O Lord, we might have been good or bad but they did not let us grow; some of us were eaten by dogs, others by beasts.' God ordered that the children be given to Temeleyakos; as for their parents, they undergo this punishment."

Then I saw a big caldron of fire in which there were many of the mighty kings, governors, and princes. I said to him: "Who are these who are punished like this?" He said to me: "The mighty kings, governors, and princes, who ate of the offerings and laid waste the sanctuary, who robbed the dwellings of the priests and laid desolate the land, who loved not the orphans. and gave not alms from what God had given them."

Woe unto you who spoil the world!

Woe unto you who eat of the offerings!

Woe, for your punishment will be severe!

Woe unto you who spoil with a razor God's creatures!

Woe unto you, kings and governors, who build sanctuaries to please the eye of man, but in your hearts, you like not the priests and chanters! You are like a bee with no honey or a pitcher with no water.

Woe unto you, kings and governors, who do not save the oppressed and the poor. You foolish ones, do you think that you will enter the Heavenly Kingdom because of your great riches? All the glory of your house will not go down with you and your terrestrial kingdom will be forgotten, for the existence of this world is ephemeral. The world is ephemeral and its concupiscence as well. Everything is ephemeral and wears out like a garment, and like linen clot a that you change and they are changed, for the existence of the world is ephemeral.

Blessed are the kings who pleased God during their lifetimes.

Blessed are the kings who loved the poor and the miserable.

Blessed are those who made <sup>127</sup> wisdom their mother.

Blessed are the kings who gave all their wealth to the poor and miserable as ransom for their souls, knowing that the existence of this world is ephemeral, that gold and silver deteriorate and garments wear out.

Woe unto you, kings, you who are creatures and yet exalt yourselves over other creatures.

Woe unto you, kings and governors, you are dust; <sup>1P8</sup> and why do you exalt yourselves over the dust?

Woe unto you, kings and governors, you are clay; and why do you exalt yourselves over the clay?

Woe unto you, kings and governors, who cut off the creatures of God with the razor and the sword; you can make neither white nor black even a single hair of your head. Heard you not what Scripture said: One man is more honorable than ninety-nine angels'?

Woe unto you, kings and governors, who rob the sanctuary and rebuke not your subordinates that they may not corrupt the world. If your governors corrupt the world and you rebuke them not, I shall require their blood of you, says God.

I, Baruch, saw horrible and great judgments, and each of them was terrifying. I saw great mountains of fire full of pitch[?] and sulphur, a terrifying caldron full of the great governors and princes engulfed in a sea of fire. I said to the angel Sutu'el who conducted me: "Who are these men who undergo this

terrible punishment?" He said to me: "The wicked kings who corrupted the world and defiled the sanctuary."

Then I saw a large pit of fire full of princes and wealthy people, men and women. Serpents of fire were (suspended) on their garments and devoured them, vipers of fire stung them, dogs of fire bit and devoured them, angels of fire pierced them, rocks of fire fell upon them, and the pit of fire engulfed them up to their heads. I asked the angel: "Who are these who are punished so severely?" He said to me: "These are the hermits who were supposed to despise this world but despised it not and purified not their thoughts. They were like other men of the world, they had relations with women and married and forgot God during their lifetimes. They resemble the dog that returns to his own vomit, or the sow that was washed and returns to the mire, or Absalom who transgressed the commandments of his father. They resemble Lot's wife who became a pillar of salt. All things are vain."

Then I saw many men whom they made to run on burning sand. I said to him: "Who are these whose punishment is like this?" He said to me: "Deacons who did not promptly bring the offerings into the sanctuary."

Then I saw people suspended by burning ropes, their feet upward and their heads downward. I said to him: "Who are these who are punished like this?" He said to me: "Priests who did not offer Sunday sacrifices to God at sunrise; the rest day of the temple comes from God. Therefore are they punished."

Then I saw people whom they made to touch fire and to whom they gave cups of fire to drink. I said to him: "Who are these who are punished like this?" He said to me: "Priests and deacons who did not offer sacrifices with a pure heart, those who, being bound by the priesthood, transgressed it. This is their punishment."

Then I saw men whose hands were cut off. I said to him: "Who are these maimed people?" He said to me: "Those who wrote [magic] texts and carved. This is their punishment."

Then I saw people from whose mouths came fire and sulphur. I said to him: "Who are these who are punished like this?" He, said to me: "The tailors who sewed garments and kept for themselves even a small piece of thread."

Then I saw people brought in with cords of fire and searing flame. All kinds of fruit and limpid water passed in front of them, but when they wished to drink the water fled from them. I said to him: "Who are these who are punished like this?" He said to me: "Those who broke the fast and those who hastened to eat."

All this the angel Sutu'el showed to me.

Then I saw a terrible punishment, sealed with seven seals. He said to me: "O Baruch, wilt thou be strong enough to see this terrible and frightful [punishment]?" I said to him: "Speak, O Lord." Then he commanded the angel of Gehenna and said: "Show the seal of Gehenna to Baruch, the beloved of God." And he opened the seal and, behold, a great torment called Gehenna appeared, and a great cold, and snow. From the time of the creation of Heaven and earth until the end of the world, the shining sun would be unable to heat it. Those who are thrown into it will no more be mentioned among the living, and those who enter into it will remain there. As the prophet David says: "Therefore the wicked will not rise from Hell and the sinners will not remain in the congregation of the righteous." He also says: "Like the dust which the wind drives away from the surface of the earth."

Then I, Baruch, saw what he showed me: bad years, and numerous good years during which there will be love, corn, wheat, honey, and milk. The Holy Spirit will go down like the dew of the rain season; fasting and prayer will please [God]. The husband will speak agreeably with his wife, the daughter-in-law with her mother-in-law, the monk with his disciple, and the disciple with his teacher, the brother with his brother, the daughter with her mother, and the mother with her daughter, the father with his son, and the son with his father, the relative with his relatives, and the friend with his friends.

In the four-hundred-and-seventieth cycle, the six-thousandth year, and the fifth day, a queen will reign and there will be great joy. Qostanfinos and Teodros, the orthodox, will reign, and in their days there will be love and peace. They will build God's house which Diyoqleytanos, the heretic, destroyed. In their time five hundred and thirty years will be added to Gabra Masqal, the king of Aksum, because of his orthodoxy.

Then every year love will decrease. Small foxes will rise; they will destroy the whole world and they will exalt the ark of God into the Heavenly Zion. Wheat will grow less and water will flow four times less. Those who bring offerings, incense, and sacrifices to God's house will go up to Heaven. There will be good priests and bad priests. Those who minister in God's house will be the slothful, the foolish, the silly, and the scorners. At that time slothful teachers will be created. They will reduce everything to schemes. They will not be saved nor will they save their children. They will profane the Sabbath and violate the festivals.

In the twenty-fourth year of mercy the trees of the fields will rejoice, the mountains and hills will be joyful, as will creatures, man, and beast. Everything will go back to its first condition.

Then a righteous man will reign. Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. Justice shall spring out in his days. He will reign thirty years in the five-hundred-and-forty-eighth cycle.

After that the false messiah will come. He will say: "I am God," and will perform numerous signs and wonders. He shall cause the sun to rise in the west and the moon toward 'Elam; his right eye will be blended with blood, his right foot will be thin; the nails of his hands will be distorted and those of his hands and feet will be like scythes; his right [hand] will be for extermination; his left [hand] for death. He will reign seven years.

Then God will cause the false messiah to cease. The lion will then reign seven years or sixty-seven in the count of the cycles. He will summon a council of priests, monks, believers, and numerous armies. He will say to the Cross: "Take away all this," and the Cross will take it and ascend to Heaven. All of them will weep bitterly and will die; the king will die with them. Michael and Gabriel will come with their armies and will take them into the garden of joy. Then the demon Qoleyon will come with thirty thousand and seventy-seven others and will reign. They will eat rocks like reeds, will swallow fire, and will drink the blood of women in their impurity. They will reign seven years.

Then the eagle will reign and will reside in Jerusalem. He will devour ten thousand girls each evening, and ten thousand each morning. He will reign seven years.

Then the winds will reign. They will destroy God's houses and will unearth the bones of men. They will reign seven years.

The holy Michael will blow the horn for thirty years, and all the bones will assemble. Then he will sound the trumpet for The second time for thirty years. The bones will be sewn up again with flesh and all the bodies will assemble. Praise and glory be to Him forever. Amen.



If I, Baruch, were to tell you everything I saw and heard all the books would not contain it. The Spirit of God dictated it to Absalom and Abimelech, the priests of Jerusalem. He gave it to King Masfeyanos, who fears the Lord. Glory to God forever. Amen.

## **650 AD**

**John Climacus (595-650), Monastic Leader, Mt. Sinai Desert**

**May This Ladder Teach You Spiritual Disposition Of Virtues; I Am At Summit Of Ladder, & As My Great Initiate (St Paul) Said: So Faith, Hope, Love Abide, These Three; But The Greatest Of These Is Love**

**The Ladder of Divine Ascent**

Address by His Holiness Benedict XVI

Paul VI Audience Hall, Wednesday, 11 February 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today I would like to return to presenting the great writers of the Church of the East and of the West in the Middle Ages. And I am proposing the figure of John known as Climacus, a Latin transliteration of the Greek term klimakos, which means of the ladder (klimax). This is the title of his most important work in which he describes the ladder of human life ascending towards God. He was born in about 575 a.d. He lived, therefore, during the years in which Byzantium, the capital of the Roman Empire of the East, experienced the greatest crisis in its history. The geographical situation of the Empire suddenly changed and the torrent of barbarian invasions swept away all its structures. Only the structure of the Church withstood them, continuing in these difficult times to carry out her missionary, human, social and cultural action, especially through the network of monasteries in which great religious figures such as, precisely, John Climacus were active.

John lived and told of his spiritual experiences in the Mountains of Sinai, where Moses encountered God and Elijah heard his voice. Information on him has been preserved in a brief Life (PG 88, 596-608), written by a monk, Daniel of Raithu. At the age of 16, John, who had become a monk on Mount Sinai, made himself a disciple of Abba Martyr, an "elder", that is, a "wise man". At about 20 years of age, he chose to live as a hermit in a grotto at the foot of the mountain in the locality of Tola, eight kilometres from the present-day St Catherine's Monastery. Solitude, however, did not prevent him from meeting people eager for spiritual direction, or from paying visits to several monasteries near Alexandria. In fact, far from being an escape from the world and human reality, his eremitical retreat led to ardent love for others (Life, 5) and for God (ibid., 7). After 40 years of life as a hermit, lived in love for God and for neighbour years in which he wept, prayed and fought with demons he was appointed hegumen of the large monastery on Mount Sinai and thus returned to cenobitic life in a monastery. However, several years before his death, nostalgic for the eremitical life, he handed over the government of the community to his brother, a monk in the same monastery.

John died after the year 650. He lived his life between two mountains, Sinai and Tabor and one can truly say that he radiated the light which Moses saw on Sinai and which was contemplated by the three Apostles on Mount Tabor!

He became famous, as I have already said, through his work, entitled The Climax, in the West known as the Ladder of Divine Ascent (PG 88, 632-1164). Composed at the insistent request of the hegumen of the neighbouring Monastery of Raithu in Sinai, the Ladder is a complete treatise of spiritual life in which John describes the monk's journey from renunciation of the world to the perfection of love. This journey according to his book covers 30 steps, each one of which is linked to the next. The journey may be summarized in three consecutive stages: the first is expressed in renunciation of the world in order to return to a state of

evangelical childhood. Thus, the essential is not the renunciation but rather the connection with what Jesus said, that is, the return to true childhood in the spiritual sense, becoming like children. John comments: "A good foundation of three layers and three pillars is: innocence, fasting and temperance. Let all babes in Christ (cf. 1 Cor 3: 1) begin with these virtues, taking as their model the natural babes" (1, 20; 636). Voluntary detachment from beloved people and places permits the soul to enter into deeper communion with God. This renunciation leads to obedience which is the way to humility through humiliations which will never be absent on the part of the brethren. John comments: "Blessed is he who has mortified his will to the very end and has entrusted the care of himself to his teacher in the Lord: indeed he will be placed on the right hand of the Crucified One!" (4, 37; 704).

The second stage of the journey consists in spiritual combat against the passions. Every step of the ladder is linked to a principal passion that is defined and diagnosed, with an indication of the treatment and a proposal of the corresponding virtue. All together, these steps of the ladder undoubtedly constitute the most important treatise of spiritual strategy that we possess. The struggle against the passions, however, is steeped in the positive it does not remain as something negative thanks to the image of the "fire" of the Holy Spirit: that "all those who enter upon the good fight (cf. 1 Tm 6: 12), which is hard and narrow,... may realize that they must leap into the fire, if they really expect the celestial fire to dwell in them" (1,18; 636). The fire of the Holy Spirit is the fire of love and truth. The power of the Holy Spirit alone guarantees victory. However, according to John Climacus it is important to be aware that the passions are not evil in themselves; they become so through human freedom's wrong use of them. If they are purified, the passions reveal to man the path towards God with energy unified by ascesis and grace and, "if they have received from the Creator an order and a beginning..., the limit of virtue is boundless" (26/2, 37; 1068).

The last stage of the journey is Christian perfection that is developed in the last seven steps of the Ladder. These are the highest stages of spiritual life, which can be experienced by the "Hesychasts": the solitaries, those who have attained quiet and inner peace; but these stages are also accessible to the more fervent cenobites. Of the first three simplicity, humility and discernment John, in line with the Desert Fathers, considered the ability to discern, the most important. Every type of behaviour must be subject to discernment; everything, in fact, depends on one's deepest motivations, which need to be closely examined. Here one enters into the soul of the person and it is a question of reawakening in the hermit, in the Christian, spiritual sensitivity and a "feeling heart", which are gifts from God: "After God, we ought to follow our conscience as a rule and guide in everything," (26/1,5; 1013). In this way one reaches tranquillity of soul, hesychia, by means of which the soul may gaze upon the abyss of the divine mysteries.

The state of quiet, of inner peace, prepares the Hesychast for prayer which in John is twofold: "corporeal prayer" and "prayer of the heart". The former is proper to those who need the help of bodily movement: stretching out the hands, uttering groans, beating the breast, etc. (15, 26; 900). The latter is spontaneous, because it is an effect of the reawakening of spiritual sensitivity, a gift of God to those who devote themselves to corporeal prayer. In John this takes the name "Jesus prayer" (Iesou euche), and is constituted in the invocation of solely Jesus' name, an invocation that is continuous like breathing: "May your remembrance of Jesus become one with your breathing, and you will then know the usefulness of hesychia", inner peace (27/2, 26; 1112). At the end the prayer becomes very simple: the word "Jesus" simply becomes one with the breath.

The last step of the ladder (30), suffused with "the sober inebriation of the spirit", is dedicated to the supreme "trinity of virtues": faith, hope and above all charity. John also speaks of charity as eros (human love), a symbol of the matrimonial union of the soul with God, and once again chooses the image of fire to express the fervour, light and purification of love for God. The power of human love can be reoriented to God, just as a cultivated olive may be grafted on to a wild olive tree (cf. Rm 11: 24) (cf. 15, 66; 893). John is convinced that an intense experience of this eros will help the soul to advance far more than the harsh struggle against the passions, because of its great power. Thus, in our journey, the positive aspect prevails. Yet charity is also seen in close relation to hope: "Hope is the power that drives love. Thanks to hope, we can look forward to

the reward of charity.... Hope is the doorway of love.... The absence of hope destroys charity: our efforts are bound to it, our labours are sustained by it, and through it we are enveloped by the mercy of God" (30, 16; 1157). The conclusion of the Ladder contains the synthesis of the work in words that the author has God himself utter: "May this ladder teach you the spiritual disposition of the virtues. I am at the summit of the ladder, and as my great initiate (St Paul) said: "So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love' (1 Cor 13: 13)!" (30, 18; 1160).

At this point, a last question must be asked: can the Ladder, a work written by a hermit monk who lived 1,400 years ago, say something to us today? Can the existential journey of a man who lived his entire life on Mount Sinai in such a distant time be relevant to us? At first glance it would seem that the answer must be "no", because John Climacus is too remote from us. But if we look a little closer, we see that the monastic life is only a great symbol of baptismal life, of Christian life. It shows, so to speak, in capital letters what we write day after day in small letters. It is a prophetic symbol that reveals what the life of the baptized person is, in communion with Christ, with his death and Resurrection. The fact that the top of the "ladder", the final steps, are at the same time the fundamental, initial and most simple virtues is particularly important to me: faith, hope and charity. These are not virtues accessible only to moral heroes; rather they are gifts of God to all the baptized: in them our life develops too. The beginning is also the end, the starting point is also the point of arrival: the whole journey towards an ever more radical realization of faith, hope and charity. The whole ascent is present in these virtues. Faith is fundamental, because this virtue implies that I renounce my arrogance, my thought, and the claim to judge by myself without entrusting myself to others. This journey towards humility, towards spiritual childhood is essential. It is necessary to overcome the attitude of arrogance that makes one say: I know better, in this my time of the 21st century, than what people could have known then. Instead, it is necessary to entrust oneself to Sacred Scripture alone, to the word of the Lord, to look out on the horizon of faith with humility, in order to enter into the enormous immensity of the universal world, of the world of God. In this way our soul grows, the sensitivity of the heart grows toward God. Rightly, John Climacus says that hope alone renders us capable of living charity; hope in which we transcend the things of every day, we do not expect success in our earthly days but we look forward to the revelation of God himself at last. It is only in this extension of our soul, in this self-transcendence, that our life becomes great and that we are able to bear the effort and disappointments of every day, that we can be kind to others without expecting any reward. Only if there is God, this great hope to which I aspire, can I take the small steps of my life and thus learn charity. The mystery of prayer, of the personal knowledge of Jesus, is concealed in charity: simple prayer that strives only to move the divine Teacher's heart. So it is that one's own heart opens, one learns from him his own kindness, his love. Let us therefore use this "ascent" of faith, hope and charity. In this way we will arrive at true life.

### **Steps or Rungs on the Ladder to Heaven**

The steps consist of 30 chapters, or "rungs."

In the separation of the spiritual ascent by Evagrius of Pontus and others into the three levels, steps 1 through 3 are the "Break with the world", steps 4 through 26 are the "Active Life", and 27 through 30 are the "Contemplative Life."

The first seven steps and the last seven steps balance each other chiastically, being grouped in groups of four steps followed by three steps.

The sixteen steps in the middle about the vices actually contain 18 different vices, and nine of them are primary vices and the other nine are dependent upon one of the primary vices, though not in a one-for-one correspondence.

### **1-4: Renouncement of the world**

1. Περὶ ἀποταγῆς (On renunciation of the world, or asceticism)
2. Περὶ ἀπροσπαθείας (On detachment)

3. Περί ξενιτείας (On exile or pilgrimage; concerning dreams that beginners have)
4. Περί υπακοής (On blessed and ever-memorable obedience (in addition to episodes involving many individuals))

#### **5–7: Penitence and affliction**

5. Περί μετανοίας (On painstaking and true repentance, which constitutes the life of the holy convicts, and about the Prison)
6. Περί μνήμης θανάτου (On remembrance of death)
7. Περί του χαροποιού πένθους (On joy-making mourning)

#### **8–17: Defeat of lower levels of vices**

8. Περί αοργησίας (On freedom from anger and on meekness)
9. Περί μνησικακίας (On remembrance of wrongs)
10. Περί καταλαλιάς (On slander or calumny)
11. Περί πολυλογίας και σιωπής (On talkativeness and silence)
12. Περί ψεύδους (On lying)
13. Περί ακηδίας (On despondency)
14. Περί γαστριμαργίας (On that clamorous mistress, the stomach)
15. Περί αγνείας (On incorruptible purity and chastity, to which the corruptible attain by toil and sweat)
16. Περί φιλαργυρίας (On love of money, or avarice)
17. Περί αναισθησίας (On non-possessiveness (that hastens one Heavenwards))

#### **18–23: Avoidance of higher vices that are traps of asceticism**

18. Περί ύπνου και προσευχής (On insensibility, that is, deadening of the soul and the death of the mind before the death of the body)
19. Περί αγρυπνίας (On sleep, prayer, and psalmody with the brotherhood)
20. Περί δειλίας (On bodily vigil and how to use it to attain spiritual vigil, and how to practice it)
21. Περί κενοδοξίας (On unmanly and puerile cowardice)
22. Περί υπερηφανείας (On the many forms of vainglory)
23. Περί λογισμών βλασφημίας (On mad pride and (in the same Step) on unclean blasphemous thoughts; concerning unmentionable blasphemous thoughts)

#### **24–26: Highest virtues of the “Active” portion of the Path**

24. Περί πραότητος και απλότητος (On meekness, simplicity, and guilelessness, which come not from nature but from conscious effort, and on guile)
25. Περί ταπεινοφροσύνης (On the destroyer of the passions, most sublime humility, which is rooted in spiritual perception)
26. Περί διακρίσεως (On discernment of thoughts, passions and virtues; on expert discernment; brief summary of all aforementioned)

#### **27–29: Acquisition of hesychia, or peace of the soul, leading to God’s Presence**

27. Περί ησυχίας (On holy stillness of body and soul; different aspects of stillness and how to distinguish them)
28. Περί προσευχής (On holy and blessed prayer, the mother of virtues, and on the attitude of mind and body in prayer)
29. Περί απαθείας (Concerning Heaven on earth, or Godlike dispassion and perfection, and the resurrection of the soul before the general resurrection)
30. Περί αγάπης, ελπίδος και πίστεως (Concerning the linking together of Charity, Hope, and Faith, the supreme trinity among the virtues; a brief exhortation summarizing all that has said at length in this book)

### **700 AD**

**Isaac of Nineveh (Isaac the Syrian) Syriac Christian Monk**  
**Alexander Golitzen, modern scholar of Early Judaism**  
**What is Heaven? - St Isaac of Syria**

St Isaac of Syria's teaching about hell is often quoted especially in Orthodox circles . His understanding of the nature of heaven is a little less well known however. I wanted to share a section from Archbishop Hilarion (Alfeyev's) book "The Spiritual World of Isaac the Syrian" on this subject.

"Though there are many mansions in the kingdom of heaven, none is to be found anywhere except inside that kingdom. Beyond its borders is only Gehenna. Isaac was not aware of any other intermediate state between these two realms:

In the future separation there will be no middle realm between the state that is completely on high and the state that is absolutely below. A person will either belong entirely to those who dwell on high, or entirely to those below; but within both the one state and the other there are diverse degrees of recompense. If this is true, which it most certainly is, what is more senseless and more foolish than those who say that 'It is enough for me to escape Gehenna, I do not seek to enter the kingdom!' For to escape Gehenna means precisely to enter the kingdom, even as falling away from the kingdom is entering Gehenna. Scripture has taught us nothing about the existence of three realms, but 'When the Son of God will come in his glory, he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left'.... How have you not understood by these things that falling short of the order on high is in fact, the Gehenna of torment?

“What then are paradise and Gehenna in Isaac's vision? The blessing of paradise, according to him, is human persons' participation in the love of God- itself 'the tree of life' and 'the heavenly bread':

Paradise is the love of God, wherein is the enjoyment of all blessedness, and there the blessed Paul partook of supernatural nourishment. When he tasted there of the tree of life, he cried out, saying 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him'. Adam was barred from this tree through the devils counsel. The tree of life is the love of God from which Adam fell away... When we find love, we partake of heavenly bread... The heavenly bread is Christ, who came down from heaven and gave life to the world... Therefore, the man who lives in love reaps the fruit of life from God, and while yet in this world, he even now breathes the air of resurrection; in this air the righteous will find delight in the resurrection.

"God shows us His love for mankind not only when we do good, but also when we offend and displease Him. How patiently He endures our transgressions; and when He chastises, how mercifully He chastises."

**400 - 1000 AD**

**Rabbinic Authors; translated by Louis Ginzberg**  
**Jewish Rabbis On Sun, Moon, Stars and Degrees in Paradise**  
**1968 Publication "The Legends of the Jews"**

**by Louis Ginzberg**

Volume I - Bible Times and Characters from the Creation to Jacob

**The Third Day**

The most important work done on the third day was the creation of Paradise. Two gates of carbuncle form the entrance to Paradise,[76] and sixty myriads of ministering angels keep watch over them. Each of these angels shines with the lustre of the heavens. When the just man appears before the gates, the clothes in which

he was buried are taken off him, and the angels array him in seven garments of clouds of glory, and place upon his head two crowns, one of precious stones and pearls, the other of gold of Parvaim,[77] and they put eight myrtles in his hand, and they utter praises before him and say to him, "Go thy way, and eat thy bread with joy." And they lead him to a place full of rivers, surrounded by eight hundred kinds of roses and myrtles. Each one has a canopy according to his merits,[78] and under it flow four rivers, one of milk, the other of balsam, the third of wine, and the fourth of honey. Every canopy is overgrown by a vine of gold, and thirty pearls hang from it, each of them shining like Venus. Under each canopy there is a table of precious stones and pearls, and sixty angels stand at the head of every just man, saying unto him: "Go and eat with joy of the honey, for thou hast busied thyself with the Torah, and she is sweeter than honey, and drink of the wine preserved in the grape since the six days of creation,[79] for thou hast busied thyself with the Torah, and she is compared to wine." The least fair of the just is beautiful as Joseph and Rabbi Johanan, and as the grains of a silver pomegranate upon which fall the rays of the sun.[80] There is no light, "for the light of the righteous is the shining light." And they undergo four transformations every day, passing through four states. In the first the righteous is changed into a child. He enters the division for children, and tastes the joys of childhood. Then he is changed into a youth, and enters the division for the youths, with whom he enjoys the delights of youth. Next he becomes an adult, in the prime of life, and he enters the division of men, and enjoys the pleasures of manhood. Finally, he is changed into an old man. He enters the division for the old, and enjoys the pleasures of age.

There are eighty myriads of trees in every corner of Paradise, the meanest among them choicer than all the spice trees. In every corner there are sixty myriads of angels singing with sweet voices, and the tree of life stands in the middle and shades the whole of Paradise.[81] It has fifteen thousand tastes, each different from the other, and the perfumes thereof vary likewise. Over it hang seven clouds of glory, and winds blow upon it from all four sides,[82] so that its odor is wafted from one end of the world to the other. Underneath sit the scholars and explain the Torah. Over each of them two canopies are spread, one of stars, the other of sun and moon, and a curtain of clouds of glory separates the one canopy from the other.[83] Beyond Paradise begins Eden, containing three hundred and ten worlds[84] and seven compartments for seven different classes of the pious. In the first are "the martyr victims of the government," like Rabbi Akiba and his colleagues;[85] in the second those who were drowned;[86] in the third[87] Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai and his disciples; in the fourth those who were carried off in the cloud of glory;[88] in the fifth the penitents, who occupy a place which even a perfectly pious man cannot obtain; in the sixth are the youths[89] who have not tasted of sin in their lives; in the seventh are those poor who studied Bible and Mishnah, and led a life of self-respecting decency. And God sits in the midst of them and expounds the Torah to them.[90]

As for the seven divisions of Paradise, each of them is twelve myriads of miles in width and twelve myriads of miles in length. In the first division dwell the proselytes who embraced Judaism of their own free will, not from compulsion. The walls are of glass and the wainscoting of cedar. The prophet Obadiah,[91] himself a proselyte, is the overseer of this first division. The second division is built of silver, and the wainscoting thereof is of cedar. Here dwell those who have repented, and Manasseh, the penitent son of Hezekiah, presides over them. The third division is built of silver and gold. Here dwell Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Israelites who came out of Egypt, and the whole generation that lived in the desert.[92] Also David is there, together with all his sons[93] except Absalom, one of them, Chileab, still alive. And all the kings of Judah are there, with the exception of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, who presides in the second division, over the penitents. Moses and Aaron preside over the third division. Here are precious vessels of silver and gold and jewels and canopies and beds and thrones and lamps, of gold, of precious stones, and of pearls, the best of everything there is in heaven.[94] The fourth division is built of beautiful rubies,[95] and its wainscoting is of olive wood. Here dwell the perfect and the steadfast in faith, and their wainscoting is of olive wood, because their lives were bitter as olives to them. The fifth division is built of silver and gold and refined gold,[96] and the finest of gold and glass and bdellium, and through the midst of it flows the river Gihon. The wainscoting is of silver and gold, and a perfume breathes through it more exquisite than the perfume of Lebanon. The coverings of the silver and gold beds are made of purple and blue, woven by Eve, and of scarlet and the hair of goats, woven by angels. Here dwells the Messiah on a palanquin made of the

wood of Lebanon, "the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom of gold, the seat of it purple." With him is Elijah. He takes the head of Messiah, and places it in his bosom, and says to him, "Be quiet, for the end draweth nigh." On every Monday and Thursday and on Sabbaths and holidays, the Patriarchs come to him, and the twelve sons of Jacob, and Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, and all the kings of Israel and of Judah, and they weep with him and comfort him, and say unto him, "Be quiet and put trust in thy Creator, for the end draweth nigh." Also Korah and his company, and Dathan, Abiram, and Absalom come to him on every Wednesday, and ask him: "How long before the end comes full of wonders? When wilt thou bring us life again, and from the abysses of the earth lift us?" The Messiah answers them, "Go to your fathers and ask them"; and when they hear this, they are ashamed, and do not ask their fathers.

In the sixth division dwell those who died in performing a pious act, and in the seventh division those who died from illness inflicted as an expiation for the sins of Israel.[97]

### **The Fourth Day**

The fourth day of creation produced the sun, the moon, and the stars. These heavenly spheres were not actually fashioned on this day; they were created on the first day, and merely were assigned their places in the heavens on the fourth.[98] At first the sun and the moon enjoyed equal powers and prerogatives.[99] The moon spoke to God, and said: "O Lord, why didst Thou create the world with the letter Bet?" God replied: "That it might be made known unto My creatures that there are two worlds." The moon: "O Lord: which of the two worlds is the larger, this world or the world to come?" God: "The world to come is the larger." The moon: "O Lord, Thou didst create two worlds, a greater and a lesser world; Thou didst create the heaven and the earth, the heaven exceeding the earth; Thou didst create fire and water, the water stronger than the fire, because it can quench the fire; and now Thou hast created the sun and the moon, and it is becoming that one of them should be greater than the other." Then spake God to the moon: "I know well, thou wouldst have me make Thee greater than the sun. As a punishment I decree that thou mayest keep but one-sixtieth of thy light." The moon made supplication: "Shall I be punished so severely for having spoken a single word?" God relented: "In the future world I will restore thy light, so that thy light may again be as the light of the sun." The moon was not yet satisfied. "O Lord," she said, "and the light of the sun, how great will it be in that day?" Then the wrath of God was once more enkindled: "What, thou still plottest against the sun? As thou livest, in the world to come his light shall be sevenfold the light he now sheds." [100] The Sun runs his course like a bridegroom. He sits upon a throne with a garland on his head.[101] Ninety-six angels accompany him on his daily journey, in relays of eight every hour, two to the left of him, and two to the right, two before Him, and two behind. Strong as he is, he could complete his course from south to north in a single instant, but three hundred and sixty-five angels restrain him by means of as many grappling-irons. Every day one looses his hold, and the sun must thus spend three hundred and sixty-five days on his course. The progress of the sun in his circuit is an uninterrupted song of praise to God. And this song alone makes his motion possible. Therefore, when Joshua wanted to bid the sun stand still, he had to command him to be silent. His song of praise hushed, the sun stood still.[102]

The sun is double-faced; one face, of fire, is directed toward the earth, and one of hail, toward heaven, to cool off the prodigious heat that streams from the other face, else the earth would catch afire. In winter the sun turns his fiery face upward, and thus the cold is produced.[103] When the sun descends in the west in the evening, he dips down into the ocean and takes a bath, his fire is extinguished, and therefore he dispenses neither light nor warmth during the night. But as soon as he reaches the east in the morning, he laves himself in a stream of flame, which imparts warmth and light to him, and these he sheds over the earth. In the same way the moon and the stars take a bath in a stream of hail before they enter upon their service for the night.[104]

When the sun and the moon are ready to start upon their round of duties, they appear before God, and beseech him to relieve them of their task, so that they may be spared the sight of sinning mankind. Only upon compulsion they proceed with their daily course. Coming from the presence of God, they are blinded by the radiance in the heavens, and they cannot find their way. God, therefore, shoots off arrows, by the glittering

light of which they are guided. It is on account of the sinfulness of man, which the sun is forced to contemplate on his rounds, that he grows weaker as the time of his going down approaches, for sins have a defiling and enfeebling effect, and he drops from the horizon as a sphere of blood, for blood is the sign of corruption.[105] As the sun sets forth on his course in the morning, his wings touch the leaves on the trees of Paradise, and their vibration is communicated to the angels and the holy Hayyot, to the other plants, and also to the trees and plants on earth, and to all the beings on earth and in heaven. It is the signal for them all to cast their eyes upward. As soon as they see the Ineffable Name, which is engraved in the sun, they raise their voices in songs of praise to God. At the same moment a heavenly voice is heard to say, "Woe to the sons of men that consider not the honor of God like unto these creatures whose voices now rise aloft in adoration." [106] These words, naturally, are not heard by men; as little as they perceive the grating of the sun against the wheel to which all the celestial bodies are attached, although the noise it makes is extraordinarily loud.[107] This friction of the sun and the wheel produces the motes dancing about in the sunbeams. They are the carriers of healing to the sick,[108] the only health-giving creations of the fourth day, on the whole an unfortunate day, especially for children, afflicting them with disease.[109] When God punished the envious moon by diminishing her light and splendor, so that she ceased to be the equal of the sun as she had been originally,[110] she fell,[111] and tiny threads were loosed from her body. These are the stars.[112]

### Notes

76 Jub. 2. 7; BR 11. 9, 12. 5, 15. 3, 21. 9; 2 Enoch 21. 1. The prevalent view in the rabbinic sources is that paradise was created before the world; comp. Excursus I. In Konen 25 paradise is differentiated from its plants, presupposing that paradise is pre-existent, while the plants were created on the third day. This is an attempt to harmonize two different views.

77 On this gold, comp. Yoma 45a; BaR 11. 3; Tan. B. IV, 33; Tan. Naso 9. In all these passages it is stated that this gold bears fruit. In this and in other accounts of paradise the description of the future Jerusalem and the temple by the prophets is transferred to paradise; for later on paradise was identified with the heavenly Jerusalem. Alphabetot 96-97 contains many points which are analogous to the description given in the text, with this essential difference that the reward of the pious is postponed for the future world. As to the site of the earthly paradise, comp. vol. I, p. 11. The old rabbinic sources hardly contain anything definite on the earthly paradise; but in the Pseudepigraphical literature, particularly in the Books of Enoch (comp. Charles' edition, index, s. v.) and in later haggadic works a good deal is said about it.

78 According to Baba Batra 75a and PR 38, 163a, there are seven "canopies" given to each pious person.

79 These four streams are frequently mentioned in the legends; comp. 2 Enoch 8. 5; PR 38, 163a; Aggadat Shir 4, 83-84; see also vol. I, p. 132; vol. II, p. 315; Visio Pauli 23; Koran 47. 16-17. While in the Koran the stream of oil is replaced by a stream of fresh water, it is just this stream of balsam which is frequently alluded to in rabbinic literature; BR 62 (beginning); Ta'anit 25a; Yerushalmi 'Abodah Zarah 3, 42c; Tan. B. II, 131; Bacher, *Agada der palästinensischen Amorer*, II, 102, note 7; *Jeremias, Babylonisches im NT*, 47. On the wine preserved for the pious, comp. Sanhedrin 99a and Matthew 26. 29; Targum Eccl. 9. 7, where the Midrash given in the text was very likely made use of.

80 This picture is mentioned in the Talmud, Baba Mezi'a 48a, with reference to the beauty of R. Johanan, upon which our source is based; comp. PK 1, 3b.

81 I. e., the branches of this tree extend to the farthest ends of paradise. On the joys of the four different ages, which the pious experience, see Zohar I, 140a, where it is explained allegorically.

82 Instead of one word, read ("fanning", from "blew"); the variant seems to be an explanation of the difficult word, which, as a *lectio difficilior*, deserves preference. On the seven clouds of glory see vol. II, p. 374.

83 Comp. vol. IV, p. 205, with reference to the fragrance of paradise. Concerning the "canopies", see note 78.

84 Concerning these worlds see note 30. According to Zohar I, 125a, Eden is situated in the seventh heaven (according to another view, even above the seventh heaven), and paradise is situated on earth directly opposite to it. Comp. Berakot 34b; Sanhedrin 99a: No eye has ever seen Eden, Adam dwelt in the garden (=paradise) of Eden; comp. note 17, end.

83 The divisions of the dwellers in paradise (or Eden?) into seven classes is very frequently met with (Sifre D., 10 and 47; Midrash Tannaim 6; Tehillim 11, 10, and 16, 128; WR 30. 20; PK 28, 197b; PRK,



Schönblum's edition, 36a). **In one passage only is the number reduced to three (ARN 43, 120; comp. also note 97). Perhaps the difference of opinion on this point is in some way related to various opinions about the number of the heavens (comp. note 21);** each heaven having a separate class of dwellers, the more pious, one is, the higher the heaven in which he dwells. It is said in Shir 6. 8 that sixty groups of the pious study the Torah under the shades of the tree of life, while eighty groups of the average men study the Torah within a short distance from that tree. Mention is often made of the habitations, or rather worlds, which every pious man receives according to his merit; comp. Shabbat 152a; Ruth R. 1, 16; PK 4, 75a; Tehillim 34 (end); ShR 42. 2; Koheleth 12. 5; Baba Batra 75a; 2 Enoch 61. 2; **John 14. 2 - "Many Mansions"**. This view does not conflict with the division of the pious into classes, since the individual, though being one of a class, does not forfeit his independence.—The honor conferred upon R. Akiba and his colleagues as members of the first, i.e., the foremost division, is already mentioned in Baba Batra 10b.

86 I. e., as martyrs during the religious persecutions; comp. Gittin 57b.

87 Comp. Hagigah 14b where this **Rabbi describes his disciples as belonging to the "third division"**.

88 Under these, the descendants of Moses (comp. vol. IV, p. 317) are to be understood.

89 In Berakot 34b two views are cited; according to one, those who repent are considered superior to those who have never sinned, while the other view maintains the opposite case. As to the high esteem in which innocent youths are held, comp. Pesahim 113a. On the study of the Torah under God's guidance, comp. note 194.

90 Perek Gan 'Eden, which is extant in many recensions: Yalkut I, 20 (from a poor text of Yalkut published by Jellinek in BHM II, 52-53, under the wrong title Seder Gan 'Eden); Baraita di-Shemuel 25 (text in manuscript by Rachlin, Bar Levoi, New York, 1906, pp. 82-84); Mahzor Vitry 735. Aggadat Shir and Targum Eccl., and probably also Zohar (comp. notes 79 and 81), seem to have made use of this description of paradise. Most of the legends relating to paradise and hell are attributed to R. Joshua b. Levi, who, according to a well-known tradition, already mentioned in the Talmud (Ketubot 77b), was permitted to enter paradise during his life-time. Hence the description of paradise begins: "R. Joshua b. Levi said: There are eighty myriads of trees in every corner of paradise, etc." In Baraita di-Shemuel, after this description of paradise, there follows in a second chapter another description of the seven divisions of the pious in paradise (comp. note 97). The entire tractate is headed Masseket Gan 'Eden. It is, however, quite obvious from the contents that the two descriptions are of different origin. That a description of hell followed the one of paradise is quite probable, and the designation of the latter as Perek Gan 'Eden clearly points to this direction; but the description of hell found in our text of Baraita di-Shemuel 30-32 (published in BHM I, 147-149), from another source, has been artificially attached to that of paradise. One of the descriptions is purely legendary, while the other is midrashic-haggadic; they therefore must be of different origin.

91 These seven divisions are obviously identical with those previously described. There are many other descriptions of these divisions; comp. note 97. Concerning the proselyte Obadiah, comp. vol. IV, pp. 240-241.

92 The views of the ancient authorities differ on the question whether the "generation of the wilderness" have a portion in the life to come (=paradise); comp. note 177 on vol. III, p. 79.

93 The sentence is to be placed after a different place; hence the translation in the text.

94 Read, instead of , and comp. Konen 28. On Chileab comp. Vol. II, p. 260 and vol. IV, p. 118. On Menasseh comp. Vol. IV, p. 280. On those who repent, see note 89 and Koheleth 1. 8.

95 Read norm (=Ezek. 28. 13) instead of the meaningless phrase. Comp. Konen 29. A scribe who misread for added retro.

96 According to Yoma 45a, fine gold is the third best among the seven kinds of gold, whereas Parvaim gold (comp. note 77, as well as Masseket Kelim 89) is the very best.

97 Ma'aseh de-R. Joshua b. Levi 48-49. This description is partly (not in its entirety, as Jellinek asserts) incorporated into Konen 28-30, which source is to be used for the establishing of a correct text of Ma'aseh (comp. notes 94-95). Great caution must, however, be taken, since Konen had other sources, along with Ma'aseh, at its disposal for the description of paradise. R. Joshua b. Levi's description of paradise, found in Gaster's Ma'asiyyot 96-97, corresponds to ours in the introductory parts only, in which the adventure of this sage with the angel of death is mentioned (according to Ketubot 77b; comp. note 90), but not in the description of paradise proper. Very characteristic is the fact that **this source knows only of three halls of**

**paradise, one of glass, for proselytes; one of silver, for the righteous of Israel (on p. 97, line 24, read; one of gold, in which dwell the three patriarchs and Moses, Aaron, David, "the weeping" Messiah, and Elijah comforting him.** On the division of paradise into three, comp. note 85. The most elaborate description of paradise is that given by Jellinek in BHM III, 131-140 (comp. also the additions, 194-198), published under the title of Seder Gan 'Eden. This description has been extensively made use of by kabbalistic authors (comp. Jellinek, *Einleitung und Zusätze*, as well as Zohar I, 41a; III, 167b) who describe it as a part of the Book of Enoch. It, however, shows traces of speculative mysticism (for instance, great emphasis is laid upon the difference between spirit and soul, on the union of the masculine with the feminine souls which result in the productions of new souls, and on many other views of speculative mysticism), and it therefore could not have originated earlier than the end of the twelfth century. The division of the pious into seven classes is also known to this source, but it differs from the divisions found elsewhere (Perek Gan 'Eden 52-53 and Sha'are Gan 'Eden 42-43 = Baraita di-Shemuel 28-29; comp. note 90). This source is also acquainted with a portion of paradise assigned to women, who, like the men, are divided into seven classes, each of which is under the supervision of some famous woman from biblical times. These are: Bithiah, the foster-mother of Moses, Jochebed, Miriam, Huldah the prophetess, Abigail, the four matriarchs, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah. As nine women are given here as heads of seven divisions, the text must therefore be corrected in accordance with Zohar III, 167b. The distinction drawn here between the garden( =paradise) and Eden is old (comp. note 84 and Sha'are Gan 'Eden, loc. cit., where the dwellers of Eden are divided into twelve classes), but this source expresses this distinction in a different manner. To the old mysticism belongs the conception of the 390 heavens and 18000 worlds (comp. note 30), but this source gives a different interpretation of this mystic doctrine. Quite new is the conception of the secret chamber of the Messiah in paradise which is called here, as well as in Zohar II, 8a, by the peculiar name "bird's nest". On the whole, the Messiah plays an important part in this description of the life of the pious in paradise. Old is the view that the pious, particularly the patriarchs and the Messiah, grieve over Israel's suffering, and pray to God for their redemption; Berakot 18b; ShR 15. 26; BaR 19. 15; Tehillim 14, 115; Ekah 2, 11 (in the two last-named passages it is Jacob especially who is most concerned about Israel's suffering); Baba Mezi'a 85b (comp. this passage in vol. IV, p. 219); Mahzor Vitry 17; Pardes 54d; Seder Rashi 22; a kabbalistic source in Yalkut Reubeni on Deut. 23. 3; Tosafot on Sotah 34d (caption V113t4), and the passages cited there from the Talmud; see further PR 12, 46b-47a. Whereas Tehillim 30, 234 and 14 (according to the reading of Makiri, ad. loc., 79, bottom), and PR 2, 5b, state that the pious when dead continually praise God, later sources (PR 198a; BHM V, 43; Recanati on Gen. 3. 24; R. Bahya on Exod. 20. 8; Seder Gan 'Eden 138) maintain that on the Sabbath, festivals, and new-moons the dead rise from their graves, behold the Shekinah, and praise the Lord. Comp. also Zohar II, 8a (which very likely depends upon the Seder Gan 'Eden, loc. cit.); Yalkut Reubeni Gen. 19. 2; vol. III, p. 400. On Korah comp. vol. III, p. 300, and vol. IV, p. 234.—R. Joshua b. Levi is also the author of a description of hell which is given in vol. II, pp. 310, seq. For further details concerning the description of hell and paradise, comp. Gaster, *Hebrew Version of Hell and Paradise* in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1893, pp. 571-611; Rachlin, *Bar Levoi*, 70-86; Landau, *Mille und Fegfeuer* (Heidelberg, 1909, passim). A fragment of a description of paradise is found in *Steinschneider-Festschrift*, Hebrew section, 55-56. Comp. also *Abkat Rokel*, II, 1.

98 Hagigah 12a. The view that the light created on the first day is identical with that of the heavenly bodies is given as that of the majority of scholars. But there are some who maintain that the light of the first day is entirely different from all the other lights. Comp. vol. I, pp. 8-9. Philo, *De M. Opif.*, 3-4, asserts that the ideal world was created on the first day (concerning this explanation of the expression or comp. note 71), whereas the material world appeared on the following days. Similarly a Tanna of the middle of the second century asserts: Everything was created on the first day, except that some things appeared earlier and others later; Tan. B. I, 2; BR 12. 4; Origen on Gen. 2. 2; Ephraim, I, 127C; Basilius Hexaameron, 4. Comp. Ginzberg, *Haggada bei den Kirchenv.*, 24. See also Ginzberg's remarks in *R.E.J.*, LXVI II, 148. On the same view by the philosophers of the middle ages, see Horovitz, *Ueber den Einfluss auf den Kalam*, 22, note 2. Comp. also note 97 on vol. I, p. 82.

99 God created the sun and the moon in order to give the lie to the heathen who worship them as deities; had God only created one of them, the heathen would have apparently had good reason for adoring it. Similarly Philo, *De M. Opif.*, 14-15; Theophilus 2. 15; Tadshe (beginning), which reads: God first created the plant

world and then the heavenly bodies, in order that it should not be said that the latter produced the former; comp. also vol. I, p. 16, where the same idea is expressed with reference to the angels.

100 Konen 25-26, which is based on older sources; comp. BR 6. 3; Hullin 60b; Shebu'ot 9a (the sacrifice of atonement on the new-moon is God's acknowledgement that He dealt too severely with the moon); PRE 4 and 51; Targum Yerushalmi Gen. 1. 16 and Num. 28. 15. These sources, as well as others (Mekilta Bo 1, 3a; PK 5, 54a; PR 15, 78a; Tan. B. II, 47), also speak of the compensation received by the moon for its reduction in size: it became a symbol of Israel and the pious, whereas the sun represents Esau and the ungodly. Moreover the moon is sometimes seen also by day while the sun on the other hand is never seen by night. A reminiscence of the mythological conception of the diminution of the moon (the rationalistic explanation of the Haggadah by Back, *Monatsschrift* XXIX, 226, seq., must not be taken seriously) as a punishment for its rebellious conduct toward God may be found in Enoch 18. 15, where mention is made of the chastisement of the stars which "did not come at their appointed times". This corresponds to the reproach administered to the moon, mentioned in BR, loc. cit., for having encroached upon the province of its colleague (=the sun), i. e., for having shone during the day. The myth sought to explain the appearance of the moon by day, which, owing to the superiority of the sun over it, was rather baffling to the primitive mind. Hullin, loc. cit., as well as the later addition in BR, does not present the myth in its original form.—That the sun and moon are endowed with wisdom and passion like man is originally a mythological conception which had been maintained for a long time by Jews and Christians. On this conception in Pseudepigraphical literature and Philo, comp. Psalms of Solomon, end (the prayer at the appearance of the new-moon, in present use, which is already found in Sanhedrin 42a, partly corresponds to this psalm); Apocalypse of Baruch 48. 9; Enoch 2, 1-5, 3 (it is more than a poetic description of the order reigning in nature and the lack of order displayed by man); Philo, *De Plant. Noe*, 3; *De Somn.* 1, 4 and 2, 16. On the rabbinic sources containing this view, comp., besides the passages referred to at the beginning of this note, also those cited in notes 102, 104, 105, 112. For the Christian sources, see Origen, I, 7; *Visio Pauli* 4-6. Like the heavenly bodies, even so the earth, the plants, in short, all existing things, were conceived more or less by analogy to man; comp. note 193.—Concerning the motions of the heavenly bodies, the Books of Enoch, as well as the old rabbinic sources, contain a good deal of material which is on the boundary line of mythology and astronomy; comp. Pesahim 94a; Yerushalmi Rosh ha-Shanah 2, 58a; Baba Batra 25a; PK 29, 186a-186b; ER 2, 9-10; Hallel 89; Shir 3. 11; see also the two writings Baraita di-Shemuel and Baraita di-Mazzalot, which are entirely devoted to this subject. Old material is found also in Razi'el, which is particularly instructive for the history of astrology. Of interest is "the case" in which the disc of the sun is inserted, a conception often mentioned in old rabbinic literature as well as in the writings of the Persians and Arabs (comp. Grünbaum, *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, 145-146). It is noteworthy that this "case" is known in rabbinic sources (BR 6. 6; Koheleth 1. 5; PK 29, 186a; Nedarim 8b; 'Abodah Zarah 3b; Tehillim 19, 168 and 170; Tan. B. II, 98; Tan. Tezawweh 8; Hallel 89; Baraita di-Ma'aseh Bereshit 50) by the Greek word —Concerning the darkness of the sun and the moon, which occupied the minds of the ancients, comp. Mekilta Bo 1. 3a; Tosefta Sukkah 2. 6 and Babli 29a; Derek Erez 2; Nispahim 10; see also the references in note 112, and Index s. v. Eclipse. The view that the light of the sun is seven times as intense as that of the moon (Enoch 72. 37, 73. 2, and 78. 4, as well as 2 Enoch 11, 2) is based on Is. 30. 26. This opinion is also shared by the legend given in the text in accordance with Konen 24-25 concerning the restoration of the light of the moon and the sevenfold increase of the light of the sun in the future. The old midrashic sources (Midrash Tannaim 181; ShR 15. 21; Targum, ad loc.), however, conceive the passage of Is., loc. cit., in a different manner, and according to them the relationship between the light of the sun and that of the moon is 1: 49 or 1: 343. That the sun and the moon had been of equal size, as stated by Enoch 72. 37, is not stated explicitly in rabbinic literature, but the legend given in the text implies it. Similar is the view of modern scientists that the moon was originally an independent planet; comp. See, *Researches*, II. Like all first things created (comp. vol. I, p. 59), the moon was created in a fully developed form, so that there was full moon on the fourth day of creation; Seder 'Olam 4.

101? PRE 6; Baraita de-Ma'aseh Bereshit 50. The metaphor of the sun as bridegroom is, of course, taken from Ps. 19. 6. It is, however, questionable whether the crown and the wreath (in Hebrew these two things are represented by one word) belong to this conception. The wreath of the bridegroom is Jewish (comp. Sotah 9. 14) but the wreath of the sun may have been borrowed from the Greeks, as the Jews have often seen the image of the sun-god wreathed. The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch knows of the crown of the sun, as well

as of its chariot; so also Enoch 75. 8; 2 Enoch 11. 2. Many of the rabbinic sources cited above employ the word 11=710 "chariot", which is, however, rendered "throne", in order to retain the picture of the bridegroom.

102 MHG I, 41-42; PRE 6; Tehillim 19, 168-170; Baraita deMa'aseh Bereshit 50; Koheleth 86; 'Aseret ha-Dibrot 64; Zohar Hadash on Gen. 4, 19b; 2 Enoch 11. 4; Greek Apocalypse of Baruch 6. Comp. also vol. I, p. 132. The song of praise of the heavenly bodies is partly based on Ps. 19, but presupposes also an acquaintance with the Pythagorean doctrine (perhaps of oriental origin) of the music of the spheres. The original text of Enoch 41. 7 very likely read "And they give thanks and they glorify; they would cease to exist if they would not praise." In consequence of the similarity between the letters 11 and n, the translator was misled into making the text say just the opposite. With regard to the music of the spheres, Philo, De Car., 3, refers to it in the very words which remind one of the anonymous Midrash quoted in Hadar, Deut. 32. 1. Comp. also DR 10. 1 and 2; Yelammedenu in Yalkut I, 729. See further vol. I, pp. 44, seq. The song of praise of the sun and moon did not strike the naive mind as strange, in view of the fact that the surfaces of these luminaries resemble the human countenance; comp. R. Benjamin b. Zerah (about 1050) in his piyyut num 11715tV4n the Roman and German Mahzor (comp. Zunz, Literaturgeschichte, 121), who undoubtedly made use of a version of Mid-rash Konen different from ours, but which Treves still had before him in his commentary on the Roman Mahzor entitled Kimha Dabishuna, ad loc. The human countenance of the sun is also referred to in the Greek Apocalypse of Baruch 6. Comp. also the preceding note as well as note 112 and note 6 on vol. IV, p. 4.

103 PRE 6; Baraita de-Ma'aseh Bereshit. See also 2 Enoch 37. 2. In the Midrashim (BR 5. 6; Koheleth 1. 5; Tehillim 19, 170; Baraita de-Ma'aseh Bereshit, loc. cit.) it is said that the sun is led through a stream, which is put up for that purpose in heaven, before it starts its revolution, to cool off its heat; otherwise it might consume the earth.

104 PRE 51 and 6; Baraita de-Ma'aseh Bereshit 50. The moon and the stars have light but no heat, and hence the "bath of hail". On the stream of fire in which the sun bathes, comp. also Enoch 17. 4 and Baba Batra 84a. The latter passage reads: The sun passes paradise in the morning and hell in the evening. Dawn is a reflection of the roses of paradise; the evening twilight of the fire of hell. The stream of fire in which the sun bathes, is identical with the Nehar di-Nur; comp. Luria on PRE 51 and note 62.

105 WR 31. 9; Tehillim 19, 169; ER 2, 11; MHG I, 42; Alphabetot 118; Baraita de-Ma'aseh Bereshit 50. Quite similar is the statement of the Greek Apocalypse of Baruch 8 to the effect that the angels remove the crown of the sun in the evening, bring it to heaven, and "renew" it there (the "renewing" of creation every day is also alluded to in the morning prayer, at the end of Yozer, comp. note 6), because the sun and its rays are becoming defiled on earth. With regard to the compulsory motion of the heavenly bodies, which do not wish to shed their light upon a sinful world, comp. vol. III, pp. 197-298; vol. IV, p. 309. In Visio Pauli 4-6, the sun, moon, stars, and the sea implore God to grant them the power to destroy the sinners. There is a widespread view, which is based on Deut. 31. 28, to the effect that the earth, the heaven, and the heavenly bodies bear witness for and against man, according to his actions; comp. Enoch 1. 7; Sifre D., 306; 'Abodah Zarah 3a. The following legend is quoted by many medieval authors (Mahzor Vitry 373; Zohar III, 275a; Sefer Mizwot Gadol, 42nd positive precept; Kaneh in Yalkut Reubeni I, 16, 8b) from an unknown midrashic source which reads: Whenever Satan brings accusations against Israel on the New Year, the day when God sits down to judge the whole universe, God commands him to produce witnesses in support of his accusations. But he can only secure one witness on that day, the sun, because the moon is invisible at that time; but when Satan appears ten days later, on the Day of Atonement, with his second witness, he is informed by the Lord that Israel repented of their sins during the ten days of penitence and that they were pardoned. Satan fares still worse in the legend given in PR 45, 185b-186a, according to which, while Satan is searching for more sins, God removes sins from the balance in which the good and evil deeds are weighed. On the appearance of the heavenly bodies, before and after their daily course, before God, comp. Baba Batra 25a and vol. III, p. 116.

106 Zohar Hadash Bereshit 4, 23a (on Gen. 2. 8); that God's name is engraved in the sun is already mentioned in PRE 6, as well as in the Baraita de-Ma'aseh Bereshit 50; whereas according to the Greek Apocalypse of Baruch 6, the bird running before the sun (comp. vol. I, p. 32) bears on its body an inscription of golden letters. In the old Midrashim (Tan. B. II, 112; Kinyan Torah; introduction to Ekah 2; Tan. Ki-Tissa

16; PK 15, 121a; ShR 41. 6) it is said that a heavenly voice proclaims daily on mount Horeb: "Woe to mankind for contempt of the Torah." The revelation which took place on Sinai-Horeb is a constant accusation against mankind for not walking in God's path, despite the Torah that was given to them. Similarly the daily appearance of the sun also is a constant accusation against the sinners who do not recognize their Creator.

107 BR 6. 7; ShR 5. 9; Koheleth Z. 86; Shemuel 9, 74; Yotna 20b-21a; PRE 34. On the grating of the sun against its wheel, comp. Sachs, Beitrage, I, 50; Perles, Etymologische Studien, 72; Grünbaum, Gesammelte Aufsätze, 145. This has nothing to do with the music of the spheres, despite the statement of Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed, II, 8, and Zohar Hadash Bereshit 4. The old Jewish sources are not acquainted with the conception of the music of the spheres; comp. note 102. As to the noises which resound throughout the universe but are nevertheless inaudible to man, a good deal more is mentioned in the sources just quoted. These noises are at the birth and death of man, at the first sexual intercourse, as well as at the time of divorce, the felling of a fruitful tree and the sloughing of the skin of a serpent, the falling of rain (Yoma loc. cit., reads more accurately: the roaring of the taurine angel when he causes the water from the lower abyss to be poured into the upper abyss; comp. Ta'anit 25b; Baraita de-Ma'aseh Bereshit 49; Seder Rabba di-Bereshit 10; Responsen der Geonim, Harkavy's edition, No. 289. p. 142); finally there resounds out of Rome such a loud voice, that were it not for the grating of the sun, it would have been audible all over the world. In these sources mythological conceptions, as, for instance, the roaring of the taurine angel of the abyss, which is merely the Jewish recast of the Babylonian belief about the god "Ea", are found side by side with purely poetical images. As to the loud voice which resounds at the time of a divorce, comp. Index s. v. Divorce. See also vol. I, p. 59.

jog Nedarim 8b; Yoma 20b, which reads: These notes are named in Aramaic, according to which 117 (Dan. 4. 32) is explained. On the grating of the sun, comp. Low in Orientalische Literaturzeitung, XV, 305.

109 Yerushalmi Ta'anit 4, 68b; Babli 27b; Soferim 7. 5. One should not go out of doors on Wednesday night (i.e., on Wednesday eve, for according to the Jewish conception the day belongs to the preceding night) because the demon Agrat the daughter of Mahlat; the transliteration is doubtful, and Kohut's Persian etymology in Angelologie, 88, is certainly untenable) with her eighteen myriads of malicious throngs come out on this night (also on Saturday night) to inflict evil on man. See Pesahim 111a and 112b; PRK (Griinhut's edition) 73; BaR 12. 3. Comp. further Sifra 26. 4; Geiger, Kebuzzat Maamarim, 167, and Ginzberg's note in the supplement. In the middle ages Monday (comp. vol. I, p. 15) and Wednesday were considered as unlucky days, and there is an accepted rule "one should not begin any undertaking on Monday or Wednesday". Briill, Jahrbilcher, IX, 5 (comp. also *ibid.*, 66), accepts the explanation found in a manuscript, according to which the belief is due to the fact that 12 in Persian signifies "bad"; but this explanation is rather far-fetched.

110 Comp. vol. I, pp. 23-24.

111 It is not on earth but in heaven where the moon slipped in its terror of the punishment which was pronounced.

112 Hadar on Gen. 1. 16, which cites an unknown midrashic source; Toledot Yizhak on Gen., loc. cit., which is very likely based on Hadar. According to this legend, the word "stars" is connected with the word "was extinguished"; the light of the moon was dimmed because some of her parts fell off. On the etymology of "sun", and "moon", see Konen 25-26. The text of this passage is to be corrected in accordance with Zohar Hadash Bereshit 4, 19b) "servant of man". Jellinek emended it correctly without having known the parallel passage.—In the legends concerning the sun, moon, and the stars it is presupposed that these luminaries are endowed with consciousness and intelligence. This idea, as pointed out in note 100, was so widespread among the ancients that Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed, II, 5 (comp. also Yad haHazzakah, Yesode ha-Torah, 3. 9), was justified in referring to the Haggadah as support for his doctrine which he borrowed from the Greeks, that the heavenly bodies were endowed with intelligence. Philo, De Plan. Noe, 3 and De Somn., 4, likewise calls attention to the agreement among the Jews and the Greeks concerning this view. It should, however, be observed that in the liturgy, at least as far as the old prayers are concerned, the conception of the heavenly bodies as intelligent or animate beings is entirely ignored, though the opportunity has frequently presented itself to make use of this idea, as, for instance, in the morning and evening prayer, in the passages of Yozer and Ma' crib 'Arabim. On the passages in Pseudepigraphical literature stating that the heavenly

bodies are endowed with life and senses, comp. note 100, as well as Enoch 41. 5, and the passages cited by Charles. Not only Enoch 18. 13-16, but also the Talmud (Mo'ed Katan 16a) speaks of "rebellious" stars; comp. also vol. IV, p. 36, on Meroz (Jud. 5. 23). On the eclipse of the moon and sun comp. note 100. See further Philo, De M. OW., 19, and Steinschneider in Magazin fur Literatur d. Auslands, 1845, No. 80. Concerning the material of which the sun and moon were made very little is found in the Haggadah; according to Konen 25 the moon consists of light, the sun of fire. The statement made in the Greek Apocalypse of Baruch 9 to the effect that the moon has the likeness of a woman (in the original myth she must have been the wife of the sun) is unknown in Jewish sources. On the human form of the moon, however, see note 102. Comp. further Index, s.v. "Man in the Moon".

### **1000 AD; 1980 Translation By George Maloney S.J.**

### **St. Symeon the New Theologian (942-1022), Syriac Church Father**

### **Extasy In The Light, How Not To Lose The Kingdom Of Heaven, And The Final Reward Discourses On Christ's Resurrection**

"The Discourses" 1980 Translation By George Maloney S.J. in "Classics in Western Spirituality"  
Preface by Basile Krivocheine

#### **Discourse XIII - Of Christ's Resurrection**

In what it consists—how Christ's resurrection takes place in us, and in it the resurrection of the soul. The mystery of this resurrection. Delivered on the Monday of the second week of Easter.

#### **The Day Of Resurrection**

Brethren and fathers,

Already Easter, that joyful day, that day of all gladness and delight, the day of Christ's resurrection, has arrived in the circle of the year. But rather, it happens daily and eternally in those who know its mystery, and so has filled our hearts with unspeakable joy and gladness. Likewise it has broken off the labor of the all-holy fast, or, rather, it has perfected our souls and encouraged them as well. So, as you see, it has come and invited all the faithful together to rest and to thanksgiving. Let us therefore give thanks to the Lord, who has brought us over the sea (Wis. 10:18) of Lent and led us with joy into the harbor of His resurrection. Let us give thanks to Him, both those who have nobly and zealously completed the course of Lent with fervent resolve and struggles of virtue, and those of us as well who have been weak in this matter through neglect and weakness of soul. He it is who in great generosity gives crowns to the zealous and duly rewards their labors, and also in mercy and loving-kindness grants forgiveness to the weaker. He sees the dispositions and intentions of our souls rather than the labors of our bodies, by which we exercise ourselves in virtue, whether we increase our asceticism out of eagerness of soul or practice less than the zealous ones because of the weakness of our bodies. According to our intentions He measures out the prizes and the gifts of the Spirit to each one, whether He grants fame and glory to one who is zealous or leaves him still in lowliness and in need of more strenuous purification.

#### **Christ's Resurrection Mystically Reproduced In Us**

But, if you will, let us look and carefully examine what is the mystery of that resurrection of Christ our God which takes place mystically in us at all times, if we are willing, and how Christ is buried in us as in a tomb and how He unites Himself to our souls and rises again, and raises us with Himself. Such is the aim of our discourse.

Christ our God was hanged on the cross and nailed on it (cf. Cot 2:14) the sin of the world. He tasted death (Heb. 2:9) and went down to the uttermost depths of hell (d: Eph. 4:9). Again, He returned from hell into His own spotless body, from which He had in no way been separated as He descended thither, and forthwith He arose from the dead. After that He ascended into heaven with great glory and power (Mt 24:30). So, likewise,

as we have now come out of the world and entered into the tomb of repentance and humiliation by being assimilated to the sufferings of the Lord (Rom. 6:5; 2 Con 1:5; Phil. 3:10), He Himself comes down from heaven and enters into our body as into a tomb. He unites Himself to our souls and raises them up, though they were undoubtedly dead, and then grants to him who has thus been raised with Christ that he may see the glory of His mystical resurrection.

### **Union With The Mystical Reality**

Christ's resurrection is thus our resurrection, ours who lie here below. He who has never fallen into sin (Heb. 4:15, 7:26), as it is written, nor lost anything whatever of His own glory, how will He ever be raised up or be glorified, since He is always glorified above all and remains the same, "far above all rule and authority (Eph. 1:21)? As has been said, Christ's resurrection and His glory are our glory. Through His resurrection in us it comes into being in us, is shown to us, and is seen by us. Once He has appropriated what is ours, that which He works in us He attributes to Himself. The resurrection of the soul is union with life. The body is dead and cannot live or be called alive unless it receives the living soul in itself and is joined to it, though not mingled with it. Likewise the soul cannot live unless it is ineffably and without confusion united to God, who is truly the life eternal (cf 1 John 5:20). Before this union in knowledge, vision, and perception it is dead, even though it is endowed with intellect and is by nature immortal. There is no knowledge without vision, nor vision without knowledge. This is what I want to say—there is vision, and in the vision there is knowledge and perception; but I say this about spiritual things, for in the physical realm there is perception even apart from vision. What do I mean? A blind man who hits his foot against a stone feels it, but a dead man does not. But in spiritual things, unless the mind comes to the contemplation of the things that are above thought, it does not perceive the mystical activity. He who has not arrived at contemplation in spiritual matters and claims that he perceives the things that are above intellect, word, and thought is like him whose eyes are blinded and who has a sensation of good or bad things that he experiences, but does not know what is in his hands or at his feet, even if they are for him a matter of life or death. Since he is deprived of the faculty and perception of vision he in no way perceives the bad or the good things that come upon him. Thus he will often lift up his staff to ward off his enemy and possibly strike his friend instead, while his enemy stands before his eyes and laughs at him.

### **Who Is Able To Experience The Resurrection**

Most men believe in the resurrection of Christ, but very few have a clear vision of it. Those who have no vision thereof cannot even adore Christ Jesus as the Holy One and as Lord. As it is written, "No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit" (I Cot. 12:3), and, elsewhere, "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (Jn. 4:24). That most sacred formula which is daily on our lips does not say, "Having believed in Christ's resurrection," but, "Having beheld Christ's resurrection, let us worship the Holy One, the Lord Jesus, who alone is without sin." How then does the Holy Spirit urge us to say, "Having beheld Christ's resurrection," which we have not seen, as though we had seen it, when Christ has risen once for all a thousand years ago, and even then without anybody's seeing it? Surely Holy Scripture does not wish us to lie? Far from it! Rather, it urges us to speak the truth, that the resurrection of Christ takes place in each of us who believes, and that not once, but every hour, so to speak, when Christ the Master arises in us, resplendent in array (cf Ps. 93A) and flashing with the lightnings of incorruption and Deity. For the light-bringing coming of the Spirit shows forth to us, as in early morning, the Master's resurrection, or, rather, it grants us to see the Risen One Himself. Therefore we say, "The Lord is God, and He has given us light" (Ps. 118:27), and we allude to His second Coming and add these words, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord" (Ps. 118:26). Those to whom Christ has given light as He has risen, to them He has appeared spiritually, He has been shown to their spiritual eyes. When this happens to us through the Spirit He raises us up from the dead and gives us life. He grants us to see Him, who is immortal and indestructible. More than that, He grants clearly to know Him who raises us up (cf. Eph. 2:6) and glorifies us (Rom. 8:17) with Himself, as all the divine Scripture testifies.

### **A Faith That Lives In Deeds**

These, then, are the divine mysteries of Christians. This is the hidden power of our faith, which unbelievers, or those who believe with difficulty, or rather believe in part, do not see nor are able at all to see (1 Tim. 6:16). Unbelievers, those who believe with difficulty, or believe in part, are those who do not show their faith through works. Apart from works the demons also believe (Jos. 2:19) and confess Christ to be God and Master. "We know who you are" (Mk. 1:24), they say, "you are the Son of God" (Mt 8:29), and elsewhere, "These men are the servants of the Most High God" (Acts 16:17). Yet such faith will not benefit the demons, nor even humans. This faith is of no use, for it is dead, as says the divine apostle, "Faith apart from works is dead" (Jas. 2:26), just like works without faith. How is it dead? Because it has not in itself God who gives life (1 Tim. 6:13). It has not laid hold of Him who said, "He who loves Me will keep My commandments, and I and the Father will come and make Our home with him" (in. 14:21, 23), so that by His coming He may raise from the dead him who has attained faith and give him life, and grant him to see Him who has risen in him and who has raised him up. For this reason such faith is dead, or, rather, they are dead who have faith apart from works. Faith in God is always alive, and since it is living it gives life to those who come with a good intention and receive it. Even before they have practiced the commandments it has brought many out of death into life and has shown them Christ our God. Had they persevered in His commandments and kept them until death they too would have been preserved by them—that is, in the state to which faith alone had brought them. But since they "turned aside like a bent bow" (Ps. 78:57) and speared themselves on their former actions, they inevitably at once made shipwreck of their faith (1 Tim. 1:19) and miserably deprived themselves of the true riches, who is Christ our God.

So I urge you, let us keep God's commandments with all our might, so that we may not share in their fate, but enjoy both present and future blessings, that is, the very vision of Christ. To this may we all attain through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

#### **DISCOURSE XVI - Ecstasy In The Light**

On the activities of the Holy Spirit. The contemplation of His mysteries. How they are revealed to the pure in heart. A useful preliminary account of a young monk who received the Holy Spirit at the prayers of his spiritual father.

#### **The Story Of A Novice—The Pursuit Of The Light**

Brethren and fathers and children,

A young man has told me this story:

"I was the apprentice of a venerable father, of one who was equal to the great and exalted saints. From him I often heard of divine illuminations sent from heaven to those engaged in the spiritual struggle, consisting in a flood of light, and conversations between God and man thereby, and I marveled. So great", said he, "was my desire and longing for such a blessing that as I thought thereof I forgot all things earthly and heavenly, to the extent even of eating and drinking and bodily relief.

"This man, however, was a great saint (he is now among the saints!), a man endowed with the gift of prophecy. When he saw me carrying out the things that he enjoined on me to the exclusion even of eating and drinking, wholly absorbed in myself and as though I was wasting away through some poison, out of endless compassion he gave me a strict command and so, unwillingly, I ate, for," as he said. "I was afraid of being charged with disobedience. The more I partook of food, the more the fire consumed me and I could not bear the constraint. I poured out tears like rivers and so I often left the table. In my senselessness I thought that he was setting obstacles in the way of my desire out of ignorance of the great pain that I suffered within. In this state I, miserable wretch, did not know that he was aware even of the hidden thoughts of my heart, as will appear from what follows.



"It happened one day that we were going into the city<sup>2</sup> in which he had his dwelling, in order that we might visit his spiritual children. We spent the whole day among them, for there were many whom he helped even by his mere presence. At evening we came back to our cell, hungry and thirsty from much labor and the heat, for, however hot the day, he would never take the slightest nap, in spite of his age, though he was about sixty years old. When we sat down to partake of some bread I did not eat, for I was worn out by fatigue. I thought that if I were to take food and drink I should not at all be able to stand for prayer and seek what I desired. These," said he, "were my thoughts, as I was sitting, as though I were beside myself."

### **The Counsels Of Symeon The Pious**

"When the saint saw me and considered the labor that I had endured with him he realized why I had undergone these things, since, as I have mentioned, he was endowed with prophetic insight. Moved with great compassion he spoke to me and strictly commanded me, 'Eat, my child, and drink, and from henceforth be not sad. Had not God willed to have mercy upon you, it would not have pleased Him that you should come to us.' So we ate," said he, "and drank, and more than we needed, for he too ate to put himself on the level of my weakness. Then when the meal was finished he said to me, 'Know this, my boy, that it is neither fasting, nor vigil, nor bodily effort, nor any other laudable action that pleases God so that He appears to us, but only a soul and heart that is humble, simple, and good.' When I heard this I marveled at the words and the admonition of the holy man. More than ever I was burning with ardor. With keenness of mind I called to mind in a single instant all my sins and was flooded with tears. I fell at his holy feet and laid hold of them and said, 'Pray for me, O saint of God, that I may find mercy through you, for none of the good things that you have mentioned belong to me, but only many sins, as you well know.' The holy man showed me even more compassion and shed tears. Then he bade me rise from the ground and said, 'I am confident that God, who has bestowed abundant grace on me, will bestow a double portion thereof on you simply because of the faith you show toward Him and toward my humble self.' So I received this word as though it came from God Himself and thought of that which Elijah did to Elisha (2 Kings 2:9-10). I believed that however unworthy I was, yet God is gracious to men, and quick to fulfill the desire of those who fear Him (Ps. 145:19). So again I made a bow of reverence and asked for his prayer and departed for my cell, having been told by him merely to recite the Trisagion<sup>3</sup> and go to sleep."

### **The Light And The Ecstasy**

"So I entered the place where I usually prayed and, mindful of the words of the holy man I began to say, 'Holy God.' At once I was so greatly moved to tears and loving desire for God that I would be unable to describe in words the joy and delight I then felt. I fell prostrate on the ground, and at once I saw, and behold, a great light was immaterially shining on me and seized hold of my whole mind and soul, so that I was struck with amazement at the unexpected marvel and I was, as it were, in ecstasy. Moreover I forgot the place where I stood, who I was, and where, and could only cry out, 'Lord, have mercy,' so that when I came to myself I discovered that I was reciting this. But Father," said he, "who it was that was speaking, and who moved my tongue, I do not know—only God knows. 'Whether I was in the body, or outside the body' (2 Car. 12:2, 3), I conversed with this Light. The Light itself knows it; it scattered whatever mist there was in my soul and cast out every earthly care. It expelled from me all material denseness and bodily heaviness that made my members to be sluggish and numb. What an awesome marvel! It so invigorated and strengthened my limbs and muscles, which had been faint through great weariness, that it seemed to me as though I was stripping myself of the garment of corruption. Besides, there was poured into my soul in unutterable fashion a great spiritual joy and perception and a sweetness surpassing every taste of visible objects, together with a freedom and forgetfulness of all thoughts pertaining to this life. In a marvelous way there was granted to me and revealed to me the manner of the departure from this present life. Thus all the perceptions of my mind and my soul were wholly concentrated on the ineffable joy of that Light"

### **The Pain Caused By The Withdrawal Of The Light**

"But when that infinite Light which had appeared to me—for I can call it by no other fitting or appropriate name," so he continued, "in some way had gently and gradually faded and, as it were, had withdrawn itself, I regained possession of myself and realized what its power had suddenly done to me. I reflected on its

departure and considered how it had left me again to be alone in this life. So severe was the grief and pain that overcame me that I am at a loss properly to describe how great it was: A varied and most vehement pain was kindled like a fire in my heart. Imagine, father, if you can," said he, "the pain of being separated from it, the infinity of love, the greatness of my passion, the sublimity of this greatest of blessings! I on my part cannot express in words or comprehend with my mind the infinity of this vision."

### **The Enjoyment Of Such A Light**

"But tell me, most venerable father and brother," said I, "more clearly and exactly what were the effects of what you have seen." But that dear man, full of the divine Spirit, who had been found worthy of such contemplation, at once replied with a voice most gentle and flowing like honey, "Father, when it appears it fills one with joy, when it vanishes it wounds. It happens close to me and carries me up to heaven. It is a pearl [of great price] (Mt 13:96). The light envelops me and appears to me like a star, and is incomprehensible to all. It is radiant like the sun, and I perceive all creation encompassed by it. It shows me all that it contains, and enjoins me to respect my own limits. I am hemmed in by roof and walls, yet it opens the heavens to me. I lift up my eyes sensibly to contemplate the things that are on high, and I see all things as they were before. I marvel at what has happened, and I hear a voice speaking to me secretly from on high, 'These things are but symbols and preliminaries, for you will not see that which is perfect as long as you are clothed in flesh. But return to yourself and see that you do nothing that deprives you of the things that are above. Should you fall, however, it is to recall you to humility! Do not cease to cultivate penitence, for when it is united to My love for mankind it blots out past and present failures.'"

When I had heard these things from him, fathers and brethren, I was almost ecstatic and trembled all over. I noted at once the great height of contemplation and knowledge to which he had readily ascended, solely because he loved and trusted his spiritual father. From mere beginnings he had been granted to see and enjoy such great blessings, as if he had already cast human weakness aside and become an angel instead of a man.

### **The Pursuit Of Purity Of Heart**

I therefore entreat you, brethren in Christ, let us cast far from us every attachment and every care of this present life. Let us hate the pleasures of the flesh, bodily comfort, slackness, and idleness, by which that which is worse prevails over that which is better. Come, let us arm ourselves with genuine faith (cf. Eph. 6:16) toward God and toward our fathers and teachers who live - according to God. Let us acquire a contrite heart, a soul humbled in mind, and a heart that by means of tears and repentance is pure from every stain and defilement of sin. So shall we too be found worthy in due time quickly to rise to such heights that even here and now we may see and enjoy the ineffable blessings of the divine light, if not perfectly, at least in part, and to the extent to which we are able. So shall we both unite ourselves to God and God will be united to us. To those who come near us we shall become "light" and "salt" (cf Mt. 5:13-14) to their great benefit in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

### **DISCOURSE XXX - On Penitence**

On penitence and the beginning of a life that is worthy of praise. How he who is penitent ought to behave every day. Of tears and compunction.

### **How Not To Lose The Kingdom Of Heaven**

But if you are ignorant of the things I have told you, and do not even know whether you have sown in your ground—I mean the ground of your heart—any of the more excellent fruits, what good has it done you to encompass the ends of the earth and to go to the furthest parts of the sea (Ps. 139:9)? None whatever! Even if I show mercy to the whole world by giving what is not my own—even if it were my own—but ignore my nakedness and poverty (cf. Rev. 3:17), and have reached the extremity of destitution and so am about to die destitute of all goodness and to stand before the awesome judgment seat of Christ (Rom. 14:10), what good is it? We must depart from this life and from the body fully clothed and equipped if we wish to go in to the wedding feast of the king and to sit at table with his friends (cf. Mt. 22:11 ff). With what garment must I and

indeed everybody be clothed, so that we may not be found naked on that day (cf 2 Con 5:2f)? Brethren, it is Christ (cf. Rom. 13:14) our God! Supposing I were to travel on a pilgrimage through all the earth under heaven as if it were a single house, without omitting any country or city or failing to enter any church to worship and pray there and carefully and accurately examine everything that is in them. Yet were I to lose the kingdom of heaven, would it not have been better for me never to have been born (Mk. 14:21; Mt 26:24) or to have fallen on the ground (Wis. 7:3), or to have breathed the air or seen the sun with my eyes? Indeed, it would have been far better for me!

What then shall I do, so that I may not fall out of it? If I were to practice all the things that I have mentioned, I would receive the Holy Ghost, for He is the seed of Christ, through which we poor mortals become Christ's kin. When it falls into the good soil it "bears fruit thirtyfold and sixtyfold and hundredfold" (Mk. 4:20), and this very thing is the kingdom of heaven. Apart from this all other things are useless. Brethren, if we fail to take pity on ourselves and through penitence find our souls purified and filled with light, the practice of all other things will avail us nothing, as our Lord and God tells us, "What will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and loses his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?" (Mt 16:26). Again He says, "He who loses his life for my sake will find it, but he who finds it will lose it" (Mt. 10:39). If I do not lose my soul in the former way, as I have said, by giving myself to death for Christ's sake, and find it again alive with eternal life, what will I have been profited by all other things, friends and brethren? Nothing at all! Nothing will profit us at all, beloved servants of Christ; nothing will snatch us from eternal fire if we do not forsake all things and all people and take heed to ourselves alone!

### **DISCOURSE XXXI - SELF-EXAMINATION ON THE BEATITUDES**

How every man ought to watch over himself and carefully examine that which concerns him. How one ought to compare one's conduct with the commandments of Christ.

#### **Examination Of One's Self**

Brethren and fathers,

In the preceding catechesis, when we left our subject incomplete in order that we might avoid prolonging our discourse to excess, we were discussing what it is to watch over oneself. Now we have come to pay the debt of the discourse we owe you by the present catechesis. It is for this purpose that we have been appointed to this position. We are always obliged to supply to your charity the due measure (cf Lk. 12:42) of the word.

What is it to take heed to oneself and to watch over oneself as we have mentioned before? That everyone should take heed to himself consists in this: that he says to himself: "Is there not some passion that has control over me? For, as I hear in the divine Scriptures, he who has even one passion only does not enter into the kingdom of heaven, for it is written, 'If a man keep the whole law, but fails in one point, he has become guilty of all of it'" (Jas. 2:10). Similarly, to watch over oneself consists in this, that one says to oneself, "Have I not neglected this commandment or that? Am I careless about it, do I ignore it and fail to practice it?" For Christ our God says, "Not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law of My commandments until all is accomplished" (Mt. 5:8). Again He says, "He who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches men to do so shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:19).

#### **Humility**

But we must be even more attentive to the divine Scriptures. While they are being read a man ought to look at himself, and reflect on his soul as in a mirror (Jas. 1:23). In what state is it? What do I mean? A man hears the Lord say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt. 4:17). He must therefore call to mind how he spends his days. If he is duly penitent he will increase and prolong his work; if he is negligent he will mend his ways.

Again he hears Him say, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:3). He must then constantly examine and test himself (cf 1 Cor. 11:28) on every occasion of humiliation—I mean, when he is insulted, dishonored, treated with contempt. He must look at himself, whether or not the virtue of humility be found in him, for he who has acquired it bears all things without being pained or burdened. Nothing that happens to him wounds his heart. If he is slightly wounded thereby, yet he is not completely disturbed; on the contrary he afflicts himself and counts himself worthless because of that wound of his heart, because he was even slightly grieved instead of receiving with joy that which happened to him. He is grieved and weeps as he enters into the inner chamber (Mt. 6:6) of his soul or into his cell. So he falls down before God and makes confession to Him, as though he had wholly lost his own life.

### **Being Afflicted**

Then again he hears. "Blessed are those who mourn" (Mt. 5:4). Note that He does not say, "Those who have mourned," but "those who constantly mourn." Here too we must examine whether we mourn daily. For if we become humble from penitence, it is clear that not one day or night will pass for us with, out tears and mourning and compunction.

### **Meekness**

And again (he hears), "Blessed are the meek" (Mt. 5:5). Is there anyone who mourns every day who can continue to live in a state of anger and not become meek? Just as a flame of fire is extinguished by water (cf Sir. 3:30), so anger of soul is quenched by mourning and tears; so much so that a man who has spent a long time being irascible sees the temper of his soul changed and transformed into total calm. Therefore a man must look at himself in this respect as well, to see whether he is truly meek. He who is this cannot in any way bear to see the transgression of God's commandment, but laments over those who commit sin as though he himself had committed it.

### **Hunger For Righteousness**

Then likewise (he should examine himself) whether he hungers and thirsts for God's righteousness (Mt. 5:6). It is admittedly possible, if one searches, to find a person who is righteous, yet does not hunger and thirst for it. It is God who is righteousness (cf. 1 Co., 1:30), just as you hear him called "the sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2). So he who hungers and thirsts for Him counts the whole world and the things in it as refuse (Phil. 3:8). As for the honors of princes, he either counts them a disgrace, or else has no regard for human honors.

### **Mercy**

And again, "Blessed are the merciful" (Mt. 5:7). Who, then, are the merciful? Those who give money or feed the poor? No. But who are they? Those who have become poor for the sake of Him who became poor for our sakes (cf 2 Cor. 8:9). They have nothing to give, yet they are constantly spiritually mindful of the poor, the widows, the orphans (cf. Jas. 1:27), and those who are sick. As they see them frequently, they have compassion on them and weep warm tears over them. Such was Job when he said, "I wept over every one who was infirm" (Job 30:25 LXX). Whenever they have anything they gladly give alms to them (cf. Rom. 12:8), and also generously remind them all of the things that serve for the salvation of their souls, by obeying Him who said, "I learned without guile and I impart without grudging" (Wis. 7-13). These are the ones whom the Lord calls blessed, those who are truly merciful; for it is from such mercy, as from a step, that they climb in order to reach perfect purity of the soul.

### **The Pure And Peaceful Heart**

Following this, and on this basis God calls blessed those whose heart is pure, in that He says, "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God" (Mt. 5:8). He, our God and Lawgiver, knows that unless our soul attains to such a disposition it can neither constantly mourn nor become perfectly meek, nor yet thirst for God (Mt. 5:4-6), nor yet become pure as a mirror. But if it fails to become so, it will never contemplate the Master's face in itself. The soul, however, who has attained to this sees God from every (side) and is reconciled to Him (cf. Rom. 5:10). Peace is established between our Maker and God on the one hand and the soul that was once hostile to Him on the other, and it is then called blessed by God for having made peace,

for He says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Mt. 5:9). To Him who came to give peace to those who were near and to those who were far off (Eph. 2:17) they have consciously reconciled themselves. He came to reconcile us, who were enemies (Rom. 5:10), to His own Father and to unite into one those who had become separated (f. Eph. 2:13), impart His Holy Spirit to us and our flesh on Himself. It is clear, then, that those who see Him have been truly reconciled to Him, in that they have found the peace they had sought and become sons of God (f. Mk 5)9; In. 1:12). "It is God who justifies, who is he who condemns?" (Rom. 8:33). But if you do not love your brother whom you see, how can you love God whom you have not seen (1 John 4:20)? If we are not able, or rather, not willing to love Him, it is clear that we have not been reconciled to Him. Let us then be eager to see Him, to be reconciled to Him, and to "love Him," brethren, "of all our soul" (Mk. 12:30), as He Himself commanded us.

### **Enduring Persecution**

Then again he hears Him say: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake" (Mk 5:10). So he aims to examine himself whether he has been persecuted for the sake of a commandment of God, since, as the apostle says, "all who desire to live in Christ will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12). Therefore Christ adds these words and says, "Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven" (Mt 5:11-12). Why then did he place those who are objects of persecution and reproach at the end, and command them, as He proclaimed with authority (cf: Mt. 7:29), to "Rejoice and be glad"? For he who has shown worthy penitence for his offenses and has thence become humble—I tell you the same things twice, so I repeat—he who has been found worthy of mourning each day and becomes meek, who hungers and thirsts with his soul for the "Sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2) becomes merciful and compassionate. He makes the passions of all men, their afflictions and their weaknesses, his own. As he weeps and is cleansed he sees God and is reconciled to Him and becomes in truth a peacemaker and is found worthy to be called a son of God. Such a person is able, even though he is persecuted, beaten, reproached, abused, insulted, and hears all evil spoken against him, to endure it with joy and unspeakable gladness. God, our Master, knowing this, solemnly declared, "Rejoice and be glad" (Mt. 5:12). But he who has not attained to this state and is not in possession of abundant and substantial joy within himself, how will he be able to endure all these things without vengeful thoughts? Not at all!

### **The Final Reward**

Therefore, my fathers and brethren, let us never cease from judging and examining ourselves (1 Car. 4:3) with great zeal, day by day, even hour by hour if possible! Rather, as we have said, let us go through all the commandments and see ourselves as we examine and observe ourselves in each one of them. If we should find that we are fulfilling it, let us give thanks to God our Master and from henceforth observe it without fail. If, however, up till now we have forgotten it or failed to keep it, let us, I entreat you, run to embrace it and take hold of it, lest for contempt of it we should be called the least in the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 5:19). Thus as we ascend the ladder by one step after another we shall arrive, as well I know, to the very city of heaven. There, as I have said above, our Master stands and peers out, saying to us all, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28). When we have arrived there we shall see Him as far as man is able so to do, and receive at His hands the kingdom of heaven, which is the Holy Ghost, and constantly have it within us (cf. Lk. 17:21), as the Master Himself explicitly proclaims. Thus we shall live as angels on the earth, or, rather, as sons of God. We shall be holy, and in all things of God (cf. Eph. 5:1) our Father. That most sweet vision of Him may we all enjoy, now and always, forever and ever. Amen.

## **1120 AD**

### **Hugh Of Saint-Victor (1078 – 1141), Founder of Catholic Monastic Order**

### **Of The Four Steps Of The Ascents; Of The Three Paradises, And The Tree Of Life In Each; Of The Fifteen Steps By Which Wisdom Arises And Grows In The Hearts Of The Saints**

### **Noah's Ark (Excerpts)**

Translated by a Religious of C.S.M.V.  
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## **Chapter 8**

### **What Is Denoted By The Throne High And Lifted Up, And What The Temple Is, That Is Filled**

Angelic spirits are, therefore, the 'high' throne, and the souls of the saints, who from this world's abyss have been translated to the joys of peace on high, are the throne 'lifted up'. God is represented as 'sitting on a throne high and lifted up', because He rules over both.

That which is said a little further on, however, 'the whole earth is full of His glory, means that every corporeal creature on earth is full of the glory of God. For as the divine essence by means of knowledge guides a spiritual creature, 'so does it fill that which is corporeal by ordering and ruling it. So, as it is said elsewhere, 'I fill heaven and earth', and again, 'the heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool', so in this place we have first, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up", and then 'the whole earth is full of His glory, and 'the things that were beneath it filled the temple'. 'The temple' is the power of understanding, whether of angels or of men, which temple is filled by the things that are beneath it. For the works of God so far transcend assessment that no creature has the power to understand them perfectly. The contemplation of them fills our heart, but our heart cannot compass their immensity. How, then, shall we comprehend the Maker of the works, when we cannot fully take in the works of the Maker?

We may say also that this throne high and lifted up, whereon God sits, is the eternity of the Godhead; for it is said of Him alone that He "inhabiteh eternity", not because God is one thing and His eternity another, but because a throne implies a ruler. He therefore is rightly represented as sitting upon the throne of eternity since, as there is neither beginning nor end to His being, so is there none either to His omnipotence. He always was. He always was omnipotent. Full ever in Himself and of Himself, He was at once perfect, and yet never overflowed. Well then may the prophet say, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up", for the might of the Godhead at once precedes all creatures in eternity,, surpasses them in excellence, and orders them by power.

Next come the words, "and the things that were beneath it filled the temple". The temple may here be understood as meaning the cycle of the ages and revolutions of the centuries. For as the ages in their course return upon themselves, they seem by their cycles to mark out as it were the enclosure of a temple, 'the things that were beneath it filled the temple', is to be taken, therefore, as meaning that all the periods of time are full of the works of God, and that every generation tells of His wonderful acts. Or else it may be taken thus: 'the things that were beneath it filled the temple' that is, the things that filled the temple were beneath it, because whatever belongs to time is found below eternity. For the vastness of eternity includes below itself the narrow paths of time, in that it is both before time, since it has no beginning, and after time, in that it knows no end. It is above time too, for it admits no change.

## **Chapter 17**

### **Once More, The View Of Certain Persons As To Three Storeys In The Ark, And Of The Three Wills That Are In A Man**

There is still something else that we can say about the first three storeys; for each of us has in himself three wills, whereof the first is carnal, the second natural, and the third spiritual. The carnal will wants to give free rein to concupiscence and unhesitating obedience to the desires of the flesh; it wishes to be subject to no law, to fear no one, and to do exactly what it likes. The eager desire of the spirit, on the other hand, is just the opposite; it so longs to cleave with its whole self to spiritual interests that it wants to dispense with bodily

necessity. So between these two desires of the soul the natural will takes a middle course; it neither gives itself to the shameful deeds of the vices, nor does it submit to the trials of the virtues. Thus in seeking to moderate the bodily passions it is never prepared to endure those essential mortifications without which the desires of the spirit cannot be possessed. It wants to obtain the gift of chastity without disciplining or chastising the flesh, to acquire purity without the toil of vigils, and to exhibit Christ's humility without throwing worldly honour overboard. And finally it wants to pursue the benefits of the future, without losing those of the present.

Such a will would never lead us to true perfection, but would establish us in a deplorable state did not invading forces disrupt this most lukewarm interior condition. For when we follow this will and we want to relax a little, at once the stings of the flesh arise and they will certainly not allow us to remain in that hurtful purity of lukewarmness in which we take pleasure, but they drag us towards that way, frightening and full of the briars of vices, of which we stand in dread.

And again, when we are inflamed with spiritual fervour, we want to put down the works of the flesh without any regard to human frailty, and in the pride of our hearts would give our whole selves over to immoderate religious practices. But the weakness of the flesh intervenes to recall and restrain us from that blameworthy spiritual excess, and to reduce the pace. And so when each of these desires opposes the other in this conflict, it brings about a state in which the natural will, not wanting either to give itself wholly to carnal desires, nor to toil at the labours of the virtues, is tempered by just control. A certain equilibrium is established by balancing the spirit against the flesh in the scales of our body, and this prevents a preponderance either of the soul aflame with spiritual fervour on the one hand, or of the flesh with the stings of the vices on the other. This makes that lukewarm condition of our natural will impossible. For our soul's health we are compelled to come to that fourth condition which we do not desire, wherein we acquire the virtues not by idleness and ease, but by continual sweat and compunction of spirit; lest, if we remain in that thoroughly pernicious tepidity, God should begin to spew us out of His mouth.

It is of this conflict between flesh and spirit and of the fruit thereof that the apostle shows us when he says: "This I say then, Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that whatsoever things ye would not, those ye do."

## **Book II**

### **Chapter 8**

#### **The Meaning Of The Three Storeys, The Cubit, And The Pillar Set Up In The Midst Of The Ark Of The Understanding, That Is To Say Of Wisdom**

The three storeys in the ark of the understanding denote three kinds of thoughts, right, profitable, necessary. If, therefore, I have begun to love to meditate upon the Scriptures, and have always been ready to ponder the virtues of the saints, and the works of God, and whatever else there is that serves to improve my conduct and stimulate my spirit, then I have already begun to be in the first storey of the ark. But if I neglect to imitate the good I know, then I can say that my thought is right, but unprofitable. For it is good that I should think what I do think and know what I know about others, but it profits me nothing if I do not take it to myself as a pattern for living. For another person's virtue is of no profit to me, if I neglect to copy it as far as I am able. C A treasure hid, and knowledge hid,, what profit is in either?" hide my knowledge, if I do not put into practice the good that I know; and therefore it cannot .profit me that, knowing, I feign not to know.

But if I have taken pains not only to know, but also to perform good and profitable actions, and if my heart's preoccupation is to see how by self-control and a right way of living I can make my own the virtues which I love and admire in others, then I can say that my thought is profitable, then I have gone up to the second storey. My heart is now more at one with itself; in consequence, it does not gad about among vain and profitless things.

There remains the third kind of thought, that when I have begun to do the works of the virtues, I should labour to have the virtues themselves that is to say, that I should possess within myself the virtue which I show in outward works. Otherwise it will not be much good for me to have performed the works, unless I have also the virtues of the works. If, then, I direct the thought of my heart to this end, that I may strive to show inwardly before the eyes of God whatever good appears in me outwardly to human sight, then I have gone up into the third storey, where the essential virtues are to be found. But among all these there is one that is supremely necessary, namely, charity, which unites us to God; and that is why the ark is gathered into one at the top, that even now we should be thinking of the One, looking for the One, desiring the One, even our Lord Jesus Christ.

So in the first storey there is knowledge, in the second works, in the third virtue, and at the top the reward of virtue, Jesus Christ our Lord. These steps if you change the order to 'knowledge, discipline, and goodness' you have in the psalm where it says, c Teach me goodness, discipline, and knowledge, O Lord Jesus Christ.'

The pillar set up in the middle of the ark to the height of thirty cubits, to which the entire structure leans, and the top whereof measures a single cubit from corner to corner, this is the tree of life which was planted in the midst of paradise, namely, our Lord Jesus Christ, set up in the midst of His Church for all believers alike as the reward of work, the End of the journey, and the victor's crown. He it is who rose from earth and pierced the heavens, who came down to the depths, yet did not leave the heights, who is Himself both above and below, above in His majesty, below in His compassion, above that He may draw our longings thither, below that He may offer us His help. Below He is among us, above He is above us. Below is what He took from us, above is what He sets before us.

## **Chapter 10 Of The Four Steps Of The Ascents**

Let us speak now about these steps in the ascents, whereby we climb to heaven, that no one whom the promised prize delights may fear the journey's toil. There is fair climbing there indeed, for, though the going is hard, the love that lies beneath alleviates the toil.

The first ascent, then, is made from the cold of the east that is, from the swelling of pride; for it behoves the sinner, who fell into sin by disobedience, first to be humbled, and then, by obedience, to rise up again.

The second ascent is made from the heat of the west, for the next thing needed is that we should tread our fleshly vices underfoot, so that we walk not after our own desires but mortify our members that are upon the earth, that we serve sin no more.

The third ascent is from the cold of the west, for when through abstinence and the practice of discipline we have extinguished in ourselves the passions of the flesh, then we shall be free to give ourselves up gladly to meditation, and to the teaching of Divine Scripture, so that by applying ourselves to reading and to meditation the eye of our mind may once more be enlightened, even as the psalmist says: 'Depart from me, ye evil-doers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.

The fourth ascent is from the heat of the east, when we have gone on from good to better. For by no means can we ever reach perfection, unless we strive unceasingly to grow in the good things we do.

## **Chapter 14 Of The Three Paradises, And The Tree Of Life In Each**

There are three paradises. One is a garden of earth, whose inhabitant was the first, the earthly Adam. The second is a garden of faith, the Church of the saints which the second, the heavenly Adam, Christ, founded, and in which He dwells. The third is heavenly, and that is the kingdom of God, and eternal life, and the kind of the living, or rather the living land wherein God dwells.



In the first paradise the tree of life is a material tree. In the second, the tree of life is the Saviour's manhood. In the third, the tree of life is the wisdom of God, the word of the Father, the fount of life, the wellspring of good, and this is in truth the eternal life.

Now let us make comparison between them. Assuredly the tree of life in the earthly paradise could promote only an unfailling bodily life. But the tree of life of the faithful paradise, that is Jesus Christ, promises His own eternal life to those who eat His flesh and drink His blood; yet He Himself, desiring to show how far removed the sacrament is from the power, says, 'it is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing', which is as if He said: Do not imagine that it is enough for you to receive Me bodily in the sacrament, unless you have learnt to eat Me also in My function as the word of life, enlightening souls, making sinners righteous, and quickening the dead.

### **Chapter 15 Of The Fifteen Steps By Which Wisdom Arises And Grows In The Hearts Of The Saints**

This, therefore, is the tree of life indeed, the word of the Father, the wisdom of God in the highest, which in the hearts of the saints, as in an unseen paradise,

is sown in fear,  
watered by grace,  
dies through grief,  
takes root by faith,  
buds by devotion,  
shoots up through compunction,  
grows by longing,  
is strengthened by charity,  
grows green by hope,  
puts out its leaves and spreads its branches through caution,  
flowers through discipline,  
bears fruit through virtue,  
ripens through patience,  
is harvested by death, and  
feeds by contemplation.

But as our discourse has gone on rather long, let us now have a little breathing-space, at the same time beseeching the same wisdom of God, that He who scorned not to redeem us by tasting bitter death, would deign to satisfy us with the taste of His own sweetness, to whom be honour and dominion unto the eternal ages of ages. Amen.

## **Book III**

### **Chapter 4 Of The Three Kinds Of Men, And Of The Steadfastness Of Faith**

We said in the fourth place that the tree of wisdom is rooted in faith. There are three kinds of people, those who have no faith, those who are weak in faith, and those who are full of faith. Those who have no faith are they who do not know God, or believe the gospel of Christ, who think there is no life beyond this one that we now have in time. These sink their roots in the earth, for their appetite for things present is in proportion to their ignorance of the eternal goods that are to follow. They strive for earthly things, and look to be happy here, since they believe that after this life they will be nothing. That fool was one of them, who is derided in the Book of Job by Eliphaz. "I saw the fool firmly rooted," he says, 'and I cursed his beauty forthwith.' A fool is one who does not know what he was made for, thinks that nothing exists beyond what he can see, does not foresee the evils that await him, and loves these transient and spurious goods as though they were to

last for evermore. It seems sometimes, while he is prosperous, that such a one is firmly rooted. But the wise man 'curses his beauty forthwith', because he knows to what evils he will be snatched away, after these ephemeral good things. Of this same fool the psalmist says, 'The fool hath said in his heart, "There is no God"/ And then, including his fellows, "There is , he says, 'no fear of God before their eyes'. For how can they fear God, when they do not believe that God exists?

It is obvious from this that those to whom the fear of God has not come cannot attain to the beginning of wisdom either.

Now let us consider whether those whom we named second be rooted, or where their roots take hold. They seem to have no roots. For the weak in faith are those who have already acquired some conviction of the truth, but, halting between two opinions still, neither completely gainsay nor yet entirely accept that which is said in Holy Writ about the rewards that await the good, or the pains in store for the bad. For they perceive that certain things occur in this world, from which it may be inferred that God exists and has a care for the affairs of men, and that all men's deeds, whether good or evil, will be subject to His judgements. In view of this, therefore, they begin to fear that God is threatening them; and, driven by this fear, they set about to do what He commands and shun what He forbids. And it sometimes happens that, when they have been practised some while in this fear, they no longer only fear God's threats, but even begin with some inclination of heart to desire what He promises.

Yet again, when they see the wicked prospering in this world and perceive much else in life that goes so awry that it seems the world can never be governed by God's providence, the outcome of everything being subject to the chances of fate, then they start to strive for the peace of the wicked, and long that they too may prosper in this world. In their unspoken thoughts they tell themselves that it is vain to fear the Judgement, that there is nothing in the tales made up by fools about the pains of hell and the torments of the wicked, and that all this is a product, not of truth but of fear; since surely if God really weighed the works of men so strictly. He could have declared the fact by signs so obvious as to leave nobody hereafter in the slightest doubt.

Lastly, so they argue, to abandon the certain for the uncertain and to pursue unseen things concerning which it is given to no man to know whether they be true, or whether men have been deceived into imagining that they are so, is flatly contrary to reason. To do so is to scorn with a vile presumption assured and present benefits, which in the common judgement and opinion of all men are held to be not only good, but even strict necessities for human nature. This is so the more especially since it is clear that God created them solely for man's service, and it therefore does Him no wrong to use the good things He has made for no other purpose than that men should use them.

Men like these, who know only how to weigh their faith against the uncertain issues of events, can never be stable. For, as with a certain lightness of mind they easily believe for a time in the word of truth, they equally easily fall away from their belief in the truth in time of trial, since in temptation they are readily persuaded of its falsehood. Hence they were wavering formerly too, even when they seemed to stand.

The prophet described this sort of man in his own person when he said: 'But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked,' And a little later, 'they say, "How doth God know, and is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches".' For they question and they waver, and they are borne along on the currents of their own thoughts, not knowing in what direction their opinion should incline. They cannot believe, and they dare not deny. They hesitate to give assent, and yet they distrust faith.

But those who are full of faith, they have got roots; yet they do not fix them in the world, as do the unbelievers, but through faith and love they are rooted and grounded in God. They are the vineyard of the

Lord in Soreq. They are the faithful vine, the righteous vine, which the Good Husbandman Himself has planted, yes and transplanted too, for He "brought a vine out of Egypt, and cast out the heathen, and planted it". Of these things the Lord says elsewhere by His prophet, "I will plant them, and not pluck them up". For our land and our country is God, in whom we are planted when we cleave to Him with our hearts' devotion, saying with the psalmist, 'But it is good for me to stay close to God, to put my hope in the Lord God'. From this land we shall not be pulled up any more, if we abide in His love to the end.

Of this rooting the Holy Spirit says also by the prophet: 'Whatsoever shall be left of the house of Judah shall take root downward, and bear fruit upward/ For by those that are left of the house of Judah the faithful are denoted; these take root downward, in that every thought of their heart is fixed on inward joys, and they bear fruit upward, since in their heavenly fatherland, which in this life they ever seek by love, they hereafter receive the gifts of life in recompense.

So the faithful both believe and wait for that which the faithless deny, and about which the weak in faith are hesitant. And the faithful flee that which the faithless love and the weak in faith are anxious to acquire. It is in faith, therefore, that wisdom is rooted, because by means of faith the mind is rendered steadfast and the will made strong. But he who is unsure in faith cannot be made perfect either in the fear of God or in His love. For we fear the thing we are not sure about in a different way from that in which we fear the thing that we believe. That which we believe, we really fear; that which we doubt, we generally fail to fear, because through our very doubtfulness we fall into a certain false security. The result is that we now judge that only to be right, which we see will not be incompatible with what we want; so that our deluded mind often thinks that what it would like our fortune to be will actually come to pass.

In order, therefore, that fear should not be insufficient, nor yet the will lukewarm, we need to have a strong, unshaken faith; so that, being rooted in that, we may establish our hold upon the benefits which we received by means of the three things that went before.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Of The Powers Of Charity, And Of The Eight Beatitudes Compared With These Eight Steps**

In the eighth place we added that the tree of wisdom is strengthened by charity. Charity is like wine. For wine makes those whom it inebriates sprightly, bold, brave, forgetful, and in a certain way insensible. So charity, by cleansing the conscience, puts new spirit into the heart; and then, as through purity of conscience it gains confidence, emboldens it. Hence it grows strong because, as Scripture testifies, he who trusts in the Lord is as strong as a lion. For a pure conscience cannot be overcome by any adverse circumstances. So long as it is inwardly confident that it will always have God's help, it readily despises and conquers whatever outward contradiction it endures. It also induces forgetfulness, because while it draws the whole attention of the soul towards desire for eternal things, it drives from it entirely the memory of all those that pass. It makes the soul insensible, filling the heart to overflowing with inward sweetness; so that it despises whatever outward bitterness it suffers, as though it did not feel it.

Thus charity strengthens wisdom, since it affords the soul both confidence and strength, and further gives it an insuperable constancy by rendering it in a way insensible.

We can, if we will, see the eight beatitudes expressed in these eight steps:

Our saying that the tree of wisdom is sown through fear will then correspond to 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'.

Our saying that it is watered by grace will answer to 'Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth'.  
Our saying that it dies through grief will answer to 'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted'.  
Our saying that it takes root by faith will answer to 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled'.

Our saying that it germinates through devotion will answer to 'Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy'. Our saying that it shoots up through compunction will answer to 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God'. Our saying that it grows by longing will answer to 'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God'. Our saying that it is strengthened by charity will answer to 'Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'.

## **Chapter 9**

### **What The Hope Of Future Blessings Effects In A Man's Heart**

In the ninth place we added that the tree of wisdom grows green through hope. The hope of future blessings in the mind is like a sparkling fire fed with kindling wood. For hope is as it were the memory of unseen joys which, hidden in man's heart, warms it inside, and in the winter of this present life will not allow the cold of infidelity to wither it. And as long as this hope lives in our mind, the tree of wisdom never wilts; but, as a tree preserves its foliage unharmed as long as it has moisture and warmth in the right proportions, so the soul cannot wither that is fostered by the warmth of the Holy Spirit descending from above, and watered by the practice of good works from below.

## **Book IV**

## **Chapter 19**

### **A Further Threefold Distinction In The Works Of Restoration, According To The Division Of The Ark Into Three Storeys**

There is yet another way in which, if we so wish, we may discern the height of the ark, so that, while the truth remains the same, the expositions of it may be multiplied. For we would have the reader notice this also, that often in this treatise we have presented the same thing in different ways, in order so to enrich our teaching that the wise soul may make trial of every path of knowledge, with this reservation only, that nothing that gainsays the truth be either thought or said. Therefore, as the ark is divided into three storeys, so also the works of restoration are divided into three classes. In the first class, as it were in the first storey, is the shadow. In the second class, as in the second storey, is the spirit. Or, if you prefer to use these terms, call the three things figure, actuality, and truth, and understand that the figure and the shadow are the same, the body and the actuality, and the spirit and the truth.

Those things are called shadows, which were done before Christ's coming under the natural and the written law, bodily and visibly, in order to prefigure the things that now, after His coming, are being done bodily and visibly in the time of grace. They are called shadows, because they were both corporal and figures of the corporal. Our sacraments themselves, which are now performed in Holy Church, are called the body. And the spirit is that which the grace of God effects invisibly beneath these visible sacraments. For instance, to take one example, the Red Sea prefigured baptism, which is now sanctified in Holy Church. And the same visible baptism signifies the cleansing from offences, which the Holy Spirit effects invisibly within our souls, beneath the washing of our bodies, in this sacrament

Thus the Red Sea is the shadow and the figure; the baptism of visible water, which we now have, is the body and the actuality; and the washing away of sins is the spirit and the truth.

## **Chapter 20**

### **A Further Threefold Distinction In Respect Of The Same Height**

There remains yet another way, of which we spoke just now, by which we can divide the height of the ark. For God performed the works of restoration partly through men, partly through angels, and partly by Himself. So in the first storey we put the works of men, in the second the works of angels, and in the third the works of God.

Or, if we take it morally, the first storey is faith, the second hope, and the third charity. Or, according to the analogical sense, the first storey is right thought, the second is wise meditation, and the third pure contemplation. Or, according to active life, the first storey is knowledge, the second discipline, and the third goodness. Or, according to the different states, the first is nature, the second the written law, and the third grace.

If indeed these three are considered from the point of view of time, they measure the length of the ark; if they are assessed according to their dignity, they divide its height. For as they followed each other in time, so did they precede each other in respect of dignity.

## **Chapter 21**

### **A Concluding Chapter In Praise And Commendation Of The Ark**

What then is this ark, about which we have said so many things, and in which so many different paths of knowledge are contained? You do not think it is a maze, I hope? For it is not a maze, nor is there toil within, but rest. How do I know this? Because He lives in it who said: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' For if there is toil where He is, how do those find rest who come to Him? But now 'His place is in peace and His dwelling-place in Sion. There He hath broken the powers of bows, the shield, the sword and the battle/ In the place whence all tumult and disturbance is far off, joy and peace and rest are ever present.

What, then, is the ark like? Do you desire to know? Bear with me, that I may tell you a few things out of many. This ark is like a storehouse filled with all manner of delightful things. You will look for nothing in it that you will not find, and when you have found one thing, you will see many spread before your eyes. There all the works of restoration are contained in all their fulness, from the world's beginning to its end; and therein is represented the condition of the universal Church, Into it is woven the story of events, in it are found the mysteries of the sacraments, and there are set out the stages of affections, thoughts, meditations, contemplations, good works, virtues, and rewards. There we are shown what we ought to believe, and do, and hope. There the form of man's living and the sum total of perfection are contained. There that which is hidden comes to light, there burdensome tasks seem easy, and matters which might in isolation seem unfortunate, when viewed in their context are seen to be appropriate. There the sum of things is displayed, and the harmony of its elements explained. There another world is found, over against this passing, transitory one; because the things that go through different times in this world exist in that one simultaneously, as in a condition of eternity. There the present does not follow on the past, nor does the future supervene upon the present, but whatsoever is there, is there as in the present.

For this reason also those who dwell there, dwell there always, and always rejoice, grieving for nothing that is past, fearing nothing future, possessing what they love, seeing what they desire; and perhaps that is why the apostle said, 'The fashion of this world passeth', the form of this world, the appearance of this world, the beauty of this world. For there is another world, whose 'fashion' does not pass, nor does its form change, nor its appearance wither, nor its beauty fail. That world is in this world, and this world is less than that world, for that world contains Him whom this world cannot contain. Eyes of flesh see this world, the eyes of the heart behold that world after an inward manner. In this world men have their pleasures, but the delights in that world are ineffable. In this world men run after and applaud vain shows, but in that world they are occupied with inner silence, and the pure in heart rejoice in the sight of the truth.

I meant to speak but briefly, but I confess to you that I am pleased to have much to say; and perhaps there was still more which I might have said, had I not been afraid of wearying you. And now, then, as we promised, we must put before you the pattern of our ark. Thus you may learn from an external form, which we have visibly depicted, what you ought to do interiorly, and when you have impressed the form of this pattern on your heart, you may rejoice that the house of God has been built in you.

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**St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090 – 1153), Doctor of the Church and Founder, Cistercian Order**  
**Eternal Life, Where Men Shall Be Equal To Angels Of God, Righteous Shall Shine As Sun In**  
**Kingdom Of Father; How Gloriously Bright May We Suppose Souls Of Men Shall Then Be,**  
**When Even Their Bodies Shall Be As Resplendent As Stars In Firmament**  
**Devout Meditations of St. Bernard With Regard to the State of Human Nature, [otherwise](#)**  
**[called his “book of the Soul”](#)**

## **Book VIII**

### **Chapter I**

#### **The Dignity of Man with Regard to his Soul**

MANY are deeply learned in variety of arts and sciences, and all the while continue as profoundly ignorant of themselves: they are inquisitive about the affairs of other men, and perfectly void of thought or care for their own. Nay, even in their most useful and necessary studies, where God is the subject of the inquiry, they think to find him in the things without them, and overlook the evidences of him within their own breasts: none of which, though within them, is yet so intimate and close to them, as God. I desire then that I may proceed in a quite contrary method, and from external, retire to internal evidences; from objects within, rise up to those above me; that by these I may at last understand from whence I come, and whither I am bound; what I am, why I am, and from whom I am; that so this knowledge of myself may lead me up to the knowledge of God. For the more perfect understanding I have of my own condition, the nearer I shall approach to, and advance proportionably towards the right understanding of the Divine nature and perfections.

Now when I turn my eyes inward, I discover three distinct faculties in my soul, whereby I am qualified to remember, and contemplate, and desire God. These are the memory, the understanding and the will. By the first of which I recollect, by the second I discern, and by the last I love and embrace him. When I reflect upon God, I find him in my memory, and delight in him by those remembrances, according to that measure of satisfaction, which he is pleased to impart to me. By my intelligent faculty, I see what God is in himself, what in his angels and saints, what in men, and the other works of his hands; each of which contribute to the manifestation of his excellences. In himself he is incomprehensible, the beginning and the end, the beginning without conclusion, the end without any more excellent end to which it is ultimately referred. The consideration of myself convinces me how far God must needs exceed all comprehension, because I find myself unable perfectly to understand myself; who yet am but one of his creatures: considered in the angels, he appears lovely and desirable, because their constant happiness and employment is to behold and look into him. In the saints I find him full of delight, because those blessed spirits rejoice in him. In the creatures he appears wonderful, because creating all things by his power, governing all things by his wisdom, and disposing all things by a good and kind Providence.

In men he is the most worthy object of love, because he is their God, and they are his people. He dwells in them, as in his own house, and they are his temple, in which his Divine presence resides. He does not disdain the whole species, nor any individual person of it. Whoever remembers, and understands, and loves him, the same is with him. We ought to love him, because he first loved us. (1 John iv. 19.) He made us after his own image, in his own likeness, which was a privilege vouchsafed to no other creature besides. Now, when we are said to be made after God's image, the mystical meaning may be, that we are made to understand and be acquainted with the Son, by whom we come to an understanding of and acquaintance with the Father, and gain access to him. So near is the relation between us and the Son of God, that the Son of God is himself the express image of the Father, and we are made after that image of him. And this nearness of relation is farther signified by saying that we are made after his likeness, and not only in his image. (Gen. i. 26.) For that which is made in the image of another, must agree with the original model, and not only partake of an empty name, without any real similitude to justify it.

Let us be careful then to express this likeness, and make our resemblance to God appear in the desire of peace, the contemplation of truth, and the love of charity. Let us keep God in our remembrance, carry him in our consciences, and behave ourselves with that deference and respect, becoming men that believe Him to be always present with them. For it is in this regard, that our mind is his image, as it is capable of receiving and partaking of him. It is for that reason his image, because, like him, it remembers, understands, and loves itself; and more especially, because, while it does so, it is capable of rising higher, by remembering, considering, and loving its Maker; in the doing whereof consists its true improvement and wisdom. For nothing comes so near to that perfect wisdom above, as the rational mind; which by its three faculties, of memory, understanding and will, subsists in that inexplicable trinity of the Divine persons, as an image does in its original.

But in that original it does not truly subsist, except in conformity to it, it remember, and consider, and love it. Let it therefore be careful to remember that God, after whose image it was made; let it endeavour to understand and love him, by whom it is endued with a capacity of being for ever happy, together with himself.

For happy is that soul, with whom God takes up his residence, makes it the place of his rest. Happy, which can say, He that formed me, hath lodged and dwelt in my tabernacle; for to such a one he cannot deny the rest of heaven. Why then do we go out of ourselves, and seek God in external objects, who all the while is with and in us, if we do but make it our business to be with, and in him? For he is certainly with, and in us at present, by a lively faith, which is all the union we can attain to, till he admit us to see him face to face. Thus the apostle says; we know that Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith; (Ephes. iii. 17.) for Christ is in our faith, faith in our soul, the soul in our heart, the heart in our breast. By faith then I reflect upon and remember God in the quality of my Creator, I adore him as my Redeemer, I wait for him as my Saviour. I believe that I see him in all his creatures, that I have him in myself, and (which is unspeakably more pleasant and happy than all the rest) that I know him as he is. For to know the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, is life eternal; (John xvii. 3.) consummate felicity, and the very perfection of transport and delight.

No mortal can conceive, how bright, how sweet, how ravishing we shall find that vision to be, when we shall see God face to face; that light of them who shine by his reflection; that repose of them who have been exercised by labours and sufferings; that country of them who are called home from exile; that life of them that live; the crown of them that overcome. In the meanwhile the image of that blessed glorious Trinity, which I find in my own soul, teaches me, that I ought to make the remembrance, and knowledge, and love of that Trinity which I resemble, the main design of all my actions, and the chief end of living. For the mind is the likeness of God, and in it are three powers, memory, understanding, and will. We attribute our advancement in knowledge to memory, though this be not strictly the faculty by which we think. We attribute all our knowledge to the understanding also, because by thinking we find out the truth, which when found, we commit to the custody of our memory. Memory is more particularly our resemblance to the Father, our understanding to the Son, and our will to the Holy Ghost. No part of us is so like the Holy Spirit, as our will or love: and kind affection is nothing else than a modification and exaltation of the will, in that which is its proper excellence. Love is not only the gift, but the best gift of God: (1 John iv. 7.) for that love which is of God, and which God is, is properly styled the Holy Spirit, by which the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, and all the Trinity dwells in us.

### **Chapter III**

#### **Reflections upon the Excellent Nature and Privileges of the Soul**

WHAT, my soul, what hast thou to do with the flesh? Thou, who art adorned with the likeness of thy Master, enriched with his holiness and immortality! What hast thou to do with that flesh which exposes thee to so much suffering and misery? For from this flesh it is, that the sin never actually committed by thee is laid to thy charge; that the righteousness of thy own doing is no better than filthy rags, and that thou art reduced so low, as to be esteemed little better than vanity and nothing. The flesh, with which thou maintainest so strict a friendship, is in itself no better than froth and bubble, clothed with a gay, but frail and decayed beauty; and a

time will shortly come, when all its boasted charms shall sink into a rotten carcase, and be only food for worms: for, after all thy care to dress and set it off, thou canst not change its nature, nor make it cease to be flesh. Consider a little those constant evacuations, the discharges of thy mouth, and nose, and other passages, without which the body cannot subsist; and ask thyself how much this differs from a common-sewer. But there is a much more melancholy consideration yet behind; for, if thou wouldest sit down and undertake to compute, how this flesh is loaded with guilt, and frailty, entangled with vicious habits, urged and inflamed with unlawful desires, overborne with unruly passions, deluded with temptations and deceits, prone to evil perpetually; thus it will appear full of all manner of mischief and reproach. This is the thing that renders every man living altogether vanity (Psa. xxxix. 5.); for here the snares of concupiscence are laid, which captivate the mind, and draw it off to the love of vanity, and the commission of iniquity.

But, oh the heart-breaking, the grief and amazement, the howlings and doleful lamentations of that dismal day, when the wicked shall be severed from the conversation of the saints, and for ever banished the sight and presence of God; when they shall be abandoned to the fury of devils, and fruitless tears and groans, and cast into the lake that flows in streams of fire for ever and ever! Such is the desperate condition of the damned, shut out irrevocably from the regions of bliss, to be tormented without mercy in hell; doomed never to see the light, never to gain one minute's ease or respite, but to endure thousands of thousands of ages; at the hands of tormentors who shall never be weary, and in a state where the tormented shall never expire with their pains. For the fire so burns, as never entirely to consume; and the tortures are so inflicted, as to be ever new, ever increased. Nor will these be dealt promiscuously to all, but the quality of the punishment (we have reason to think) will be determined by the nature of each person's crimes; and they whose vices are of a sort, will find the same agreement in their sufferings. Weeping and wailing, howlings and groans, lamentations and gnashings, are the only sounds heard in those dismal prisons: worms, and ghosts, deformed and monstrous spectacles are all the objects presented to their eyes: their bodies shall burn in the fire, their souls be gnawed with the never-dying worm of an upbraiding conscience. Their pains intolerable, their fears inconceivably amazing, the stench suffocating beyond comparison, their soul and body ever dying, without the least glimpse of hope, or possibility of pardon and mercy. Thus must the soul be dealt with in the other world, capable of no middle state, but either tormented everlastingly in hell for sin unremitted, or inexpressibly happy in heaven for good works graciously accepted. And need we then to be persuaded which of these two we ought to choose, whether to be continually tormented with devils, or to be as continually in felicity with the saints? good and evil, life and death are set before us, and whether we had rather, that shall be given us. (Eccles. xv. 17.) The punishment indeed shall infinitely exceed all the descriptions, that have been here, or can be given of them: yet these descriptions sure are full of terror enough, to fright us into better manners. But if these terrors of the Lord fail to persuade, let us try if the mercies and rewards will invite us to amendment.

## **Chapter IV**

### **The Rewards of good Men in the next Life**

IT may suffice to say upon this occasion, that good men shall be recompensed for their labours by seeing God, by living with God, by living of God, being in him, who shall be all in all, and possessing him who is the supreme good: for where the supreme good is, there of necessity must be the most perfect happiness, -the most exquisite joy, true liberty, unbounded charity, and eternal security, fulness of knowledge, perfection of beauty, and all manner of blessedness. There shall be peace and piety, joy and sweetness, life everlasting, glory and praise, rest and concord. So blessed shall every man be with God, who, leave8 this world with a quiet and clear conscience, and to whom the Lord will not impute sin. (Psal. xxxii. 2.) He shall see God to the satisfying his desire, he shall enjoy him to the consummating of his pleasure: he shall shine in truth, rejoice in goodness, flourish in a never-decaying eternity: nor shall his duration be more enlarged, than his capacity of knowledge and felicity. He shall be free of that city above, of which the angels are denizens, the Father the temple, the Son the light, the Holy Spirit the cement of inviolable love. O happy mansion! O fruitful, peaceful country, whose territories are large enough for all thy inhabitants! whose people dwell securely, without strife or want! How glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of God! (Psal. lxxxvii. 3.) In thee is nothing heard but the voice of praise and thanksgiving, the shouts and exultations of them that



rejoice in God, whose sight is charming, whose words are sweet beyond expression. Thy presence, O Lord, is delightful: the possession of thee is entire satisfaction. Thou, thou alone art pleasant, thou art more than a sufficient reward; the highest merit, the sharpest sufferings, are overpaid in thee. Beyond thee there remains no new object for our wishes; for all that we can possibly propose to ourselves, is found in thee alone. The desires of beholding and possessing thee will be ever fresh and growing, and the delights of these ever new and entertaining. In thee our understandings will be enlightened, in thee our affections ever purified, so as to know and love the truth continually more and more. And this is the utmost perfection mankind are capable of, to know, and entirely to love their Creator.

What strange perverseness! What madness and dotage then is this we labour under, to thirst after the gall and wormwood of sin, to court the storms and shipwreck of worldly cares, to be content with the disasters of a perishing life, to submit tamely to the tyranny of an enemy that usurps a dominion over us; and not rather to aim at the bliss of saints, the society of angels, the magnificent joys above, and the pleasures of a devout and contemplative life, that so we may enter into the joy of our Lord, and be made partakers of the riches of his exceeding goodness? There we shall taste how gracious the Lord is, see the beauties of his holiness, the lustre of his saints, and the glories of his palace and throne: there we shall know the power of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, the most extensive love of the Holy Ghost; and get acquainted with that ever blessed and most mysterious Trinity. Now we see bodies with the eyes of our body; we form ideas of bodies by the powers of the soul; but then we shall see God himself with a clear intuitive knowledge. O the blessedness perpetually flowing from that vision, which sees God in himself, sees him in us, and us in him; which furnishes us with the utmost we can wish, and leaves no new objects for our desires; which shews us all we can see, and inflames us with the love of all we see, and renders us perfectly happy in that love. So shall we be blessed in the pleasures of love, blessed in the delights of contemplation. This shall be the sum of our contemplation, that the sum of our happiness. For the Divine nature shall then be understood by us in its abstracted essence and brightest perfections; the secrets and mysteries of the Trinity, and the harmony of providence, and the justice of his judgments, and all the wondrous works of God, shall lie fair and open to our view. The delights resulting from them, shall fill and satisfy our largest thirst after knowledge, and so consummate the happiness of the rational soul. And as truth shall shine, so charity shall burn bright; one voice, one will, one concert of praise: the whole assembly of saints united to each other; body and soul shall no more war and hold perpetual conflicts; nor then, as here, obstruct, but promote each other's happiness, and maintain good correspondence, and the human nature shall shine in glory, as the sun in its strength. The joy, the discourse, the entertainment of angels and men shall then be the game. Their love shall never grow cold, their hopes and expectations shall never languish by delays; for in God all good shall be present with them, and they shall all partake in common of the same wisdom, and power, and righteousness, and peace. No difference of language shall there be heard, but all things uniform, and hearts unanimous; the same dispositions and the same affections: in the overflowing river of this pleasure, there will be gratification to the full, the perfection of bliss, and glory, and gladness.

But who is sufficient, who shall be meet to partake of these things? Even every true penitent, even every faithful friend, even every obedient servant. The true penitent grieves and mourns for his past miscarriages, and gives all diligence to avoid the like for the time to come. For this is repentance indeed, to be continually under concern for the sins we have committed heretofore; and so to bewail what hath been done, as never more to do what we bewail. And reason tells us, that he who persists in practices, which he professes to be sorry for having ever been engaged in, does not repent, but mock God, and delude his own soul. If then thou wouldest approve thy sincerity in this matter, leave oft thy sins; for vain is that repentance which subsequent crimes of the same nature stain. Every obedient servant resigns his own inclinations and aversions to his master's pleasure, so as to be able to profess with the psalmist, My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready, I am content, and delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart. I delight to dedicate my time to thee, to converse with thee in my prayer, to do good to my neighbours, and perform all offices of charity for thy sake; to keep a strict guard over myself, and to seek rest for my soul in the contemplation of heavenly things. A faithful friend is serviceable and obliging to all, and troublesome to none. He is serviceable to all, because devout towards God, kind to his brethren, reserved and moderate in his

enjoyments, a servant to his Lord, a companion to his equal, a master of the world. The things above him minister to his delight; those upon the level with him, to his comfort and assistance; those below him, to his use and service. He is troublesome to nobody, because using and esteeming all things according to their proper spheres and capacities j pursuing and reaching to those that are more excellent, and retaining an absolute mastery over those that are beneath him. To the former he gives up himself in possession, but keeps undisturbed possession of the latter; and thus employs himself in those two most important, most necessary affairs, the contemplation of God, and the preservation of his own soul.

Let this then be thy first care, strictly to watch and guard thyself from sin and temptation; but know withal, that thy own strength is not sufficient for this great work; and therefore do not forget most humbly and earnestly to implore the Divine mercy and protection: let thy Saviour Jesus Christ be ever Hi thy thoughts and affections, and wear him as a signet upon thy heart: for when the door is sealed and kept by him, ' all thy faculties will be under his governance; no thought can go in or out, or lodge there, but by his permission: the family of heaven and earth will bear thee company; thousands of angels will pitch their tents about thee, and guard the passes of thy outward senses, that no unclean thing enter there. And the great adversary of souls, how mighty and formidable soever in himself, will not be able to break through these bright armies, nor dare to make his attacks which he foresees will prove unsuccessful. So great an awe will the dread of this Divine keeper, and the bright host of angels that attend him, strike; so sure a defence will these heavenly succours be, against that otherwise undaunted, that otherwise invincible enemy.

### **Chapter XVI**

DELIVER me from mine enemies, O God, save me from the rage of them that hate me; for the mighty are gathered together against me; and they that thirst for blood, lie in wait for my soul. (Psal. lix. 1, 2.) By the assistance of thy heavenly grace, I desire and resolve from this day forward to live to my benefit and happiness, and to redeem that time which hath been hitherto mis-spent to my infinite detriment and danger: for sure we ought to employ the term allotted us in this world, as becomes men who have a lively hope; that when their perishing bodies shall be food for worms, their immortal souls shall enter into joy with the saints. Fit then it is that our mind should be set betimes into the right road to that place, which is appointed for its journey's end at last: for why should we not make the best of our way to those happy regions, where we shall live for ever secure from fear, or possibility of dying any more? If we are so immoderately fond of life here below, so short and so perpetually upon the decay, where we make so very hard a shift to live with tolerable comfort, where eating and drinking, sleeping, and the other necessities of this body devour so great a portion of our time and labour, and all does but just support this mass of clay. How much more passionately ought we to love, how much more earnestly to covet that eternal life, where neither labour nor pain shall have any place, where we shall enjoy pleasure and happiness, and freedom in perfection; where men shall be equal to the angels of God, and the righteous shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father? How gloriously bright may we suppose the souls of men shall then be, when even their bodies shall be as resplendent as the stars in the firmament? No melancholy nor heaviness of heart, no pain or fear, no labour or decay, or death there, but ever-blooming youth and health unbroken continues out of danger of decay or interruption.

There is no sin, no misery, no discontent, no temptation, no inclination to wickedness, but holiness, and peace, and security, and joy, rest from toil, pleasures always new, the sight and fruition of God ever ravishing sweet. And who would not most eagerly desire to dwell in this blissful place? Who would not think himself happy in peace so undisturbed, in pleasure so exquisite, in the vision of God, so transcendently glorious? no stranger is admitted there, but all are citizens of that heavenly Jerusalem; and dwell secure in their own country, among their dearest friends, ever rejoicing, ever satisfied with good, and yet ever desiring more; and the more diligent a man hath been in the service of God, the larger reward in proportion shall he receive at the hand of his bountiful Master. The condition, though not the meritorious cause of our bliss everlasting, is obedience; and that obedience is accepted according to the sincerity and love from which it proceeds. And this love, as it recommends our services, so does it add to our recompense: for the more fervently we love God, the nearer shall we be suffered to approach, and have the clearer view of him; and the nearer we see, the more still we shall desire to see him, and be the more transported with the sight.

## Chapter XVII

THE days of man upon earth are but a shadow, always in motion, and he in truth no better than vanity and nothing, even when he seems to be most substantial and at a stay. How foolish is it then for man to lay up treasures upon earth, since both he who heaps them up, and that which is heaped up, are eternally in motion, and pass away like water that runneth apace? What advantage, vain man, dost thou expect in this world? For the advantage of worldly-minded men is destruction, and the end of it is death. O that thou wert wise, that thou wouldest understand, that thou wouldest consider what will happen to thee in the latter days. I know, my soul, a certain person that hath lived in great familiarity with thee for several years, hath always sat at the same table, been fed by thy own hand, slept in thy own bosom, and conversed with thee as thy most intimate favourite and friend. This fellow is of right thy servant; but the kindness thou hast shewed him from the beginning, and the sparing those chastisements which his petulance deserved, have made him impudent and rebellious; for want of being kept under by the rod, he hath lift up his heel and kicked at thy life; nay, he hath ensnared his master, and repaid his indulgence with a most insolent and tyrannical cruelty. Thou wouldest ask, perhaps, whom I drive at all this while; it is the old man, who insults over and raises sedition against thy soul, to whose just dominion<sup>4</sup>je ought to submit, who proudly disdains the land of promise, and favours only the things that be of the flesh and sense. This man is blind, and deaf, and dumb from his birth; a wretch, hardened, and old in wickedness, an obstinate rebel to truth and virtue, and an irreconcilable enemy to the cross of Christ. He makes a laughing-stock of the innocent, and him that walketh in the uprightness of his heart; is always aiming at matters too high for him, bold and assuming, and boasts of things above his strength; bears no respect to any of his superiors, and in his foolish heart says, There is no God. (Psal. iv. 1.) He pines away and frets at the prosperity of others, but grows fat and triumphs in their misfortunes and misery; feeds upon carnal and unclean imaginations, and persists in impudent filthiness without remorse; squanders his own possessions like a spendthrift, scrambles and grasps at other men's like an insatiable miser; he treasures up shame and reproach to himself, and by his dissimulation and craft, and vile hypocrisy, provokes the wrath and vengeance of Almighty God.

This man was altogether born and bred up in sin, a friend of unrighteousness, a child of death, a vessel of wrath, fitted for destruction; and yet, notwithstanding these forbidden circumstances, this profligate wretch hath the confidence to preach God's laws, and take his covenant into his mouth. He hates reproof and discipline, and casts his Master's word behind his back; When he sees a thief, he consents unto him, and hath been partaker with the adulterers: he hath slandered and offended his own mothers son; (Psal. 1. 16, 17, 18, 19,20.) and made it his business, by a hard and impenitent heart, to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath. (Rom. ii. 5.) He labours to undermine thee in thy most valuable interest, would rob thee of thy inheritance; and thou art so tame, so treacherous to thyself, as not only to revenge, but even to connive at, and not be sensible of the injury: thou givest him not one hard word, nor castest one angry look, but smilest at him while he caresses and fawns upon thee. Thou playest with a scorners, and considerest not that thou art engaged with a mocking Ishmael. This is not a diversion of children, nor a recreation of simplicity and innocence; but a woeful delusion, a malicious persecution, a murdering of thy life. He casts thee into the pit himself had digged for thy destruction. Thou art softened into luxury, and sold to sin, miserably enslaved, and barbarously treated. O wretched man, who shall set thee free from the bond of this misery and reproach! Let God arise, and spoil this strong man, let his enemy fall before him, this despiser of his majesty, this idolatrous worshipper of himself, this lover of the world, this servant of Satan. What dost thou now think of this traitor, this tyrant? If thou resentest his behaviour as it deserves, thou wilt immediately cry out, He is guilty of death, let him be crucified. Do not therefore dissemble thy just indignation, do not delay thy revenge; let not thine eye spare, neither let it pity him. Crucify this man of sin boldly, resolutely, instantly, but crucify him with the cross of Christ, in which is life and salvation: for if thou cry for help to that merciful Saviour, who did not disdain to be crucified for thy sake, he will hear thee effectually, and according to his wonted goodness, return that comfortable answer, thou that art with me now upon the cross, shall also be with me this day in paradise.

Oh the bowels of compassion! Oh the riches of the mercy of Christ! Oh the surprising mystery of the redemption of lost sinners! So free, so ready is the love of God, so amazing his goodness, so far above all hope, his condescension .so unwearied, so invincible his clemency, that, when men fast bound in sin and afflictions cry to him in their distress, he hears them out of their prisons, and descends from his holy heaven to their relief, because his mercy endureth for ever. How unbounded is his kindness, how unparalleled his easiness of access, how inexpressible the happy change wrought by the hand of the Most High for most unworthy, most profligate creatures! Even for thee, my soul, the most abandoned of all creatures. Lately thou satest in darkness, and the shadow of death, but now art secure in the regions of light and glory. Lately a prey in the lion's mouth, who lay in wait to tear thy soul in pieces, but now in the hand of that faithful Shepherd, that powerful Mediator, out of which no malice, no force can ever pluck thee: lately within the gates of hell, now in the midst of paradise.

But to what purpose, Christian reader, do I recount these benefits, or put thee in mind of thy advantages or thy duty, by a book of pious admonitions, unless thou diligently peruse the book of conscience, and blot out all the black catalogue of sins written there against thee? I may write, and thou mayest read and understand these reflections, but all to no effect, till thou study and read, and thoroughly understand thy own self. Give heed therefore to this, above all other studies, consider, and resolve to continue no longer ignorant of the state of thy own soul. Read thus, that thou mayest love God, that thou mayest encounter and overcome the world, and every enemy that opposes thy peace and salvation. So shall thy labour end in rest, thy sorrow clear up into joy: and when the darkness of this transitory life scatters and wears off, a glorious morning shall dawn in comfort unspeakable, and the meridian sun of righteousness shall warm thee into new life, and shed his bright beams upon thy head. Then shalt thou see the bridegroom, and his mystical spouse in perfect unity and inviolable love; and rejoice at the marriage feast of that Lamb, who was dead, and is alive again, even that Lord of glory, who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.

## **1150 AD?**

**St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090 – 1153) (French abbot & Leader of Cistercian order)**

**Il y a Plusieurs Demeures Dans La Maison De Mon Père; Le Sens De Ces Paroles Est, Vous Régnez Avec Moi Dans La Vie Éternelle En Laquelle il y , C'est-À-Dire Plusieurs Dignités; En Cet Heureux Séjour, Autre Est La Clarté Du Soleil, Autre Celle De La Lune, Autre Celles Des Étoiles**

### **Oeuvres Complète de Saint Bernard**

**Tome VI, Sermon VI.** Voici la suite: « Pierre dit à Jésus: Seigneur, où allez-vous? » Par ces paroles, Pierre répond à ce que le Seigneur avait dit plus haut: «Où je vais, vous n'y pouvez venir. L'apôtre n'avait pu entendre cette expression sans une grande douleur, et sa réplique se rapporte, non aux paroles actuelles de Jésus: « Je vous donne un commandement nouveau, » mais à celles qu'il avait proférées auparavant: « Où je vais, vous n'y pouvez venir; » Seigneur, dit-il, “où allez-vous?» Comme la main instruite palpe fréquemment le lieu où le corps souffre, de même la langue, amie du coeur, ne peut cacher l'amertume que le cœur ressent: ce que l'âme éprouve de souffrance au dedans, la langue le produit au dehors. Aussi la force de la douleur se ressent dans l'esprit, et se découvre par la voix qui se forme au palais au moyen de la langue. Voilà pourquoi la langue de Pierre ne pouvait cacher la douleur qu'il ressentait au fond de son coeur. Ayant entendu, « vous ne pouvez venir où je vais,» il écouta à peine les autres paroles de son maître. Aussitôt qu'eut été donné le double précepte de la charité, saisi d'un regret trop vif à la pensée de l'absence future de son maître, il interrompt le discours que Jésus faisait avec tant d'obscurité, et plein de tristesse il s'écrie: « Seigneur, où allez-vous? » C'est comme s'il s'écriait: cette mutuelle charité que vous nous recommandez, avec votre secours, nous la garderons pure, et sans atteinte, nous accomplirons tous les autres préceptes que vous nous donnerez. Mais ce mot que vous avez dit: “Vous ne pouvez venir où je vais, » nous a remplis d'une grande amertume. Et où allez-vous? Pourquoi nous abandonner? à qui nous laissez-vous dans notre désolation? Je ne veux plus vivre sans vous, ne me quittez pas, ne m'abandonnez pas.

2. Le Seigneur lui dit: "Où je vais, tu n'y peux venir présentement tu me suivras plus tard. » Le sens de ces paroles est celui-ci: je ne te quitte pas, je ne t'abandonne pas; je marche devant toi: là où il n'y a pas de route, je t'ouvre un chemin; du sentier je te fais une voie battue; à la place de la crainte, je mets la sécurité, et au lieu de la mort, je place la vie. Tu es craintif, tu es tremblant, tu n'es pas encore fortifié, tu ne peux me suivre présentement. Je te précéderai à l'opprobre, au gibet, en mourant, en ressuscitant, en montant au ciel. Tu n'es pas propre à recevoir la récompense, parce que tu n'es pas encore prêt à souffrir le supplice. Tu ne peux me suivre; moi qui suis la vie, parce que tu n'es pas encore prêt à mourir pour moi: « Plus tard, tu me suivras. » J'enverrai en vous le Saint-Esprit que je vous ai promis, il vous confirmera: "Et vous serez mes témoins dans Jérusalem, dans toute la Judée, dans Samarie et jusqu'aux extrémités de la terre (Act. I. 8.): » Et alors tu seras prêt à venir à ma suite, Pierre réplique «Pourquoi ne puis-je vous suivre tout de suite? » Je ne crains pas le châtement, je ne crains pas la mort: « Je suis prêt à aller avec vous au supplice et à la mort. "Que dites-vous, "que je ne puis vous suivre actuellement? Je donnerai ma vie pour vous. "Le Seigneur lui dit « Tu donneras ta vie pour moi? Tu te trompes, Pierre, tu n'es pas encore prêt, tu n'es pas encore revêtu de la vertu d'en haut. Quand cette force sera descendue en toi; alors tu livreras ton âme à la mort. Mais le moment n'est pas loin où, par crainte de la mort, tu renieras la vie, et tueras ton âme; où tu nieras d'être mon disciple, et tu feras périr ton esprit: l'heure et le temps approchent, où tu jureras ne point me connaître, afin de pouvoir échapper au péril: le coq ne chantera pas, que tu ne m'aies renié trois fois. Quelques belles protestations que tu fasses sonner, "avant que le coq chante, tu me renieras trois fois. "Voici ce sens: avant que le coq chante, tu me renieras. Et ce renoncement aura lieu trois fois, soit avant le premier chant du coq, soit avant le second.

3. A ces mots, la crainte, la frayeur et une grande douleur s'emparèrent de tous les disciples. Cela n'est pas étonnant. Ils avaient entendu le Seigneur dire à Pierre: "Avant que le coq chante, tu me renieras trois fois; "Pierre était remarquable parmi eux par l'éclat de sa sainteté, par la ferveur de son amour et par l'énergie de sa foi; il avait déjà confessé que Jésus était le Fils de Dieu par ces paroles qu'il lui avait adressées: "Vous êtes le Christ, le Fils du Dieu vivant (Matth. XVI. 16), "et ils redoutaient qu'il ne leur arrivât le même malheur qu'à lui. Et qu'un homme si grand dût le renier, ils avaient quelque incertitude, sur ce point et ils ne croyaient point parfaitement que leur maître ressuscitât le troisième jour d'entre les morts. A cela s'ajoutait la pensée que ce même Seigneur qu'ils entendaient présentement s'entretenir avec eux, devait bientôt mourir. Ce fut alors la tristesse, le deuil et la même plainte de tous. Ils étaient certains de l'absence que leur aimable Seigneur allait faire, de la mort qu'il était sur le point de subir, ils le voyaient encore en vie, et néanmoins ils le pleuraient déjà comme mort. Ils se rappelaient alors les flots très-suaves de la doctrine qu'ils avaient reçue de lui; la santé qu'il avait rendue aux malades, la vie qu'il avait redonnée aux morts, la très-tendre et très-exquise bonté qu'il avait toujours montrée pour eux, et ils se voyaient, si subitement privés de lui. Alors ils pleuraient très-amèrement, mes frères, et croyez-moi, ils ne pouvaient plus se consoler.

4. Les voyant verser des larmes si amères, le Seigneur voulut les consoler de sa mort; mais je pense qu'il ne le voulut pas alors, et qu'il les excitait plutôt alors à la tristesse, lorsqu'il leur disait: « Que votre coeur ne se trouble pas (Joan. XIV. 1). Je serais étonné s'il ne frémit pas en esprit, s'il ne se troubla pas lui-même en disant à ses disciples en pleurs: Que votre « coeur ne se trouble pas. "Je le crois, c'est pourquoi, je le dis, mon béni Seigneur Jésus-Christ dit en tout temps à ses disciples qui pleurent: « Que votre cœur ne se trouble pas. Vous croyez en Dieu, croyez aussi en moi. "Comme s'il leur disait ne vous troublez pas de mon absence, que ma mort ne vous affecte point. J'ai le pouvoir de quitter la vie et de la reprendre. Trois jours mon corps restera mort dans le tombeau, et après ces trois jours, il ressuscitera immortel et impassible. Jonas resta trois jours et trois nuits dans le ventre de la baleine et le Fils de l'homme ressuscitera des morts le troisième jour. « Que votre coeur ne se trouble point moi qui ai ressuscité Lazare, je puis ressusciter mon corps; moi qui ai ressuscité le fils de la veuve, après trois jours la mort n'aura plus d'empire sur moi. "Vous croyez en Dieu? Croyez aussi en moi.» Ne craignez rien à l'occasion de la mort de mon corps: je suis Dieu, je le ressusciterai. Les oeuvres que j'ai opérées rendent témoignage de moi. Si vous croyez en Dieu, conséquemment vous devez croire en moi, parce, que je suis Dieu. Et pour qu'ils ne doutassent pas qu'ils demeuraient eux aussi en Dieu avec Jésus-Christ pour la vie éternelle, le Seigneur continue et dit:

5. « Il y a plusieurs demeures dans la maison de mon Père. » Le sens de ces paroles est celui-ci: Vous régnerez avec moi dans la vie éternelle en laquelle il y a plusieurs demeures, c'est-à-dire plusieurs dignités. En cet heureux séjour, autre est la clarté du soleil, autre celle de la lune, autre celles des étoiles. La maison de Dieu le Père, c'est la prédestination et sa prescience. En cette maison, chaque âme parfaite obtient son séjour au moyen du denier qui est compté et donné également à tous, car il est la mesure égale et non diverse de la vie de l'éternité: Ou, d'une autre façon: La maison de mon Père est le temple de Dieu, le royaume de Dieu, c'est-à-dire les hommes justes, entre lesquels il existe beaucoup de différences. Et ce sont là les demeures de cette maison, c'est-à-dire les dignités qui sont préparées dans la prédestination, comme l'Apôtre le dit: "Il nous a choisis avant la création du monde "par la prédestination (Éph. I.); mais ces dignités, il faut les attendre des bonnes oeuvres. Aussi l'Apôtre ajoute: "Ceux qu'il a prédestinés, il les a appelés; et ceux qu'il a appelés, il les a purifiés (Rom. VIII. 32). » Et c'est ce que dit le Seigneur: si nonobstant cela, "je vous avais dit que je vais vous préparer une place: si je m'en vais et si je vous prépare une place, je reviendrai et je vous prendrai avec moi, afin que là où je suis, vous y soyez aussi. » Le sens est celui-ci: En la maison de mon Père, il y a diverses récompenses selon les mérites; si néanmoins, c'est-à-dire, si ces mérites n'existaient pas, « je vous aurais dit » que je vais vous préparer une place. Mais parce qu'elles s'y trouvent préparées par la prédestination, il n'est pas nécessaire que je vous y en prépare d'autres. Mais comme ces mérites ne sont pas encore acquis par les oeuvres, le Seigneur ajoute: "Mais si je m'en vais et vous prépare une place, ie viendrai encore et vous prendrai avec moi, afin que là où je suis, vous y soyez vous-mêmes. C'est comme sil disait: Vous avez un séjour dans la maison de mon Père en vertu de la prédestination: mais je vais à mon Père et je vous le préparerai par les bonnes oeuvres. Vous avez en cette maison une demeure éternelle, mais vous n'y pouvez arriver que par un grand travail. Cette demeure, vous l'avez seulement parle don et la grâce de Dieu; mais je veux que vous m'en soyez aussi redevables. Je me retire de vous selon la divinité, et je vous préparerai, selon l'humanité, cette béatitude ineffable que je vous ai disposée selon la divinité, depuis l'origine du monde. Ces joies inexprimables, vous ne pouvez les goûter d'aucune façon, si auparavant je n'ai quitté et repris mon corps de chair. Je monterai au ciel, je, vous enverrai le Saint-Esprit qui vous apprendra à agir par les oeuvres et l'action de grâces, de telle sorte que vous ayez droit, par vos efforts, à ce royaume de l'éternelle félicité qui vous a été préparé en vertu de la prédestination.

6. Le Seigneur Jésus prépare chaque jour une place à ses fidèles, en offrant à Dieu son Père sa chair qui a souffert pour le salut du genre humain; et ainsi il nous fait obtenir, par son humanité, le lieu qu'il nous avait préparé par sa divinité. Toutes les fois que nous faisons quelque bonne oeuvre, prière, jeûne, lecture, méditation, larmes versées sur nos péchés, ou causées par le désir de voir Jésus-Christ, visite des infirmes, secours distribués aux indigents et autres saintes actions qu'il est trop long d'énumérer, toujours nous est préparée, en retour, la bienheureuse demeure du paradis par les mains de celui qui a dit: « Sans moi vous ne pouvez rien faire. » Mais il nous y introduira si nous vivons en sa foi et en son amour, lorsqu'il viendra rendre à chacun selon ses mérites. Et c'est là ce qu'il assure: "Je viendrai de nouveau, et je vous prendrai avec moi, afin que là où je suis, vous y soyez vous aussi ". Paroles qui reviennent à dire; j'apparaîtrai dans le jugement et vous introduirai en ces demeures pour que vous y restiez éternellement avec moi. O souveraine, ô pleine félicité, habite avec Jésus-Christ! qui pourra parvenir à une si glorieuse béatitude! qui sera assez fortuné pour régner avec le Christ pour voir sa gloire et contempler sa beauté!

7. O Jésus, Jésus, que je voudrais mériter de vous voir, ô mon Jésus! Je crois en Dieu, je crois en vous, et néanmoins mon coeur est grandement troublé. Il ne le serait pas si j'avais entendu tomber de votre bouche ces paroles,: « que votre coeur ne s'inquiète, point ». Mais à présent mon âme est grandement agitée, parce que je ne puis vous voir tout de suite; je ne veux, je ne désire, je ne cherche, il ne me faut pas autre chose que de vous voir, vous mon Seigneur et mon Dieu: Je vous cherche et ne vous trouve point; je vous appelle et vous ne me répondez pas. Je brûle de vous voir et je n'y puis parvenir; vous êtes pourtant tout ce que je désire. Vous m'êtes témoin, ô Vérité souveraine, que mon coeur est grandement troublé: mais j'ai confiance en votre miséricorde, mon âme vous verra et sera rassasiée de vous, et par vous, et dans vous et pour vous, mais en vertu de mes mérites, mais par l'effet de vos bontés si grandes et si nombreuses, je vous verrai, Dieu mon Sauveur, et lorsque vous viendrez juger le siècle par le feu. Mais je vous conjure par , vous-même et par celle qui;vous a donné le jour, quand vous paraîtrez pour ce terrible jugement; attirez-moi à vous, afin que là

où vous êtes en ce moment, je puisse m'y trouver avec vous et avec vos disciples à qui vous avez dit, étant sur le point d'aller à votre Père: «Et vous savez où je vais, et vous en connaissez le chemin ». Ils savaient, en effet, que vous alliez vers votre Père et que vous étiez la voie qui mène à lui, vous qui vivez et réglez avec le même Père en l'unité du Saint-Esprit, dans tous les siècles des siècles. Amen.

**1151 AD**

**Peter Lombard (1100—1160AD), Catholic Scholastic**

**Just As Lighting Up Of Bodies Will Be Different, So Glory Of Souls Will Be Different; For Star Differeth From Star, That Is, One Elect, From Another, In Glory Of Mind & Soul Sentences**

**Distinction XLIX, Chapter 280 (1) - De Differentia Mansionum In Caelo Et In Inferno (Of Different Mansions In Heaven And In Hell)**

**Steve St.Clair has already ordered an inexpensive English Translation of Volume 4 that is available in January 2010; [see it at this link on Amazon.com](#)**

The writings of the Fathers were weightily disposed towards the concept of degrees of reward and punishment, and the tradition thus established was continued through the Middle Ages, largely through the agency of Peter Lombard's Sentences, which transmitted the ideas of Augustine on the matter, and was accepted by a Church which tended to think in hierarchic terms. (note: Peter Lombard, Sentences, iv. dist. 49, c. 1; cf. Aquinas, Commentary on the Sentences, dist. 49, q.5, art. 1)

Let us turn to the beatific vision that the blessed will enjoy in the hereafter. The elect will all "live happily in eternal life," without any desire to sin. Nevertheless, "some will be more distinguished than others," in accordance with the scriptural saying that there exist "many mansions" in the Father's house (Mt. 14:2).

Peter explains:

For, just as the lighting up of bodies will be different, so the glory of souls will be different as well. For star differeth from star, that is, one elect, from the other, in glory of mind and soul [1 Cor. 15:41]. For some will contemplate the appearance of God more closely and more clearly than others, and the very difference in contemplating God is called the diversity of mansions. The house, in fact, is one; that is. the denarius is one [see Mt 20:1] But the diversity is one of the mansions here: that is, it is a difference of clarity. This is so because both the beatitude and the life of all is one and the highest good, namely, God. All the elect will enjoy this good, but some more fully than others. They will, however, have the enjoyment by seeing by means of the appearances, and not through a glass in a dark manner (1 Cor 13). {Peter Lombard (Great Medieval Thinkers) by Philipp W. Rosemann, p. 189] (Emma Disley, Degrees of Glory)

**1155 AD**

**Richard Of Saint-Victor (1110-1173), Leader of Cistercian Order**

**How Third Level Differs From & Rises Above Second; How Fourth Level Differs From & How Much It Rises Above Third**

**The Mystical Ark (Ark of Covenant, NOT Noah's Ark) (Excerpts)**

**BOOK III**

**Chapter III**

**Again: How It Differs From And Rises Above The Second**

We can now show the particular and special difference between these contemplations if we are willing to turn our

attention more carefully to the representation of them. It is necessary that the propitiatory, as the covering of the ark, have some density, while gilding often—nay always—seems to have no solidity, not to mention thickness. For what can I more rightly call gilding, other than a kind of deception of the exterior sense? When gilding is placed over that ark it falsely declares to external sight that it is solid gold. So without doubt gilding is that knowledge which flows into the deep places of some wise persons but deceives the eyes of carnally foolish persons much more than it illumines them. For what does knowledge of exterior things mean to you unless perhaps it leads you to knowledge of interior things? Yet your wisdom is foolishness in the presence of God. Of what benefit is it for you to have known all other things and not to know yourself and to be ignorant of your Creator? Why do you boast of the world so much, O philosopher? If it is necessary to glory, do not glory in yourself, but in the Lord (2 Cor. 10:17). Certainly if this foolish wisdom and untaught teaching of yours advanced you to knowledge of yourself or even to knowledge of God, it would make you not so much tumid as timid. If you are rightly wise, if you are truly wise, do not have conceited wisdom but have fear. "What do you have that you have not received?" (1 Cor. 4:7). You ought to glory in the one from whom you have received and glorify the one from whom you have received. "Why do you glory as if you have not received?" (1 Cor. 4:7). "If I want to glory, I will not be foolish, for I will speak the truth" (2 Cor. 12:6). You surely see that I have the name from the thing: I am called a philosopher, a lover of wisdom: "I have said to wisdom, you are my sister, and I have called prudence my friend." (Prov. 7:4). You are deceived, deceived, O philosopher; the appearance of things deceives you and concupiscence overturns your heart. This which you reckon as wisdom and call wisdom is foolishness in the presence of God. Therefore you say, what place does it have in the ark of wisdom, or why is such a work in need of such gilding? If it shines on the surface, if it has no solidity, why does it have any place in such a work? Hear, if you will, what is acceptable in our work and what is unacceptable to us in your work. Your ark does not have a covering; you do not know how to make a propitiatory. But content with gilding alone, you glory concerning the completion of the work you do, and you do not know how to continue the work. This is clearly worthy of mockery by all because you have begun to build and you have not been able to complete. Foolish and unwise, you do not know, or else you pretend not to know, that a vessel that does not have a cover ought according to divine command to be broken to pieces at the first opportunity. It is right that the vessel should be broken to pieces since always and everywhere it lies open for all sorts of impurities. O impure philosopher, you clean your vase externally, hut internally it is full of all kinds of filth. Content with outward reputation alone, you show no zeal in purifying your conscience. Your ark shines outwardly; it is inwardly filthy inasmuch as it does not have a covering. Striver for outward reputation; neglecter of conscience: Do you not pay attention to something because it was necessary to do this and not necessary to omit that? Let your ark shine outwardly and let it shine no less inwardly. Let it shine outwardly on account of this statement: "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works" (Matt. 5:16). And no less let it also shine inwardly on ac, count of this: "O blind Pharisee, first make clean the inside of the cup and the dish so that the outside may be made clean" (Matt. 23:26). Thus our ark has need of gilding, but it is not fitting for it to be content with gilding only. For without a covering it cannot maintain internal purity. Therefore strive according to the divine example to make the propitiatory; receive a cover of the sort that is suitable for the ark of wisdom. O unclean philosopher, if you wish to have an ark of wisdom clean within, if you crave to maintain purity of heart, ascend to this fourth stage of contemplation that is indicated by the propitiatory of the ark. We have already said above that this is that speculation that is concerned with invisible substances, namely human and even angelic spirits. Therefore the first thing in this consideration is that you should return to yourself, enter into your heart, and learn to estimate the worth of your spirit. Investigate what you are; what you have been; what you ought to I be; what you are able to be—what you have been by nature; what you are now by sin; what you ought to be by activity; what you are yet able to be by grace. From your spirit learn to know how you ought to estimate the worth of other spirits. This is the gate. This is the ladder. This is the entrance. This is the accent. By this we enter the innermost parts. By this we are raised up to the highest. This is the way to the summit of this speculation. This is the artful skill of making the propitiatory. This, without doubt, is the art by means of which purity of heart is recovered and, when recovered, is preserved. You certainly see how rightly we call this work the covering of the ark. By it we protect the purity of the innermost parts. Assuredly, if your ark with its gilding were under such a cover, namely a propitiatory of such sort; if your philosophy served such a philosophy it would also be acceptable to us. But our



theologians know better than worldly philosophers how to use these things. Finally, hear what is acceptable to us in our work and what ought justly to be acceptable to you in the gilding of our ark. First: that it is placed upon wood; second: that it is placed underneath the propitiatory; third: that it is placed between the two. It is placed over wood so that it may stand out in relief and hide for you the concupiscence of the eyes, and you may have a covering for your eyes lest perchance your eyes may be uncovered and see vanity. It is placed underneath the propitiatory so that it may be lifted up to higher things and so that knowledge of lower things may serve higher things and sharpen by means of much exercise the eye of the mind for comprehending higher things. It is placed between the propitiatory and the wood so that it may separate them and stop the human soul from love of lower things lest perchance after being cast down from sublime things, drawn away by its own concupiscence from the place of pleasures and enticed after its own concupiscence, the soul should go and become a wanderer and a fugitive upon the earth.

## **Chapter IV**

### **How It Differs From And How Much It Rises Above The Third**

We have just compared the fourth stage of contemplation with the first and second stages; now if it seems right, it should be compared with the third stage. We can probably do this better if we turn our attention to the representation of each of these. And so, turning attention to the representation of both, namely the golden propitiatory and the golden crown, I discover many differences between them. I pass over in silence the fact that the crown is fastened to wood, for the third stage of contemplation is supported by imagination, as has been shown above, while the fourth stage (the one about which we speak here) strives zealously to tread underfoot all imagination by the loftiness of its investigation. For this reason, according to the expression of similitude, our propitiatory ought neither to adhere to wood nor to be attached to wood. I also pass over the fact that the crown, which stands, rises up into the heights, while the propitiatory, which lies down, expands itself round about in greater amplitude because through pleasure in the sweetness of this contemplation and sweetness in the pleasure, the soul finds for the first time a place of great security and a solitary place of marvelous tranquillity for itself. Such unaccustomed and unexperienced delight gathers the longing of the heart to quiet and sets it in order for peace. Now, however, I direct your attention to the size of both, and in this respect I do not pass over the difference between them without careful consideration. For behold what I am unable to deny: They do not differ at all in the quality of the material, but there is much in every way in which they differ from each other in the quantity of the material. Each is made out of gold, because each is engaged in reasoning. But the small amount of gold from which the crown is made is exceedingly small if it is compared with the size of the propitiatory. In fact the measurement of the propitiatory in length as well as in width is defined with great care by divine teaching. Divine teaching is completely silent, however, concerning the size of the crown. No measurement of it is given, as if the divine word were to hint silently concerning the making of the crown, that he who is able to understand will understand and any person will make as much as he is able to make. I think that if its height could have extended itself up to a half cubit, the divine word would not have passed by this in complete silence. But the Lord who teaches a person knowledge knew His creation and could not completely conceal from him how much a lack of gold supports error in this human work and how the limitation of human mental sense constricts him in the watchtower of this contemplation. For now one abounds with the gold of wisdom in this place where he lacks every instrument with which these things ought to be understood—or if he possesses an instrument it is dull. What sort of instrument, I ask, will a person find in order to comprehend that peace which surpasses all sense? By which sense, I ask, does he comprehend what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has arisen in the heart of man? (1 Cor. 2:9; Isa. 64:4). For when Paul, or a person similar to Paul, is raised up above himself and snatched up to the third heaven, certainly he does not investigate by his own spirit those hidden things about which no person is allowed to speak, but God reveals them to him through His own Spirit. But whatever human understanding attains according to this mode by a sort of ecstasy of mind, the watchtower of the third consideration does not grasp it because of the immeasurable constriction of its limitation. In fact, whatever human experience sees when snatched away by means of ecstasy of mind pertains to another kind of contemplation and not to this kind. Therefore, why marvel if the limitation of its knowledge constricts the human mind especially in that consideration where the mind labors with great helplessness of sense with respect to those things which ought to be investigated? For whatever it gathers by means of thinking or discovers by means of the similitude of visible things concerning knowledge of invisible things, this is found to be almost nothing in comparison with truth. Why is it that no measure at all is prescribed for the crown, while a measure is portrayed so carefully in the description of the propitiatory? I think that it is clearly meant to be understood from this why there should

be so much lack of gold in this present work.

## **Chapter V**

### **How strongly the mind is able to pursue this contemplation and how it advances to it by much consideration and knowledge of itself**

He who seeks to abound in the gold of wisdom ought to pursue this fourth contemplation according to his strength and to exert himself vigorously in constructing the propitiatory. For a work of this sort is very pleasing in every way, and in this work every person offers of his own accord almost always more than is necessary—not to say as much as suffices. An abundance of gold will never be lacking for the one who pursues this work vigorously. If you seek a reason, accept a reason. When you begin to pursue spiritual contemplations and to rise up through consideration of your spirit to contemplation of spirits and to make spiritual things from spiritual things in this way, you also begin in a like manner to be spiritual. In this contemplation you will undoubtedly complete what you began to be in the preceding contemplation, namely spiritual. Do you know sufficiently that the spiritual person judges all things, of what sort this knowledge will be, and how great will be the abundance of this gold that is able to judge all things? Do you still wish it to be shown openly to you from what source you can provide this abundance of gold for yourself? Does it go beyond comprehension that the kingdom of God is within us? Behold, you say, the kingdom of heaven is within us but is gold within us in a similar way? Why not, I say. So! Have you forgotten that the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field? Behold, from what source an abundance of gold abounds abundantly to you. You have it at hand. Dig it up, if you will. Go quickly, sell what you have, purchase this field, and seek the hidden treasure. Whatever in the world you crave, whatever in the world you hesitate to part with, expend it freely for freedom of the heart. After purchasing the field, dig in the depths of it, exulting no doubt like persons who dig up a treasure and rejoice greatly when they have discovered a sepulcher. It is necessary to seek this treasure in the depths because wisdom is drawn from a hidden place. But wretched me; from what source does gold come to me for the gilding, the crown, and the propitiatory? I do not have silver and gold, and from what and how can these things be made? By what art, I ask, can I procure this gold for myself? I am not able to dig; I blush to beg. I know what I shall do. I shall go quickly to my Father, the Father of mercies from whom comes every good gift and every perfect gift, because He who gives copiously to everyone and does not reproach them is rich toward all. And so I pour out my prayer in His presence; I announce before Him my poverty and lack of gold; and I shall say to Him: Lord, you know my lack of (wisdom; my property is like as nothing before you; give me understanding, Lord, and I have gold and am rich. Since I am weak, and my soul and I shall have a propitiatory of the sort I crave. O how great an abundance of gold existed for him who was able to sing in truth: "I have understood more than all who teach me. I have understood more than the elders because I have sought your commandments" (Ps. 118:99-100). O what kind of propitiatory he had who sang confidently before the Lord: "You have protected me from the assembly of the wicked, from the multitude of those working iniquity" (Ps. 63:3). Late but at last Paul made a propitiatory for himself when he declared openly, "I am aware of nothing against myself" (I Cor. 4:4). Without great counsel he would not have known how to cleanse the ark of his conscience and without a golden propitiatory he would not have been able to keep clean the secret places of the heart. But up to this time, when he had been persecuting the Church of God, I think that he did not have a propitiatory. However, since he did this unknowingly and did not have the gold from which he might make himself a propitiatory it was reckoned to him for an indulgence. In what way was he able to make the propitiatory when he saw nothing with open eyes? But after he received the light of his eyes (Acts 9:17-18) he became a man who sees his poverty and henceforth takes more attentive care of himself; and he returned into himself and learned by experience that the kingdom of heaven is undoubtedly within us. For after finding the treasure hidden in a field he was enriched very much; and after being made famous he began to possess much property, beyond measure, more than thousands of pieces of gold and silver. Finally listen to someone glorying not so much about the gold as about the treasure: "However, we have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4:7). O man of riches; O man truly made famous! Was not that man who spoke of wisdom among the perfect the richest among all the Easterners? But what are we to say concerning that person who not lately like Paul but from the beginning of life has made for himself a propitiatory by which he also has preserved the purity of his heart? For this reason he also said: "For my heart does not reproach me with regard to all my days" (Job 27:6). Finally if you also desire to fulfill the Lord's command, guard your heart with all care and you have begun to make the sort of propitiatory the Lord requires from you. Learn by an example what it is advantageous to do; hear how David points himself out to you as an example: "I was meditating in the night with my heart; I was busily engaged and I searched my spirit" (Ps. 76:7). He was meditating with his heart; you also meditate with your

heart. He searched his own spirit; you also search your own spirit. Occupy yourself with the field; pay attention to yourself. While pursuing this exercise you will undoubtedly discover the treasure hidden in a field.

## **Chapter VI**

### **How From Speculation Of One's Self An Understanding Of Spiritual Things Is Secured Or Is Restored After Being Lost**

On account of this exercise the abundance of gold increases, knowledge is multiplied, and wisdom is increased. On account of this exercise the eye of the heart is cleansed, natural capacity is sharpened, and understanding is enlarged. He who does not know himself cannot rightly estimate the value of anything. He who does not consider the worth of his original condition does not know how all earthly pride should lie under his feet. He who does not first reflect upon his spirit knows nothing; he does not know what he ought to think concerning the angelic spirit or the divine Spirit. If you are not able to enter into yourself, how will you be capable of examining those things which are within or above you? If you are not worthy to enter into the first tabernacle, with what impudence do you dare to enter into the second tabernacle, that is, into the Holy of Holies? If you are not able to struggle along the high paths so that with the Lord Jesus or at least with Moses you can ascend into a high mountain, with what impudence do you come forth to fly to the heavens? First return to yourself; then you may dare to examine those things which are above you. First the sun illumines the boundaries of its rising, then it mounts up to higher places. For this reason, it is said by Solomon: "The sun rises and sets, and it returns to its place, where rising again it wheels round to the south, and is turned to the north" (Eccles. 1:5-6). Therefore the sun returns to its place so that it may rise again there; and rising again little by little from that place, it raises itself up to higher places so that later it touches the peak of heaven. "The sun rises and sets, and it returns to its place" (Eccles. 1:5). The sun rises when understanding of truth is inspired in the heart. The sun sets when the ray of understanding is withdrawn. But after setting, the sun returns to its place in order that it may rise again. The very place of this sort of sun is the soul. Understanding is born from the soul itself when it is visited by divine grace. What does it mean that the sun returns to its place except that the sight of the mind turns back to consideration of itself? Therefore, after setting, the sun returns to its place because by the withdrawal of grace, the eye of the mind is caused to rebound to the consideration of its defects. When divine grace withdraws itself for the moment, a man is compelled to learn that he is nothing and that he is able to do nothing by himself. But the sun rises again after returning to its place because by consideration of his own weakness, lost understanding is restored.

## **Chapter VII**

### **How Understanding That Has Been Received From Speculation Of One's Self Is Enlarged To All Things**

In its place the sun, rising again little by little, ascends to higher places since by knowledge of himself a man rises up into contemplation of heavenly things. But when he is led all the way to the highest point, there he gladly remains since he is refreshed there by a marvelous delight of supercelestial manifestations. Zealously the sun contrives delays in this place where it bends its course into a circle. On that account it wheels round to the south, but it is not carried there by means of desire, but rather it is turned to the north. (Cf. Eccles. 1:6.) The southern region is very pleasant from the excess of light and the heat of the day because it is a very delightful and delectable sight to contemplate the orders of blessed spirits making merry in the splendor and charity of God. Undoubtedly the region of the north has nothing of such a sort, for it has been given over to perpetual darkness and condemned to continual cold because the hearts of the reprobates—being cold by malice and blind by ignorance—are deservedly tormented in such regions. Therefore the sun does not pass completely to that place but is only turned around, for I think it is not drawn by any longing to such an unlovable region. Nevertheless, it is turned so that it may look, as if from afar, at those things that are there and may know with what precaution it ought to seek to escape those evil things. In the east we receive knowledge of our moral character and the discretion between virtues and vices. In the south we contemplate the rewards of good merits, the joys of supernal citizens, and the secret things of divine mysteries. In the west we come to know the retributions of evil merits and the end of evil spirits and reprobate men. Do you see how much the full knowledge of himself can do for a man? For indeed, from this he advances to knowledge of everything celestial, terrestrial and infernal.

## **Chapter VIII**

**Concerning The Triple Sense By Means Of Which Consideration Of Self Is Able To Run Here And There**  
Therefore if you desire to fly up to the second or even the third heaven, you must pass through the first. For indeed, the spirit examines everything thoroughly, even the depths of God (1 Cor. 2:10). Therefore if you prepare to examine thoroughly the depths of God, examine first of all the depths of your own spirit. For indeed, the heart of man is deep—nay, rather it is perverse and inscrutable Jer. 17:9). Inscrutable, yes, except perhaps to one who is spiritual. For the spiritual person judges all things and is judged himself by no one because only spiritual persons have been found worthy to see the works of God and his marvelous things in the depths. Certainly in the depths you will find many things worthily awesome and wonderful; there it is possible to find another kind of orb, wide and full indeed, another kind of fullness from the orb of the earth. There the spiritual person has his own kind of earth; there he has his own heaven; not just one but a second after the first and a third after the first and second. And in order to separate this triple heaven by a suitable distinction let the first be called the imaginative, the second the rational and the third the intellectual. And so imagination takes a place in the first heaven, reason in the second, and understanding in the third. And of these, the first is gross and fleshly in comparison with the others, and in its own certain way it is touchable and corporeal since it is imaginary and phantastical, drawing after itself and retaining in itself forms and similitudes of corporeal things. But the remaining two are very subtle by comparison with something wholly corporeal and are very far from the denseness of that. So surely, without any doubt, it is evident that this exterior heaven that we call the firmament is visible and corporeal; and indeed, it is itself the first and lowest of all the heavens. What the earth is to this visible heaven, so bodily sense is to that internal, phantastical and imaginative heaven. For just as this visible heaven contains within the expanse of its vault the multitude of everything earth bears and nourishes, so imagination encloses within its bosom the similitudes of everything the senses touch and the faculty of desire brings to mind. And so similitudes and images of all visible things are contained in the first heaven. Meanwhile the rational principles, definitions and investigations of all things visible and invisible pertain to the second heaven. However, contemplations and understandings of spiritual things themselves and also divine things pertain to the third heaven.

## **Chapter IX**

### **Concerning The Intellectual Sense By Which Alone Invisible Things Are Able To Be Seen**

The eye of the understanding is that sense with which we see invisible things—not as with the eye of reason with which we seek and find hidden and absent things by means of investigation or as we often understand causes by effects or effects by causes, and now one set, now another set of things by every possible mode of reasoning. But just as we are accustomed to see corporeal things visibly, presently and corporeally by means of bodily sense, so the intellectual sense grasps invisible things invisibly, to be sure, but presently and essentially. However, this intellectual eye has before it a great spread-out veil that has been darkened on account of the delight of sin and intertwined with the changing multiplicity of so many fleshly desires. This keeps the sight of the contemplative from the secrets of divine mysteries, except insofar as divine esteem has admitted anyone for his own benefit or the benefit of another. The Prophet, who said to the Lord "Unveil my eyes," bears witness to this (Ps. 118:18). Certainly he who asks that they be unveiled by the Lord shows that he has veiled eyes. Nevertheless by means of this very eye, the soul sees those things which are on this side of the veil, that is the invisible things of itself, namely those things which are in itself. Yet it does not see all things because not all things are on this side of the veil. Also, by means of the eye with which it sees certain things of itself, it is not able to see itself, i.e., the essence of the soul itself. But there is doubt whether we are going to see those things which we have shown are beyond the veil by this same eye of the understanding or if there is one sense that we use in order to see invisible divine things and in the same way we use other senses in order to see the invisible things of ourselves. But those who assert that one sense has a sight of higher things and another has a sight of lower things should look from whence this can be proved. I believe that it is here that they completely confuse the signification of this word "understanding." For they restrict its signification, now concerning only the superior, now only the inferior speculation, and at another time they comprehend both senses under one signification of the word. Notwithstanding, are we to call this twin sight of superior and inferior things "twin" in the sense

of "from one head," or are we to call it "twofold"? Instrument of the same sense, or twin effect of the same instrument: Whichever of these we wish to choose, nothing prevents us from saying that both of these pertain to the intellectual heaven. Why, is this heaven not said to have two great lights? Just as it is necessary to believe concerning other heavens, so it is that the more sublime and subtle speculation is the greater light in this highest heaven, and the lower and more obscure speculation is the lesser light.

## **Chapter X**

### **Concerning The Intellectual Watchtower And Its Superior Height**

This ultimate and highest heaven has its day. Without doubt it 'so has its night, and as long as we are in this life, if we direct our attention to this heaven what other than night do we have or are we able to have until night completes its course again, and the light of I awn, casting a reddish glow, drives away the darkness of night? Nevertheless, this night will be illumined like day because any day of this lowest heaven is surpassed by the brilliance of this night. Indeed, God placed the moon and stars in the power of the night and for that reason this night is my illumination in my delights. For it has its moon, that lesser light which we have indicated above, and it has stars, which expand their light everywhere and are assuredly the multiform modes of divine showings. But those who sleep, sleep at night. They cannot see the lights of this heaven nor sing with the Prophet before the Lord: "Because I shall see your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars which you have created" (Ps. 8:4). Likewise they cannot sing: "In the middle of the night I will rise up to praise you" (Ps. 118:62). What am I to say concerning such a man, since in vain he expects day and sees neither it nor the light of the rising dawn? Certainly those who are such "are taken away like wax that runs down; the fire has fallen upon them and they have not seen the sun" (Ps. 57:9). Happy are those who venture to sing confidently concerning the morning of this day: "In the morning I shall stand before you and see, for you are not a God who wills iniquity" (Ps. 5:5). I think that he signified the middle of the day who said concerning his beloved: "Show me where you, whom my soul loves, pasture, where you lie down in the middle of the day" (Cant. 1:6). I think that he wanted to signify the morning of this day and that he was warmed for a long time by desire for it, who said: "I hoped until the morning" (Isa. 38:13). Who among you rejoiced greatly that he might see this day, and then saw it and was happy? Certainly that one is great, whoever he is. Nevertheless, I believe that no one can reach the mid-point of this day, at least in this corruptible flesh, although I dare not deny this concerning the morning. Surely whoever among you can come to the brightness of this day when the sun has risen in heaven will see the truth of the judgment that the light seems softer and the sun more delightful to the eye. The sun of this day has its rising; but it knows no setting, just as the day itself does not have an evening although it begins from dawn. He knew that heaven of heavens for one day only. But one day in its courts is better than a thousand days in a lower heaven. For surely the second heaven has many days and also innumerable nights, according to which its sun rises and sets and returns to its place. So the first heaven received a moon in time, and its sun knew its own setting. But the sun and moon of the highest heaven remained in their dwelling place. For when the lights of this heaven have come to the summit they fix their course, and in the future they are never ever inclined to set. If entirely and without doubt the kingdom of heaven is within us, if it can be found within us, where, I ask, other than in this highest of heavens, is it sought more rightly, found more quickly and possessed more securely? I think that all the regions of that kingdom abound in gold because the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. For if you seek and love the gold of knowledge and the treasure of wisdom where, I ask, will you be able to find more abundant riches than in this highest of heavens? Where, I beg you, will the brightness of the highest wisdom be able to shine forth better for you, other than in the express image of that One and in His most excellent work, namely in the creation, restoration and glorification of the soul? Surely from this watchtower, from a nearby point as it were, he is able and is accustomed to see what that loftiness of the angelic spirit is, what that supereminent magnitude of the divine Spirit is. In no place is it seen more nearly, is it discerned more clearly, than from the summit of this lofty seat which is that highest and sempiternal beatitude of supernal citizens. In no place other than from

this most excellent of the heavens does that spirit who examines thoroughly all things, even the depths of God, contemplate more serenely those invisible things of God which are perceived by the intellect through those things which have been made. Nowhere in all His works, other than in the creation, restoration and glorification of the soul, does His power appear more (sublime, His wisdom more marvelous, His mercy more delightful. I think you surely see from whence comes to you that abundance of `gold that I promised to you earlier; namely how from much consideration and knowledge of your spirit you will be raised up to the knowledge and contemplation of the angelic spirit and the divine Spirit.

## **Chapter XI**

### **The Triple Distinction Of The Fourth Speculation**

But, since we already know through exposition from whence we abound with gold for such and so great a work, let us see what the Lord commands concerning the length and width of our propitiatory and why he is completely silent concerning its height. If we reflect on the nature of things, we shall be able to learn with regard to bodies themselves how we ought to proceed with an investigation into spiritual contemplations. We see in exterior things that every bodily thickness begins with length, increases with width, and ends with height. And so, the length of the propitiatory, if I am not mistaken, indicates those things which are in spiritual nature at the beginning; the width indicates those things which are for advancement; and the height indicates those things which seem to be for consummation. According to these three things we have mentioned we make a triple distinction of divine gifts in spiritual essences. First, the spiritual nature is created in order that it may exist. Second, it is made just so that it is good. Third, it is glorified so that it is blessed. And so by creation it starts toward good; by being made just it is enlarged in good; by glorification it is consummated in good. The goods of creation are for the beginning; the goods of justification are for advancement; the goods of glorification are for consummation. The first goods are gifts of the Creator; the second goods are both gifts of the Creator and merits of the creature; the third goods are gifts of the Creator and rewards of the creature, the consummation of gifts and the recompense of merits. And so, the first goods pertain to the length; the second, to the width; the last to the height. For in the first, as has been said, the rational creature starts toward the perfection of future fullness. On account of the second, it makes progress, increases and is enlarged. In the last it is raised to glory and is consummated in glory.

## **Chapter XII**

### **Concerning the subdivision of the first stage of this contemplation**

Therefore first let us see concerning the length of our propitiatory, which we are commanded to extend to two and one-half cubits. As often as we consider in the heart, investigate carefully, distinguish suitably and discuss sufficiently those spiritual goods of our creation which we have designated above, so often do we draw out the work of our propitiatory in length and extend it to a certain measure. And so in this drawing out of the construction of the propitiatory a threefold distinction of divine gifts suggests itself to us, concerning which alone, or most of all, the frequent and careful reexamination of our consideration ought to be engaged. From the very condition of its creation it is natural for every rational creature to exist, to know and to will. Think how necessary, how just, and how fitting it is for divine goodness to give discretion of good and evil to so worthy a creature and so excellent a nature, and at the same time to allow freedom of will so that its good might be both received and willed, both a gift and freely done. As long as you exert yourself in such a discussion, you labor in drawing out your propitiatory. Examine carefully, contemplate, and wonder at freedom of the will, discretion of judgment and sublimity of essence: With this you make your propitiatory according to the harmony of order and you draw out the due measure of quantity in length. I would be surprised if by yourself you did not pay attention to how useful or how necessary continual consideration of all these things is. For from this the mind is illumined, inflamed and confirmed in the good.

## **Chapter XIII**

### **How In The First Stage Of This Contemplation The Mind Ought To Exercise Itself, And How Much Such Exercise Is Effective**

Therefore, think about continually, consider earnestly, investigate carefully the will—not only your own, but also

that of another, whether good or evil. Know your own will, so that you may know what to correct, and also for what you ought to give thanks. {Also, think about the souls of the perfect, and even of the perverse; the souls of good spirits and of malignant spirits, so that from the consideration of opposites there may shine forth what it is expedient to imitate and what to avoid. Pay attention to what you know; pay attention to how much you do not know. Come to know how much you are set above brute spirits according to natural ability; come to know how much you are below angelic spirits according to intellect. If you pay attention to how much you surpass a brute spirit by means of mental sense you will sing heartily, "I will bless the Lord who gave me understanding" (Ps. 15:7). If you think about angelic understanding you will surely declare: "God, you know my lack of wisdom" (Ps. 68:6). Therefore it is very beneficial and necessary for me to examine my ignorance in order that I may know what I lack and may say with the blessed Job: "If I have not known anything, my ignorance is my own" Job 19:4). But, as often as I direct attention into myself, how or how often has He shown me uncertain and hidden things of His wisdom? Surely my soul magnifies the Lord who teaches us more than the knowledge possessed by birds and draft-cattle because it is He who illumines all men who come into this world. (Cf. John 1:9.) You see how great the benefit of this twin consideration is: namely to direct attention to the affection of the rational will and also to the sense of reason. But what should I say concerning the third of the designated considerations: Do we contemplate in wondering and marvel in contemplating the essence of the soul, the nature of the essence and the excellence of the nature? I think one's own experience can easily teach each one how much this speculation is able to encourage the soul against vices and to stir it up toward good. Come to know your worth, O man, I beseech you; think about the excellent nature of your soul, how God made her according to His image and similitude, how He elevated her above every corporeal creature, and immediately you will begin to marvel how a famous virgin daughter of Zion has been expelled from heaven to earth, and in like manner you will begin to cry out to the Lord: "What do I have in heaven and what have I wished for upon the earth besides you?" (Ps. 72:25). What is marvelous, I ask you, if in remembrance of my original condition, if because of the glance of my soul, the disorder of my external appearance overwhelmed me suddenly and without delay? For who does not feel shame to have given over the mistress of the world, the citizen of heaven, the beloved of God, to servitude to the body; to have prostituted her to unclean spirits; to have held her for a long time under the yoke of servitude in order to take care of the flesh in its longings? Surely anyone will marvel, when he comes to know his soul, when he directs his attention correctly to what the soul is or ought to be. I say, he will marvel from what and to what she has been expelled: How a mistress of nations has been made a widow; how a princess of provinces has been placed under tribute. I think that he wished to recall us to this consideration who said: "How is it, Israel, that you are in the land of enemies; you row old in an alien land; you have been wholly defiled with dead persons; you have been counted with those who are in hell" (Bar. 3:11). And so, in this triple consideration we ought, as we have already said, to bring to completion the length of our propitiatory.

## **Chapter XIV**

### **The Designation Of Those Things Which Cannot Be Comprehended In This Stage Of Speculation**

Now in the first and second consideration you can extend your knowledge as far as a cubit, but in the third you cannot do this at all. For where you have an instrument apt for that which one ought to know, there you undoubtedly possess a cubit of extraordinary certitude, as it were, because you are able to grasp by experience an idea of the thing being known. For your knowledge increases to a full cubit, as it were, when you reach firmness of certitude by means of experience. But for whom I ask, has not his own experience taught what it is to will or to know? Does not each one gather this, as often as he wills in his own heart? Do you not know how limitless are the things you will; how limitless, those you do not Will; how innumerable, those you know; how innumerable, those you do not know? But how do you see your will, how do you come to know your thought? In like manner, how are you able to see or know the substance of your soul? Who, I say, in this present fleshly condition now sees or even has been able to see his soul or

any spiritual substance whatsoever in its purity? Undoubtedly, in this respect the human intellect has been blind from birth and must of necessity cry daily to the Lord: "Illumine my eyes" (Ps. 12:4). Surely, if anyone in this corruptible flesh has been able to see what things of this sort are, he has been led above himself by ecstasy of mind. In that which he sees he passes beyond the limits of the human intellect, not by his own activity but on account of a divine showing. But whatever human experience has been able to reach in this way, it is undoubtedly evident that it does not pertain to this kind of contemplation but to another kind. Therefore, however much you exercise your natural ability in this consideration, however much you continue your effort without interruption, however much you enlarge your sense in this respect, you will not be able to extend your knowledge to a full cubit.

## **Chapter XV**

### **That We Ought Not To Neglect Those Things Which We Comprehend Only In Part**

Nevertheless, there are many things—and they ought not to be despised in the least—concerning the particular nature of spiritual essence that we are able either to gather from the authority of divine Scripture or to prove by the testimony of reason. Therefore let us strive to know in whatever way and as much as we are able, although we cannot extend it as far as a cubit by experience. Modest it is, but there is much that can be known in this consideration. Certainly, it is modest with regard to fullness, but much in every way with regard to benefit. Therefore, do not neglect what you can know concerning this cubit, even though you cannot complete it at all. That I may not be silent about the rest of the things that seem to pertain to this speculation, how much loss do we think you incur if you are ignorant concerning the immortality of the soul and do not believe it at all? For if it were not established concerning the immortality of the soul, who, I ask, would prepare himself for future retribution? Who, I beg you, would restrain his life so that he would not go after his passionate cravings? Who would make satisfaction for evils that have been committed? Who would gird himself for brave works? Who would have patience in the midst of so much bitterness of divine lashings if he utterly despaired of a future life? Everything that is affirmed concerning the redemption of the human race, everything that is believed concerning the divine sacraments, whatever is taught concerning divine instructions, whatever is hoped for concerning divine promises, is utterly destroyed if there is no hope for perpetual life for the soul. If we are persons who have hope in Christ in this life only, we are the most miserable of all people. See, we have left everything behind and have followed after Him. What, therefore, will we have if the dead do not rise again? Why do we die the whole day long on account of Him if no crown of justice is to be hoped for from Him, if the death of human beings and beasts is completely the same, and likewise the original condition of both? What advantage will it be for me if I do a great work of wisdom and justice? Do not they who eat and drink and pass their days in the good life and who feast ostentatiously daily do much better than those who are dying the whole day? Will it not be much better to go to the house of entertainment than to the house of mourning if after this life a person has no more than a beast has? (cf. Eccles. 7:3). If the dead do not rise again, why should I not rush and overflow with delights and enjoy the good things that exist? Why should we not willingly hear that voice which is saying: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die"? (1 Cor. 15:32; cf. Wisd. 2:6; Isa. 22:13, 56:12). You certainly see how many evils would follow if there were doubt concerning the immortality of the soul. We ought not to disdain in the least what we are able to accomplish with respect to this cubit, although we do not suffice for its completion. Therefore, the work of our propitiatory is begun with this triple consideration of essence (spiritual, that is) and of its discretion and will, and our work is drawn out to a definite measure. He who has exercised his soul fully in speculation of these things has finished the length of his propitiatory. Now that we have said these things concerning the length of the propitiatory, we now turn the hand of investigation to its width.

## **Chapter XVI**

### **Concerning The Subdivision Of The Second Stage Of Contemplation**

As we have said, those things which are at the beginning pertain to the width. However, justification enlarges our good that J begins with the work of creation and on account of this shows that it pertains to the width. Yet without two things this, work cannot be consummated. For it is never accomplished if the Creator does not cooperate with His creature. Indeed, if He willed, the Creator could complete everything by Himself without the work of the creature, just as when He willed, He was able to create so many and such great things from nothing. If we presume to push forward with our own strength without His aid, we labor in vain. He bears witness to this who says in His Gospel: "Without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5), because it is He "who works in us to will and to



accomplish according to a good will" (Phil. 2:13). For it is "not of the one willing nor of the one running, but it is of God who shows mercy" (Rom. 9:16). For without Him, what will I be able to do by myself, who cannot even say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:3)? Certainly it is He who works all things in all persons, apportioning to each one as He wills (I Cor. 12:11). Nevertheless, in the work of our justification voluntary consent is required by Him who says: "If you are willing and listen to me, you shall eat the good things of the land" (Isa. 1:19). He ascribes free will to persons when this work is hindered, where it is said: "If my people had listened to me, if Israel had walked in my ways, I would perhaps have humiliated their enemies for nothing and laid my hand upon those troubling them" (Ps. 80:14-15). If we do nothing at all in such a work, we appeal in vain for His aid, and falsely call Him helper. For it is one thing to do; it is another to give aid. For what does it mean to give aid except to cooperate with one who is working? That one understood that he had His aid and cooperation with regard to good who said, "Lord you are my helper and my deliverer; do not delay" (Ps. 69:6). We seek His aid daily when we cry out to Him in daily prayers: "Help us, O God our salvation" (Ps. 78:9). Therefore it is obvious that this work in which the Creator cooperates with His creature is accomplished by two. In this work, there is need for one's own activity and for divine grace. For anyone depends in vain upon free will unless he is supported by divine assistance. Our justification is accomplished by our own deliberation and divine inspiration. For to will only just things is already to be just. Indeed we are rightly said to be just or unjust from the will alone although we are judged in both cases from what we do. God cooperates with us in two modes, namely inwardly and outwardly: inwardly by secret aspiration; outwardly by the open aid of His works. But that cooperation which is exterior has nothing to do with this kind of contemplation, since our propitiatory must be made of pure gold, and this speculation ought to subsist in pure understanding. And so our own deliberation and divine inspiration are the two things by which the width of our propitiatory is brought to completion.

## **Chapter XVII**

### **That, Similarly, There Are Some Things In The Second Stage Of This Contemplation That Cannot Be Comprehended**

We learn by daily use what this deliberation is and after so much experience we cannot hesitate concerning certitude of it. For this reason we are able to extend our knowledge in this respect as far as a full cubit. But I ask, who in this life, at least, suffices to comprehend in what manner divine grace is accustomed to visit the heart and by its inspiration to incline everything to its will? However much we labor in this consideration we do not extend our work in this respect to a full cubit. For how can human understanding comprehend the manner of divine inspiration since in His Gospel the Lord reminds us of the incomprehensibility of the same thing: "The Spirit blows where it wills and you hear its voice, and you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes" (John 3:8). And so we are taught by the authority of Scripture about the assistance of divine grace, a thing we prove by the daily failure due to our infirmity and the clear effect of the cooperation of grace. Indeed with regard to this, His grace is often withdrawn from us so that human infirmity may be taught by its own failure how it cannot do anything good by itself. Again with regard to this, the same grace that earlier had been removed is restored again so that by its effect we may experience what we are as the result of a gift from God. Why is it that in one and the same thing now we are able, now we are not able, except that now we have helping grace, now we do not have it? And so it is clear that we are allowed to doubt very little concerning the assistance of divine grace, although we are able to comprehend very little about the modes of its cooperation. We are not able to complete a cubit in the work of this consideration of ours because we do not extend our natural ability as far as the limit of comprehension in the width of this investigation. The reason is clear why the width of our propitiatory cannot extend itself as far as two cubits and why, according to the divine example, it properly has one and one-half cubits. Therefore if you exercise your soul to the fullest in this twofold consideration, you complete the width of your propitiatory according to a suitable manner.

## **Chapter XVIII**

### **Concerning The First And Second Distinctions Of This Contemplation And The Difference Between Them**

Let no one think that the consideration of will that we proposed above is the same as this consideration of deliberation we now have assigned to the width. To the former pertains that which is done in the mind from the operation of nature only; to the latter, that which is done frequently in the mind from the work of activity. To the

former pertains any power of the soul implanted in it naturally; to the latter, any virtue of the soul joined with it by activity. Finally, to the former pertains any motion of the soul that is moved by some natural force; to the latter, any motion of the soul that is produced by some guidance of rational disposition. We are accustomed to call "will" that power of the soul which is able and accustomed to form itself into so many affections and to change in manifold ways through the soul. I say, we are accustomed to call this power of the soul "will." In a similar way, if I may say so, we call the motion and the act of such an instrument "will," and we say that the will itself wills. We call "will" not only the act of willing that which is brought about by natural motion only but also that act of willing which any consent of the soul accompanies on account of deliberation. But in any case the lack of words compels us at one time to extend the signification of words, at another to restrict it, and to vary it suitably under the pressure of necessity. But in order that we may sufficiently distinguish what we ought to ascribe to this consideration, it seems that every consent of the soul and everything that is done in the soul from consent pertains to this consideration. In a similar manner, any sense or motion whatsoever of the soul that is done against consent or beyond consent is as described rightly to consideration of the length. For, as has already we said above, the goods of creation ought to be assigned to the length of our propitiatory while the goods of justification ought to be ascribed to its width. And we know that everything in the soul that is beyond consent is certainly not able to make a person just. And so to the first consideration pertains careful direction of our attention to those goods which the mind may naturally possess in abundance or be in want of. But to the second pertains knowledge of which goods the mind may already possess on account of virtue and which it may not yet be capable of possessing. It is easy, I think, to see or to have known how it is necessary or beneficial to possess both of these considerations intimately and to draw them into contemplation frequently. For from the first consideration a person discerns to which goods he is naturally more inclined, to which evils he is more liable; which endeavors he ought to pursue more vigorously, which evils he ought to guard against more earnestly; by which exercises he is able better to advance, by which vices he can more easily be corrupted. However, from the second consideration one discerns to which sins he is subject or by which merits he stands out, and what punishment or reward he is to expect for these; how much he advances or falls behind each day; with how much activity of soul he is to busy himself in order to blot out past evils, avoid present ones, and prevent future ones; with how much constancy of soul he is to strive in order to recover lost goods and keep or increase goods in his possession. What a pleasure, what a suitable, and how delightful a manifestation to draw to speculation according to the first consideration so many qualities of the soul, so many of its thoughts, and so many of its affections, and to suspend the soul in wonder at them. O how marvelous speculation! O how amazing a pleasure of delight to have before our eyes according to the second consideration so many virtues of the soul, so many of its exercises, so many of its efforts and merits, and to cling for a long time in contemplation of that sort.

## **Chapter XIX**

### **That The Things Pertaining To The Third Distinction Can Be Comprehended By None Of Our Senses**

But now it surely seems worthy to consider why he who has carefully described the length as well as the width has been completely silent concerning the height of our propitiatory. It has been shown above that those things which are for glorification undoubtedly pertain to this third consideration, just as those things which are for justification pertain to the width of the propitiatory. But what human sense is able to grasp the mode of our glorification? What reason is able to comprehend it? Who has seen the witness of such evidence in another or has deserved to be undergoing the experience of this thing in himself? Surely in this life a man neither has sufficient proof of this thing nor is capable of understanding any experience of it. Rightly, therefore, no measure for the altitude of the aforementioned work is commanded since the manner of our glorification, as has been said, can be comprehended by no sense of ours. And, indeed, the propitiatory is believed to have some thickness, but this is not reckoned in comparison to the dimension of the others. So in any case we hold by the witness of faith to the certitude of our glorification although we are not yet able to grasp by means of the understanding the mode of its quality or its extent. But human eagerness reckons for very little or almost for nothing everything that it cannot test by means of experience. However we know that after a full cleansing of conscience, after much practice of justice, the

human mind at long last begins at some time to hope for that which earlier it had scarcely been able to believe in. In this way the measure of our propitiatory rises in height and grows in solidity. I believe that it pertains to the solidity of this propitiatory when the mind begins to glory in the Lord and give no small thanks for good testimony of conscience, so much so that it truly dares to make confession, since "our glory is this: the testimony of conscience" (2 Cor. 1:12). But if you want your propitiatory to increase in height and to receive a suitable solidity in the proportion that it is capable of becoming in this life, you must never cease, never be inactive until, as I have said, you possess some betrothal gifts of that future fullness, and receive the first fruits, however small, of eternal happiness, and begin to have a foretaste of the sweetness of divine pleasantness. Surely he wished to animate us to a longing for his who said: "Taste and see that the Lord is sweet" (Ps. 33:9). Therefore we believe that your propitiatory already has something of thickness if you have already tasted that the Lord is sweet. But however much you grow with respect to this grace, however much you advance in it, you ought always to reckon this to be very little and to consider it as nothing with regard to the greatness of future felicity. Surely this is what sacred Scripture means by remaining silent, for it said nothing at all concerning the height of our propitiatory. It is as if it might cry out more loudly and penetrate farther and better by keeping silent itself because everything the human mind is capable of grasping thus far in this life concerning the abundance of internal pleasantness ought to be reckoned as if it were nothing. By remaining silent it cries out that it considers itself wholly unworthy to instruct us concerning the measure of this work; in this life human infirmity is scarcely able to rise up to the beginning of the work.

## **Chapter XX**

### **Now This Kind Of Contemplation Can Be Divided Into Five Stages, And What Things Pertain To The First Stage**

But since we have divided into three portions the first consideration, which pertains to length, and also have divided into two portions that second one, which pertains to width, we can now cut this entire kind of contemplation into five portions and divide it into just as many stages. In the first stage of this contemplation we consider those things which pertain to the quality of the soul or the particular nature of its essence: that the soul is a kind of perpetual life that cannot be extinguished at any time by any pains or torments; that it is not only able itself to live in perpetuity but is able to animate the body to life and sense; that it needs no support; that it subsists eternally without assistance. Furthermore we consider how it has been diffused through so many members of the body since it is simple in itself and lacks individual essence in the parts; how in its whole body, in a kind of world of its own, as it were, it is certainly completely everywhere, just as God is found completely everywhere in all creatures of His; how in that world of its own it moves and disposes all things by the will alone just as in this world God, who created everything by the command of the will, rules all things by the same command of the will alone. In this manifestation and in others you will discover other things worthy of much consideration, which you cannot see without wonder and cannot wonder at without delight. Yet, what wonder is this if we discover many marvelous and awesome things in the rational spirit since it is the especial creature of God and has been made according to His image and similitude? For although God is marvelous in His works and very great and laudable in all His mighty deeds, nevertheless, I beg you, where will the more extraordinary marvels of His powers appear other than in His image, in His similitude? Without doubt the activity of the omnipotent Artisan, which appears marvelous everywhere, stands out singularly in such a work.

## **Chapter XXI**

### **Concerning The Consideration Of Those Things Pertaining To The Second Stage**

In the second stage of this contemplation those things are considered which are for knowing or can be devoted to the pursuit of truth, and whatsoever things come together and lead to an increase of knowledge. Surely in this consideration we rightly marvel with worthy awe and wonder at the fluency of thinking, the agility of imagination, the sharpness of natural ability, the examination of discretion, the capacity of memory, the liveliness of understanding and any other things whatever concerning this. For who is capable of thinking

worthily; who is capable of estimating the value sufficiently; who is not terrified in the wonder of his consideration if he pays careful attention to that fluency of human thinking which is so manifold; the speed of it that is so restless and indefatigable, that runs through so many, such varied and such an infinite number of things; that keeps quiet for neither an hour nor a moment of time; that passes through so great an expanse of space or so great a duration of time in so much haste? Furthermore we ought to pay attention to how easy a passage, how agile a running through, lies open everywhere from highest to lowest, from lowest to highest; from oldest to newest, from newest to oldest. But concerning the agility of the imagination and the skill of that faculty, what are we going to say or what are we able to say worthily about that which portrays with such great speed the image of all those things which the soul supplies? Whatever the soul takes in from outside by means of hearing, whatever it conceives from within from thinking alone, the imagination forms the whole by means of a representation, without delay and laying aside all difficulty, and it represents the forms of any things whatsoever with marvelous haste. What is it, I ask, to execute pictures of so many things and of so much in a moment, in a blink of the eye, and again to remove the same things with the same ease, or to change in many ways in one and then another manner? When it wishes, does the soul not create daily by means of the imagination a new heaven and a new earth and in that world of phantasms as it were every hour another kind of creator causes and forms according to his will creatures of that sort as large as you like? Nevertheless, if we pay attention to the sharpness of natural ability, we more quickly discover what we ought to marvel at in that. See how many—no, almost how infinite—are the things that are accessible to human natural ability that cannot be reached at any time by bodily sense. See how that sharpness of human natural ability is accustomed to investigate deep things, to penetrate whatever things are innermost, hidden within, perplexing, obscure and placed in darkness—and to unfold, disentangle, make clear and bring them out into the light. With subtlety, so to speak, it daily approaches, bursts into and passes through the innermost bosom of hidden nature and the secret recesses of its liveliness, making haste and always striving with eagerness to penetrate into farther places and to mount up to higher things. Pay attention to how many disciplines of knowledge it discovers, how many arts it hammers out. Then you will begin to be struck with amazement and to faint from excessive wonder. So if you pay attention to the capacity of memory and its breadth, undoubtedly you will discover what you ought to marvel at worthily. How great, I ask, is that inner chamber of such immense breadth, that comprehends, conceals and preserves so many substances of things, so many forms of substances, so many kinds of things, so many species of kinds, so many individuals of species—indeed so many particular natures, so many qualities, so many quantities, actions and passions, conditions, positions and places of individuals during the revolution of its extent of time, and after having preserved them for a long time, it brings them forth in the midst of all? Think, if you are able, how great, how wide, how large, how deep, how high, those treasuries are that are able to collect from all sides and to preserve without confusion so many treasures of knowledge and jewels of wisdom. Without doubt the capacity of memory is marvelous but the liveliness of the understanding is no less marvelous. It is easy to ponder and gather how great and marvelous it is from the things already said. For whatever sense touches, thought produces; whatever imagination forms, natural ability investigates and memory conserves. The understanding grasps knowledge of these things, and when it pleases it admits them to consideration and draws them into contemplation.

**1160 AD**

**Aelred of Rievaulx (1110-1166), Monastic Leader**

**The Perfection of the Coming Life: Lord Thus Distinguished Various Degrees Even Among The Perfect; You Know That Among Saints There Are Distinctions Of Reward, Just As Of Merit**

**Aelred of Rievaulx: Pursuing Perfect Happiness**

**by John R. Sommerfeldt (2005)**

**C. The Wondrous Harmony Of Perfection**

The perfected folk who sing with this voice "the sound of solemn celebration" will resound like a harmonious harp, whose "spiritual strings [are] stretched between two pieces of wood, an upper and a lower, prefiguring the mystery of the cross." On this harp Aelred hears the strings of the four fundamental virtues playing in harmony: "The first of these strings is temperance, through which one mortifying one's [physical] parts 'on the earth [(in 1:11r joins all to Christ. This string is fixed to the base of the cross, so that, founded in fear, it may emit the deep sound of confession and compunction." Aelred then turns his ear to "the second string, justice, [which] is attached to a higher part of the cross. In giving to each what is its due, it bursts forth with the brightest voice of true love. And the string of prudence, placed between the other two on the traverse wood of the cross, tempers the second string's keenness and the other's depth with the sweet sound of discretion." Aelred also hears a "fourth string, which is called fortitude [and] embraces the length of the cross, outstripping the others in the virtue of steadfastness and emitting the pleasant sound of patience. Truly, the strings of each of these virtues is joined side-by-side with the others, and these various sorts of several strings surely form, from numerical ratios, one spiritual harmony." The harmony of virtuous perfection accords perfectly, in Aelred's mind, with the order of the universe and with the economy of salvation.

The perfection that results brings an unexpected harmony to the whole person:

Whoever you are, O soul, whom the compassion of God has freed from unhappiness, you have been given rest from your labors and troubles, and from the harsh slavery to which you have been until now subject. You are surely surprised at how very easy continence has become for you. You are astonished at having thrown off the yoke of ingrained habit—even to the point that your nascent desperation at the great effort needed to get rid of it has been removed.... Rejoice with trembling; cry out in astonishment: "How is it that the oppressor has ceased, that the tribute is spared [Is 14:4]?"

Thus the harmony of the human with the divine, and of each human with all others," will sound forth in a music that is for Aelred the perfection of human life on earth: "If we persevere in this warfare and do not consent to vice, we shall have the kingdom of God within us in this life, that is, justice and peace and joy. Justice as a result of virtue, peace arising from the harmony of flesh and spirit—when they together agree on the good—joy from the testimony of a good conscience [see 2 Cor 1:12]."

#### **D. The Perfection Of The Coming Life**

The joy that perfected people experience in this world is as nothing when compared with the joys that they will experience in the next life. Speaking of the saints in heaven, Aelred says: "Now consider, brothers, if you can, how exalted are they in heaven who can be so exalted and honored on earth. Surely, brothers, if we could see, at one and the same time, all the glory of the world and all the praise of the world and all the joy of the world, in comparison with this joy of theirs it would seem nothing other than absolute misery." Aelred is convinced that a place in this company of the saints awaits all who have traveled the hard road of virtue. Indeed, he often places such a reward before his audience in the hope of encouraging their efforts.

Reward implies merit, and, since it is clear to Aelred that some folk are more meritorious than others, this brings up the question of whether the heavenly rewards are equal for all. One of the participants in Aelred's dialogue *On the Soul* puts the question this way: "Are there not some blessed souls more perfect than others, or are they all equal in perfection?" Aelred answers:

The Lord said: "In my Father's house there are many rooms 1Jn 14:21." He thus distinguished various degrees even among the perfect.... You know that, among the saints, there are distinctions of reward, just as of merit....Each room in the Father's house has its own perfection. So each person is said to be perfect who, in differentiation from all others, is found ready for that room for which she or he has been destined. So all will be equal in the same everlasting state, but different in the rooms [to which they are assigned]. So all will be equal in their happiness because, as one true love works its effect in them all, each will have what they all will have, and all will have what each one has.

But these distinctions fade from Aelred's thought when he considers that all God's folk, in whatever way or to whatever extent, are perfect because they have been perfected by God's free gift of salvation; they are the people of Israel who are "the people belonging to God, clearly those who were predestined 'to life everlasting [Ac 13:48].'" Thus, even those saints whose lives were characterized by exemplary spiritual and physical practices of virtue are, for Aelred, the recipients of celestial happiness, not the authors of it."

In his *Life of Saint Edward, King and Confessor*, Aelred states this position quite clearly by putting in the mouth of the dying saint these words: "...I go to the Father to receive the joys promised to the faithful. This is not for my merits but by the grace of the Lord our Savior, who has pity on whom he wills and shows mercy to whom he pleases." An appropriate, accepting response to God's loving-kindness allows the recipient a confident hope in everlasting happiness. Aelred prays: "May there be for us a spiritual resurrection when, progressing from fear to hope by a happy leap, and secure now in the remission of our sins, we sigh for that celestial good with a sort of mental rapture. Following our Lord, with our attachment and desire, in his ascension into heaven, let us now presume to sit with him in the heavens and reign with him."

In heaven, Aelred is sure, the holy folk reign together with Christ—and with each other. He sees Saint Edward welcomed into the celestial realm by other saints, including Peter, John the Evangelist, and Mary, the mother of Jesus: "...The citizens of heaven came to meet him. The ethereal key-bearer unlocked heaven for him; the disciple whom Jesus loved ran to meet him. As a virgin, with that virgin he follows 'the Lamb wherever he goes [Rv 14:4]." Once welcomed, the new citizen joins the community of the saints in their common activities of praising God and caring for those left behind in the community of those still struggling to join them:

Blessed Ninian, made perfect in life and mature in age, passed happily from the world and was borne to heaven, accompanied by angelic spirits, to receive an eternal reward. There, associated with the apostolic choir and added to the ranks of the martyrs, enlisted in the army of holy confessors and adorned with virginal flowers, he does not cease assisting those who hope in him, those who cry out to him, those who praise him.

The prayer and care of the saints for those still striving on earth is, for Aelred, a reflection of the profoundly social nature of all humans, who, he thinks, cannot be happy save in association with others" Thus, the saints in heaven "themselves care for our progress [in perfection], and they pray for us all the more devoutly as they know themselves incapable of perfection without us."

Aelred's heaven is thus a community, a community that rejoices together and resembles nothing so much as a celestial banquet—prefigured, Aelred thinks, by Christ's eating and drinking with his friends and disciples on earth:

After his resurrection our Lord wished to entrust great mysteries to us by means of certain physical signs. During those days he appeared to his disciples as they were fishing, and, at his bidding, they brought to shore "a net filled with large fish, one hundred and fifty-three [Jo 21:11 ]." This symbolizes those who, at the coming resurrection, will be presented to the Lord by the ministers of Christ. And that meal which he wished to share with his disciples signifies that banquet at which we shall, in his kingdom, eat and drink at his table [sec Lk 22:30]

### **E. The Final Fulfillment**

From that heavenly banquet nothing that fills and fulfills humans will be missing. So splendid is the food of the heavenly banquet that it transcends Aelred's intellectual powers and defies his imagination to describe it "What the nature of that kingdom [will be] is something of which we cannot even think, much less tell or write. I do know that nothing at all will be lacking that you might wish to have present, that nothing will be there that you might wish to be absent."<sup>56</sup> Aelred seems to know much of what heaven is not, and, despite his disclaimer, he knows much of what heaven is as well:

So what are the goods there present? Where there is neither sorrow nor tears, what could there be but perfect joy? Where there is no tribulation or temptation, no variation in, or worsening of, weather, neither violent heat nor harsh winter, what could there be but the most moderate temperature and true and complete tranquility of mind and flesh? Where there is nothing for you to fear, what could there be but total security???

Heaven is, above all, a state of immersion in the glories of true love, for where there is no discord or envy or suspicion or any ambition, neither adulation nor detraction, what could there be but supreme and true love? Where there is no poverty or any covetousness, what could there be but abundance of all good things? Where there is no deformity, what will there be but true beauty? Where there is no toil or weakness, what will there be but complete rest and vigor? Where there is no prospect of old age, no fear of disease, what could there be but true health? Where there is neither night nor darkness, what will there be but perfect light? Where all death and mortality have been swallowed up [sec 1 Cor 15:54], what could there be but everlasting life???

That everlasting life and bliss are enjoyed by the whole human, both in body and in soul:

The body will be full of the majesty of the Lord, who will give life to the dead, cleanse the impure, heal the infirm, glorify the ignoble, make the temporal perpetual. And, if this will be the coming happiness of the body, of what sort, I ask, will be the happiness of the soul? ... There will be occasion for our joy in the contemplation of the Creator in his creatures, of love for the Creator in himself, for the praise of the Creator in both 59

### **1. The Vision of Truth**

In the Lord's land,... no temptation will be able to gain access to the Lord's mountains, that is, to our spirits suspended in the excellent state of divine contemplation. ""<sup>o</sup> Those thus suspended "abide in the perfect vision of God."<sup>61</sup> They are like the virgin Mary, who "on the day

[of her assumption] passed on from this world and ascended to the heavenly kingdom where she began to contemplate his [God's] glory, power, and divinity...."<sup>62</sup> They are like Mary too, who "see him 'face to face [Mt 18:10]' and dwell forever in the holy vision of him." Is This, Aelred asserts, fulfills the gospel promise: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God [Mt 5:8]. That is, we shall see his divinity, that excellence and beauty, as the angels see it, for we shall be 'like the angels of God in heaven [Mt 22:30]."

Clearly this contemplation brings knowledge, and Aelred sees the intellect perfected in this vision: "There [in heaven] 'I shall know as I am known [1 Cor 13:12],' for there 'we shall see him [God] as he is [1 Jn 3:2].' `Now we see in a glass but obscurely, but then face to face [1 Cor 13:12]." The vision of God, Aelred asserts, brings great knowledge of him, for "he will be seen in himself, seen in all his creatures, ruling over all without anxiety, sustaining all without toil, sharing himself with and, in a way, dispersing himself to each one according to his or her capacity—without diminution or division of himself That lovable and longed-for face, 'on which the angels desire to gaze [1 Pt 1:12],' will be seen. Who can speak of its beauty, of its light, of its delight?"

But Aelred does indeed speak of that beautiful, delightful vision:

The Father will be seen in the Son, the Son in the Father, the Holy Spirit in both. He will be seen "not obscurely as in a mirror, but face to face [1 Cor 13:12]." For he will be seen as he is [sec 1 Jn 3:2], fulfilling that promise which says: "Those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love them and show myself to them [fn 14:21]." From this vision will come knowledge, about which he himself says: "This is everlasting life, that they should have knowledge of you, the one God, and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ [Jn 17:3]."

Aelred is convinced that the complete fulfillment of the intellect in the knowledge that comes from heavenly perfection is a source of true happiness: "...In that perfect vision they enjoy perfect happiness."<sup>63</sup> The proper response, as Aelred sees it, is rejoicing and praise.

## **2. The Unity of Love**

According to Aelred, knowledge leads to love, both in this life and after it.<sup>64</sup> The consequences of union with God in love are felt in the ordering of the will to God and in the victory of the ordered spirit over the "flesh," one's disordered will. After death and in heaven, Aelred is sure, "there will be perfect peace, perfect tranquility, for the flesh will be unable to resist the spirit or the spirit resist God. The devil will not be able to attack, and neither death nor infirmity will be able to oppress [the blessed]."

The peace and tranquility that infuse the will perfected in love are, for Aelred, a participation in the very peace and tranquility that unite the Trinity.<sup>65</sup> In the life to come, then, the wills of all who have been purged of self-centeredness in this life will be cleansed of all weakness.<sup>66</sup> Thus cleansed, their wills will be filled completely in their new homelands. And this fulfillment will be one of inseparable unity with and in God's love.

## **The Everlasting Memory**

Those thus united in love with God are blessed in the afterlife with a memory restored from its beclouded and obscured state.<sup>67</sup> Aelred is confident that, in heaven,



My memory lasts for endless generations [Si 24:28]." If you had the remembrance of gold and silver, of riches, how far could this memory extend? Perhaps for many, even a hundred years. For who lives longer than that these days? But if you think of Christ, if you think of Wisdom, the remembrance of these can extend "for endless generations," everlastingly. Wisdom will always exist, and you can always exist with Wisdom, for, as is written, Wisdom is immortal [see Ws 1:15].<sup>18</sup>

As the intellect is perfected in knowledge and the will in love, the perfection of the memory is in a wisdom that lasts forever: "... If you think about the kingdom of heaven, of the glory of the angels, of the happiness there is in the vision of God, in incorruption and immortality, this remembrance can extend 'for endless generations [Si 24:28]'—everlastingly, that is—because these things will last forever." The intellect, will, and memory are all filled and fulfilled in the happiness that awaits the pilgrims who journey toward their final home.

### **Joyful Attachment**

The affectus too will be filled—with great, indeed perfect, joys<sup>o</sup> It is a joy that will include the perfection of the friendship to which attachment aspires and in which it finds its fulfillment.<sup>81</sup> That friendship is both in and for God—in God when the friendship is for another blessed soul, for God who is the supreme friend.

The joy of friendship will reach its culmination in the communion in God of all the blessed:

This is that great and wondrous happiness which we await, with God himself acting and diffusing—between himself and the creatures whom he has lifted up, among those degrees and orders which he has differentiated, among the individuals whom he has chosen—so much friendship and true love that each one thus loves the others as herself or himself. By this, just as each one rejoices in his or her own happiness, so does each rejoice in the happiness of the others. 'Thus the happiness of each belongs to all, and the whole of the happiness of all belongs to each

All the problems that beset human friendships, from the choice of a friend to the great efforts needed to maintain friendship,<sup>84</sup> are overcome in the community of friends comprising the communion of saints: "There [in heaven], there is no hiding of thoughts, no concealment of affection. This is true and everlasting friendship, which begins in this [life] and is there [in the next] perfected, which here belongs to the few where few are good, but there belongs to all where all are good."<sup>85</sup> Thus, the glories and joys of friendship in this life will be transformed into inexpressible glory and joy in the next.

### **The Glorified Body**

The vision, love, and joy that the soul experiences in heaven are not enough for Aelred. To the glories of the soul, he must add those of the body. But for him there is a history that must be acted out and played through in the body's glorification: "We, who have undergone death in body and soul, have the need to Se again in body and in soul. First, however, in the soul, and afterward in the body."

The physical death of the body should bring no fear, Aelred thinks, for "holy and perfected souls enter heaven immediately after this life." "Still," he adds, "their happiness is not complete until they receive their bodies on the day of judgment."<sup>88</sup> They are happy, but "those happy souls wait until the number of their companions is filled up, so that on the day of the [body's] resurrection, clad in the glory of a twofold robe [sec By 6:11], they may enjoy unending happiness of both body and soul." As Aelred puts it in a sermon for Advent: "By his first coming our Lord raised us up in the soul alone, but by his second coming he will raise us up in the body, so that, as we serve God by both, by the soul and the body, so shall we then possess in both perfect happiness with God."

Thus the resurrection of Jesus will be extended to all happy souls, now reunited with their glorified bodies: "This [Easter] day had a morning, when our Lord was resurrected. It will have a noon, when that glory, that splendor, that brightness, which today begins in the Head, will be poured out on all the parts. Then he will re-fashion 'our lowly body to be like his glorious body [Phil 3:21]." Consequently, "in paradise the body can be called a body of happiness and of justice, ... in that beatitude a body of happiness and of glory." The glorified body will contribute to the beauty of the restored unity of body and soul, and "no trace of diabolic power will remain in the Lord's land, in our flesh, now glorified in an everlasting resurrection."

The resurrected body will "arise with all the perfection and integrity of its nature, but with all its corruption annihilated.... Why, then, should we not believe that sensation and motion, having reverted [in death] to those elements from which the body was made, will be taken up again ...?" These natural powers will be restored in the body; other powers will be perfected to a preternatural condition: "Then in our bodies will be the perfections of health and beauty, of strength and swiftness ...."

As glorious as these gifts are to the body, Aelred concentrates his attention on two others, immortality and incorruption. The liberation of the body from its mortality and corruptibility is, for Aelred, accomplished through the Incarnation of the Son, which itself demonstrates to Aelred the intrinsic value of the human body that now "suffers from corruption, from death, on account of the condemnation for original sin and because of its own self-centeredness and illicit desires. Let us consider that it was so cleansed of the corruption of all its vices and sins that the Son of God himself was born of it and found his rest in it."]] Those who direct the body lovingly "will have such a reward from our Lord that their bodies will be whole and sound and free of all corruption."

#### **F. The End And Consummation In Happiness**

The resurrection of the body at the last judgment will bring, Aelred is sure, a happiness to which humans can look forward with confident hope and expectant joy: "Happy are those who exult in this [Easter] day! Happy are those who possess such a conscience that they not only do not fear the eight days of its octave—for the resurrection of the dead, that is—but rather exult in Arm On that day the contrast between the burdens of this life and the glories of the next will be experienced rather than merely described: "To this life belongs toil, to that life rest. To this life belongs temptation, to that life freedom from care. To this life belongs poverty, to that life riches. To this life belongs struggle, to that life consolation. To this life belong hunger and thirst, to that life satisfaction." The burdens of this life will then be dissolved: "Then will poverty be rewarded with everlasting riches; grief be changed to everlasting joy; for the hungry everlasting satisfaction stored up. No one doubts that all these—riches, joy, satisfaction—are not lacking in happiness." And, Aelred adds; "It is a good thing, brothers, to look forward to a future of everlasting riches, to perpetual delights, to unending joy, to happiness without end."

That future bliss has been prepared as a free gift by the one who was born in Bethlehem, a Bethlehem that can now be built in each human being:

You now build a Bethlehem in your soul, shedding the self-centered love of the world and its riches and false honors. You, yourselves little and humble, see [there] this humble, little boy Jesus. As you gaze on his delightful face, you hear his most pleasant voice: "Come, you blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom which has been prepared from the origin of the world [see Mt 25:344].",

The call is inviting; the result of the call's acceptance overwhelming: "Then you will enter that kingdom, and you will see the delightful and lovable Jesus. Then you will be readied and adorned as his bride [see Ry 21:2]; then you will be worthy of his embraces, for you will be without blemish or wrinkle [see Eph 5:27]. Then you will taste the vast array of his sweetnesses [see Ps 30:20] which fill up fully his lovers but which are hidden in this life from the fateful." For Aelred there is nothing more that needs to be said or can be said—save only an exhortation to his hearers to respond lovingly to God's overwhelming love. "Let us pass over," Aelred urges, "pass over by means of hope and longing, by means of love and attachment. 'We see

[now] in a mirror but obscurely [1 Cor 13:12], but, when we have passed over what is imperfect, then we shall see 'face to face [1 Cor 13:12]' that Jesus, our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit through all ages of ages.”

**1208 AD**

**St. Dominic (1170-1221); Catholic Saint and Theologian**

**The Faithful Children Of The Rosary Shall Merit A High Degree Of Glory In Heaven**

**The 15 Promises Of Mary To Christians Who Recite The Rosary**

**(written in 1208)**

Whoever shall faithfully serve me by the recitation of the rosary, shall receive signal graces.

I promise my special protection and the greatest graces to all those who shall recite the rosary.

The rosary shall be a powerful armor against hell, it will destroy vice, decrease sin, and defeat heresies.

It will cause virtue and good works to flourish; it will obtain for souls the abundant mercy of God; it will withdraw the hearts of men from the love of the world and its vanities, and will lift them to the desire of eternal things. Oh, that souls would sanctify themselves by this means.

The soul which recommends itself to me by the recitation of the rosary, shall not perish.

Whoever shall recite the rosary devoutly, applying himself to the consideration of its sacred mysteries shall never be conquered by misfortune. God will not chastise him in His justice, he shall not perish by an unprovided death; if he be just he shall remain in the grace of God, and become worthy of eternal life.

Whoever shall have a true devotion for the rosary shall not die without the sacraments of the Church.

Those who are faithful to recite the rosary shall have during their life and at their death the light of God and the plentitude of His graces; at the moment of death they shall participate in the merits of the saints in paradise.

I shall deliver from purgatory those who have been devoted to the rosary.

**The faithful children of the rosary shall merit a high degree of glory in heaven.**

You shall obtain all you ask of me by the recitation of the rosary.

All those who propagate the holy rosary shall be aided by me in their necessities.

I have obtained from my Divine Son that all the advocates of the rosary shall have for intercessors the entire celestial court during their life and at the hour of death.

All who recite the rosary are my sons, and brothers of my only son Jesus Christ.

Devotion of my rosary is a great sign of predestination.

**1208 AD (Oldest Date for Text); Translated Into English By Rev. Dr. Jacques Issaverdens (1901)**

**Pseudepigraphical work in name of Esdras**

**Concerning The Inquiries Made By The Prophet Esdras Of The Angel Of The Lord**

**Concerning The Souls Of Men; There Are In It Seven Steps Up To The Divinity**

**Uncanonical Writings Of The Old Testament Found Armenian Mss**

**1901 Translation In “The Uncanonical Writings Of The Old Testament Found In The Armenian Mss. Of The Library Of St. Lazarus”**

See also the 1983 Translation By Michael E. Stone In OTP 1:581-599

This apocryphal writing was found in the Ritual M.S. preserved in the Library of St. Lazarus, numbered 570, — 6X10 inches — and written in the year 1208, on paper.

It is found only in the Armenian literature, and seems to be of Christian origin. I therefore give its English translation as a matter of interest to those who love antiquity, it being found only in one Manuscript of the Armenian Library of St. Lazarus.

I must however notice that the portion I give here, is only part of a longer writing; but the succeeding leaves of the MS. in which it is found being worn away, the writing has almost disappeared, and therefore it is impossible to complete the text.

The age of this writing is not known, but it is rightly supposed to date back beyond the VIIIth century.

It is probable that in the composition of this writing the author was inspired by the Hook of Enoch.

### **Inquiries Made By The Prophet Esdras Of The Angel Of The Lord Concerning The Souls Of Men.**

The prophet Esdras having seen the Angel of God, inquired of him minutely, and the Angel answered him and declared that which shall happen at the end of time.

The prophet asked the Angel and said: « What has God prepared for the Righteous and for the Sinners? and when the last day shall come, what shall become of them, where shall they go, unto honour or unto punishment? »

The Angel answered the prophet: « For the Righteous is prepared great rejoicing and everlasting light, and for Sinners is prepared outer darkness and everlasting fire ».

The prophet said unto the Angel: « Lord, what man is there among the living that has not sinned against God? If it is so, then blessed are the beasts and the birds, who expect not resurrection, and wait not for the end. If Thou shall reward the Righteous, and the Prophets, and the Apostles, and the Martyrs, who have been tortured for Thee, and who with patience suffered all kinds of torments, when they used the flint and the hammer to strike their bodies so that their inward parts were laid bare, have mercy upon us sinners, who are deceived and held by Satan ».

The Angel answered and said: « Do not repeat thy words unto Him Who is above thee, unless a great evil should befall thee ».

The prophet said to the Angel: "O Lord, I dare to speak unto Thee a little more, and answer Thou me. When the Day of death comes, and God takes the soul, does He put it into the place of torments or into that of honour, until His final coming? »

The Angel answered and said: « Do not wait until the day of death, but like a flying eagle, hasten to do good works and charity. For that day is awful, pressing and exacting; it does not allow a man to his riches. It cometh suddenly and without pity and without respect it carries away its captive suddenly and unexpectedly; neither weeping, nor mourning shall obtain mercy. But when the day of death arrives, a good Angel comes to a good soul, and a wicked one to a bad soul. Like as one sent by a king unto the wicked man and unto the beneficent one; to the good he renders good, and unto the wicked evil: in like manner a good Angel comes to a good soul, and unto the wicked soul an evil one. Not that the Angel is bad, but their several deeds are bad. The Angel takes the soul and brings it eastward, and causes it to go through frost and through snow, and darkness and hail; and through ice and storm; through the bands of Satan, and through streams, and through storms of heavy rains, through awful and terrible ways, and through defiles and lofty mountains. O wonderful way! for one beholds there foot-prints, and a river of fire runs before it ».

The prophet was in amazement and said: « How wonderful and awful is that way »!

The Angel said: « When I make a soul to pass through that path, there are in it seven steps up to the Divinity. The first halting place is one of terror and wonder; the second is awful and unspeakable; the third is hell and icy cold. In the fourth there are quarrels and wars. In the fifth judgment is held: if it is the soul of a righteous man, it is enlightened, and if of a sinner, it becomes dark. Then in the sixth the soul of the righteous shines like the sun; and then through the seventh I carry it and bring it to prostrate itself before the great throne of the Divinity, over against paradise, before the glory of God, where dwells the transcendent Light ».

The prophet said unto the Angel: « My Lord, after thou makest the soul go through such terrors, as are quarrels, wars, and burning heat, why dost thou not bring it to meet the Divinity, but only lettest it reach the throne? »

The Angel said unto the prophet: « Thou art a vain man and thinkest according to human nature. I am an Angel and wait alway upon God, and have never seen the face of God; how canst thou think to present a sinful man before God? For the Godhead is awful and wonderful; and who dares look upon the uncreated Divinity? If one look thereon, he is melted like wax before the face of God. For the Godhead is of fire and wonderful, and around His throne there are such fiery guardians, as chambers of fire . . . , there are igneous hollows, vaulted ways filled with lamps. There are heard thunders and tremblings; there are seen fightings and wars; there the heat is excessive; there, there are cavities that revolve, where one sees reptiles shaped in fire, swarming in the flamer and forming bands of fire. And around the Divinity stand the incorporeal Seraphim, and the six-winged Cherubim, who with two wings cover their face, and with two other cover their feet, and with the other two they fly, crying: ' Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of hosts; heaven and earth are full of Thy Glory'. Such are the guardians that are around the throne of the Godhead. »

Then the prophet asked the Angel saying: "Lord, what shall become of us? for we are all sinners and enslaved in the hands of Satan. Now how can we be delivered, or who is able to free us from his hands?"

The Angel answered and said: « After a man's death, if there is any one of his own people left, be it father, or mother, or brother, or sister, or son, or daughter, or any that is Christian, if they offer up prayers, or keep fasting, or give charity, or perform forty days' devotion<sup>1</sup>, through the sacrifice of Christ, they win for them great rest and mercy; because Christ was sacrificed for us upon the cross and delivered the souls of men of the six ages from the hands of Satan. O how a soul finds her freedom through a pious priest, if he fulfil the forty days' devotion in such way as is agreeable unto God, if . . . ho remain in the church those forty days and do not frequent the public places, but recite from hour to hour the psalms of David, and the hymns! It is this devotion that delivers you from the hands of Satan. Otherwise give to the poor. For your prayers are like this: According as a labourer rising goes forth and sows his seed, from which the plants come up well-shaped and comely, yielding fruit in abundance, but thorns and tares spring up and choke them, and man cannot gather much fruit. In like manner ye also, when ye go to the church, being willing to offer up prayer unto God, the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches enter in and choke you, and suffer you not to produce much fruit. For if your prayer were such as was that of Moses, who wept forty days and spake face to face with God, or as that of Elijah who was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire, or such as was that of Daniel, who prayed in the den of the lion.

1. The text has a word the meaning of which is unknown.

i. It consists in making a priest say Mass forty days, for the rest of the soul of the dead, or offer up prayers for so many days.

1. Here I stop giving the translation; for two sheets of the MS. are lost, and there are six more sheets the margins of which are worn away, and therefore the sense becomes unintelligible; and then the remainder of the inquiries of Esdras are altogether wanting, the Manuscript being incomplete.

**1259 AD (Latin)**

**St. Bonaventure (1221 - 1274): Franciscan Monk, Doctor of Catholic Church**

**These Six Levels of Ascent Are Six Steps Of True Throne Of Solomon By Which One Ascends To Peace; On Six Wings Of Cherub By Which Contemplative Man Grows Strong, Filled With Supreme Wisdom**

**Itinerarium Mentis ad Deum (The mind's road to God)**

**Prologue**

1. To begin with, the first principle from Whom all illumination descends as from the Father of Light, by Whom are given all the best and perfect gifts [James, 1, 17], the eternal Father do I call upon through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, that by the intercession of the most holy Virgin Mary, mother of God Himself and of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and of the blessed Francis, our father and leader, He may enlighten the eyes of our mind to guide our feet into the way of that peace "which surpasses all understanding" [Eph., 1, 17; Luke, 1, 79; Phil., 4, 7], which peace our Lord Jesus Christ has announced and given to us; which lesson our father Francis always taught, in all of whose preaching was the annunciation of peace both in the beginning and in the end, wishing for peace in every greeting, yearning for ecstatic peace in every moment of contemplation, as a citizen of that Jerusalem of which that man of peace said, with those that hated peace he was peaceable [Ps., 119, 7], "Pray ye for the things that are for the peace of Jerusalem" [Ps., 121, 6]. For he knew that the throne of Solomon was nowise save in peace, since it is written, "His place is in peace and His abode in Sion" [Ps., 75, 3].

2. Since, then, following the example of the most blessed Father Francis, I breathlessly sought this peace, I, a sinner, who have succeeded to the place of that most blessed father after his death, the seventh Minister General of the brothers, though in all ways unworthy--it happened that by the divine will in the thirty-third year after the death of that blessed man I ascended to Mount Alverna as to a quiet place, with the desire of seeking spiritual peace; and staying there, while I meditated on the ascent of the mind to God, amongst other things there occurred that miracle which happened in the same place to the blessed Francis himself, the vision namely of the winged Seraph in the likeness of the Crucified. While looking upon this vision, I immediately saw that it signified the suspension of our father himself in contemplation and the way by which he came to it.

3. For by those six wings are rightly to be understood the six stages of illumination by which the soul, as if by steps or progressive movements, was disposed to pass into peace by ecstatic elevations of Christian wisdom. The way, however, is only through the most burning love of the Crucified, Who so transformed Paul, "caught up into the third heaven" [II Cor., 12, 2], into Christ, that he said, "With Christ I am nailed to the cross, yet I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me" [Gal., 2, 19]; who therefore so absorbed the mind of Francis that his soul was manifest in his flesh and he bore the most holy stigmata of the Passion in his body for two years before his death. Therefore the symbol of the six-winged Seraph signifies the six stages of illumination, which begin with God's creatures and lead up to God, to Whom no one can enter properly save through the Crucified. For he who does not enter by the door but otherwise, he is a thief and a robber [John, 10, 1]. But if anyone does enter by this door, he shall go in and go out and shall find pastures [John, 9]. Because of this John says in his Apocalypse [22, 14], "Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb, that they may have a right to the Tree of Life and may enter in by the gates into the City"; as if he were to say that one cannot enter into the heavenly Jerusalem through contemplation unless one enter through the blood of the Lamb as through a gate. For one is not disposed to contemplation which leads to mental elevation unless one be with Daniel a man of desires [Dan., 9, 23]. But desires are kindled in us in two ways: by the cry of prayer, which makes one groan with the murmuring of one's heart, and by a flash of apprehension by which the mind turns most directly and intensely to the rays of light [Ps., 37, 9].

4. Therefore to the cry of prayer through Christ crucified, by Whose blood we are purged of the filth of vice, do I first invite the reader, lest perchance he should believe that it suffices to read without unction, speculate

without devotion, investigate without wonder, examine without exultation, work without piety, know without love, understand without humility, be zealous without divine grace, see without wisdom divinely inspired. Therefore to those predisposed by divine grace, to the humble and the pious, to those filled with compunction and devotion, anointed with the oil of gladness [Ps., 44, 8], to the lovers of divine wisdom, inflamed with desire for it, to those wishing to give themselves over to praising God, to wondering over Him and to delighting in Him, do I propose the following reflections, hinting that little or nothing is the outer mirror unless the mirror of the mind be clear and polished. Bestir yourself then, O man of God, you who previously resisted the pricks of conscience, before you raise your eyes to the rays of wisdom shining in that mirror, lest by chance you fall into the lower pit of shadows from the contemplation of those rays.

5. I have decided to divide my treatise into seven chapters, heading them with titles so that their contents may be the more easily understood. I ask therefore that one think rather of the intention of the writer than of his work, of the sense of the words rather than the rude speech, of truth rather than beauty, of the exercise of the affections rather than the erudition of the intellect. That such may come about, the progress of these thoughts must not be perused lightly, but should be meditated upon in greatest deliberation.

## **The Mendicant's Vision in The Wilderness**

### **Chapter One**

#### **On the Stages in the Ascent to God and of His Reflection in His Traces in the Universe**

1. Blessed is the man whose help is from Thee. In his heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps, in the vale of tears, in the place which he hath set [Ps., 83, 6]. Since beatitude is nothing else than the fruition of the highest good, and the highest good is above us, none can be made blessed unless he ascend above himself, not by the ascent of his body but by that of his heart. But we cannot be raised above ourselves except by a higher power raising us up. For howsoever the interior steps are disposed, nothing is accomplished unless it is accompanied by divine aid. Divine help, however, comes to those who seek it from their hearts humbly and devoutly; and this means to sigh for it in this vale of tears, aided only by fervent prayer. Thus prayer is the mother and source of ascent ("sursumactionis") in God. Therefore Dionysius, in his book, "Mystical Theology" [ch. 1, 13, wishing to instruct us in mental elevation, prefaces his work by prayer. Therefore let us pray and say to the Lord our God, "Conduct me, O Lord, in Thy way, and I will walk in Thy truth; let my heart rejoice that it may fear Thy name" [Ps., 85, 11].

2. By praying thus one is enlightened about the knowledge of the stages in the ascension to God. For since, relative to our life on earth, the world is itself a ladder for ascending to God, we find here certain traces [of His hand], certain images, some corporeal, some spiritual, some temporal, some aeviternal; consequently some outside us, some inside. That we may arrive at an understanding of the First Principle, which is most spiritual and eternal and above us, we ought to proceed through the traces which are corporeal and temporal and outside us, and this is to be led into the way of God. We ought next to enter into our minds, which are the eternal image of God, spiritual and internal; and this is to walk in the truth of God. We ought finally to pass over into that which is eternal, most spiritual, and above us, looking to the First Principle; and this is to rejoice in the knowledge of God and in the reverence of His majesty.

3. Now this is the three days' journey into the wilderness [Ex., 3, 18]; this is the triple illumination of one day, first as the evening, second as the morning, third as noon; this signifies the threefold existence of things, as in matter, in [creative] intelligence, and in eternal art, wherefore it is said, "Be it made, He made it," and "it was so done" [Gen., 1]; and this also means the triple substance in Christ, Who is our ladder, namely, the corporeal, the spiritual, and the divine.

4. Following this threefold progress, our mind has three principal aspects. One refers to the external body, wherefore it is called animality or sensuality; the second looks inward and into itself, wherefore it is called spirit; the third looks above itself, wherefore it is called mind. From all of which considerations it ought to be so disposed for ascending as a whole into God that it may love Him with all its mind, with all its heart, and

with all its soul [Mark, 12, 30]. And in this consists both the perfect observance of the Law and Christian wisdom.

5. Since, however, all of the aforesaid modes are twofold--as when we consider God as the alpha and omega, or in so far as we happen to see God in one of the aforesaid modes as "through" a mirror and "in" a mirror, or as one of those considerations can be mixed with the other conjoined to it or may be considered alone in its purity--hence it is necessary that these three principal stages become sixfold, so that as God made the world in six days and rested on the seventh, so the microcosm by six successive stages of illumination is led in the most orderly fashion to the repose of contemplation. As a symbol of this we have the six steps to the throne of Solomon [III Kings, 10, 19]; the Seraphim whom Isaiah saw have six wings; after six days the Lord called Moses out of the midst of the cloud [Ex., 21, 16]; and Christ after six days, as is said in Matthew [17, 1], brought His disciples up into a mountain and was transfigured before them.

6. Therefore, according to the six stages of ascension into God, there are six stages of the soul's powers by which we mount from the depths to the heights, from the external to the internal, from the temporal to the eternal--to wit, sense, imagination, reason, intellect, intelligence, and the apex of the mind, the illumination of conscience ("Synteresis"). These stages are implanted in us by nature, deformed by sin, reformed by grace, to be purged by justice, exercised by knowledge, perfected by wisdom.

7. Now at the Creation, man was made fit for the repose of contemplation, and therefore God placed him in a paradise of delight [Gen., 2, 16]. But turning himself away from the true light to mutable goods, he was bent over by his own sin, and the whole human race by original sin, which doubly infected human nature, ignorance infecting man's mind and concupiscence his flesh. Hence man, blinded and bent, sits in the shadows and does not see the light of heaven unless grace with justice succor him from concupiscence, and knowledge with wisdom against ignorance. All of which is done through Jesus Christ, Who of God is made unto us wisdom and justice and sanctification and redemption [I Cor., 1, 30]. He is the virtue and wisdom of God, the Word incarnate, the author of grace and truth--that is, He has infused the grace of charity, which, since it is from a pure heart and good conscience and unfeigned faith, rectifies the whole soul in the threefold way mentioned above. He has taught the knowledge of the truth according to the triple mode of theology--that is, the symbolic, the literal, and the mystical--so that by the symbolic we may make proper use of sensible things, by the literal we may properly use the intelligible, and by the mystical we may be carried aloft to supermental levels.

8. Therefore he who wishes to ascend to God must, avoiding sin, which deforms nature, exercise the above-mentioned natural powers for regenerating grace, and do this through prayer. He must strive toward purifying justice, and this in intercourse; toward the illumination of knowledge, and this in meditation; toward the perfection of wisdom, and this in contemplation. Now just as no one comes to wisdom save through grace, justice, and knowledge, so none comes to contemplation save through penetrating meditation, holy conversation, and devout prayer. Just as grace is the foundation of the will's rectitude and of the enlightenment of clear and penetrating reason, so, first, we must pray; secondly, we must live holily; thirdly, we must strive toward the reflection of truth and, by our striving, mount step by step until we come to the high mountain where we shall see the God of gods in Sion [Ps., 83, 8]

9. Since, then, we must mount Jacob's ladder before descending it, let us place the first rung of the ascension in the depths, putting the whole sensible world before us as a mirror, by which ladder we shall mount up to God, the Supreme Creator, that we may be true Hebrews crossing from Egypt to the land promised to our fathers; let us be Christians crossing with Christ from this world over to the Father [John, 13, 1]; let us also be lovers of wisdom, which calls to us and says, "Come over to me, all ye that desire me, and be filled with my fruits" [Ecclesiasticus, 24, 26]. For by the greatness of the beauty and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen [Wisdom, 13, 5].



10. There shine forth, however, the Creator's supreme power and wisdom and benevolence in created things, as the carnal sense reports trebly to the inner sense. For the carnal sense serves him who either understands rationally or believes faithfully or contemplates intellectually. Contemplating, it considers the actual existence of things; believing, it considers the habitual course of things; reasoning, it considers the potential excellence of things.

11. In the first mode, the aspect of one contemplating, considering things in themselves, sees in them weight, number, and measure [Wisdom, 11, 21]--weight, which directs things to a certain location;[2] number, by which they are distinguished from one another; and measure, by which they are limited. And so one sees in them mode, species, and order; and also substance, power, and operation. From these one can rise as from the traces to understanding the power, wisdom, and immense goodness of the Creator.

12. In the second mode, the aspect of a believer considering this world, one reaches its origin, course, and terminus. For by faith we believe that the ages are fashioned by the Word of Life [Hebr., 11, 3]; by faith we believe that the ages of the three laws--that is, the ages of the law of Nature, of Scripture, and of Grace--succeed each other and occur in most orderly fashion; by faith we believe that the world will be ended at the last judgment--taking heed of the power in the first, of the providence in the second, of the justice of the most high principle in the third.

13. In the third mode, the aspect of one inquiring rationally, one sees that some things merely are; others, however, are and live; others, finally, are, live, and discern. And the first are lesser things, the second midway, and the third the best. Again, one sees that some are only corporeal, others partly corporeal and partly spiritual, from which it follows that some are entirely spiritual and are better and more worthy than either of the others. One sees, nonetheless, that some are mutable and corruptible, as earthly things; others mutable and incorruptible, as celestial things, from which it follows that some are immutable and incorruptible, as the supercelestial things. From these visible things, therefore, one mounts to considering the power and wisdom and goodness of God as being, living, and understanding; purely spiritual and incorruptible and immutable.

14. This consideration, however, is extended according to the sevenfold condition of creatures, which is a sevenfold testimony to the divine power, wisdom, and goodness, as one considers the origin, magnitude, multitude, beauty, plenitude, operation, and order of all things. For the "origin" of things, according to their creation, distinction, and beauty, in the work of the six days indicates the divine power producing all things from nothing, wisdom distinguishing all things clearly, and goodness adorning all things generously. "Magnitude" of things, either according to the measure of their length, width, and depth, or according to the excellence of power spreading itself in length, breadth, and depth, as appears in the diffusion of light, or again according to the efficacy of its inner, continuous, and diffused operation, as appears in the operation of fire--magnitude, I say, indicates manifestly the immensity of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the triune God, Who exists unlimited in all things through His power, presence, and essence. "Multitude" of things, according to the diversity of genus, species, and individuality, in substance, form, or figure, and efficacy beyond all human estimation, clearly indicates and shows the immensity of the aforesaid traits in God. "Beauty" of things, according to the variety of light, figure, and color in bodies simple and mixed and even composite, as in the celestial bodies, minerals, stones and metals, plants and animals, obviously proclaims the three mentioned traits. "Plenitude" of things--according to which matter is full of forms because of the seminal reasons; form is full of power because of its activity; power is full of effects because of its efficiency--declares the same manifestly. "Operation," multiplex inasmuch as it is natural, artificial, and moral, by its very variety shows the immensity of that power, art, and goodness which indeed are in all things the cause of their being, the principle of their intelligibility, and the order of their living. "Order," by reason of duration, situation, and influence, as prior and posterior, upper and lower, nobler and less noble, indicates clearly in the book of creation the primacy, sublimity, and dignity of the First Principle in relation to its infinite power. The order of the divine laws, precepts, and judgments in the Book of Scripture indicates the immensity of His wisdom. The order of the divine sacraments, rewards, and punishments in the body of

the Church indicates the immensity of His goodness. Hence order leads us most obviously into the first and highest, most powerful, wisest, and best.

15. He, therefore, who is not illumined by such great splendor of created things is blind; he who is not awakened by such great clamor is deaf; he who does not praise God because of all these effects is dumb; he who does not note the First Principle from such great signs is foolish. Open your eyes therefore, prick up your spiritual ears, open your lips, and apply your heart, that you may see your God in all creatures, may hear Him, praise Him, love and adore Him, magnify and honor Him, lest the whole world rise against you. For on this account the whole world will fight against the unwise [Prov., 5, 21]; but to the wise will there be matter for pride, who with the Prophet can say, "Thou hast given me, O Lord, a delight in Thy doings: and in the works of Thy hands I shall rejoice [Ps., 91, 5]. . . . How great are Thy works, O Lord; Thou hast made all things in wisdom; the earth is filled with Thy riches" [Ps., 103, 24].

## **Chapter Two**

### **Of the Reflection of God in His Traces in the Sensible World**

1. But since with respect to the mirror of sensible things it happens that God is contemplated not only through them, as by His traces, but also in them, in so far as He is in them by essence, potency, and presence; and to consider this is higher than the preceding; therefore a consideration of this sort holds next place as a second step in contemplation, by which we should be led to the contemplation of God in all creatures which enter into our minds through the bodily senses.

2. Let it be noted then that this world, which is called the "macrocosm," enters our souls, which are called the "microcosm," through the doors of the five senses, according to the apprehension, delectation, and judgment of sensible things themselves. This is apparent as follows: In the world some things are generating, some generated, some governing the former and the latter. The generating are simple bodies, celestial bodies, and the four elements. For from the elements, by virtue of the light which reconciles the contrariety of elements in mixtures, there can be generated and produced whatsoever things are generated and produced through the operation of a natural power. But the generated are bodies composed of the elements, like minerals, vegetables, sensible things, and human bodies. The rulers of the former and the latter are spiritual substances, either conjoined entirely, as are the animal souls; or conjoined though separable, as are the rational spirits; or entirely separated, as are the celestial spirits, which philosophers call "intelligences," but we "angels." These, according to the philosophers, move the celestial bodies; and thus there is attributed to them the administration of the universe by taking over from the First Cause, that is God, their active influence, which they pour out in accordance with the work of governing, which looks to the natural harmony of things. According to the theologians, however, there is attributed to them the rule of the universe in accordance with the power of the supreme God with respect to the work of reparation, wherefore they are called "ministering spirits," sent to minister to them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation [Hebr., 1, 14].

3. Therefore, man, who is called a "microcosm," has five senses like five doors, through which enters into his soul the cognition of all that is in the sensible world. For through sight enter the transparent, luminous, and other colored bodies; through touch the solid and terrestrial bodies; by the three intermediate senses the intermediates, as by taste the aqueous, by hearing the aerial, by odor the vaporous--all of which have something of a humid nature, something aerial, something fiery or warm, as appears in the smoke which is freed from incense. There enter then through these doors, not only simple bodies, but also composite, mixed from these. But since by sense we perceive not only these particular sensibles, which are light, sound, odor, savor, and the four primary qualities which touch apprehends, but also the common sensibles, which are number, magnitude, figure, rest, and motion, and since everything which is moved is moved by something, and some are self-moved and remain at rest, as the animals, it follows that when through these five senses we apprehend the motion of bodies, we are led to the cognition of spiritual movers, as through an effect we are led to a knowledge of its causes.

4. As far as the three kinds of things are concerned, this whole sensible world enters into the human soul through "apprehension." The external sensibles, however, are what first enter the soul through the five doors of the senses. They enter, I say, not through their substance, but through their similitudes. These are first generated in the medium, and from the medium are generated in the organ and pass from the external organ into the internal, and from there into the apprehensive power. And thus the generation of the [sensible] species in the medium and from the medium into the organ and the reaction of the apprehensive power to it [the species] produce the apprehension of all those things which the soul apprehends from without.

5. Upon this apprehension, if it be of the appropriate thing, there follows delight. Sense, however, takes delight in an object perceived through an abstracted similitude either by reason of its beauty, as in sight; or by reason of its agreeableness, as in odor and hearing; or by reason of wholesomeness, as in taste and touch, speaking with appropriation. All delight, however, is by reason of proportion. But since a species is form, power, and operation, according to whether it is thought of as related to the principle from which it comes, to the medium through which it passes, or to the end for which it acts, therefore proportion may be considered in similitude, inasmuch as it is a species or form and thus is called beauty, because beauty is nothing other than numerical equality or a certain relation of parts with agreeable color. Or else proportion may be considered as potency or power, and thus it is called "suavity," for active power does not exceed immoderately the powers of the recipient, since the senses are pained by extremes and delight in the mean. Or it may be considered, by thinking of species, as efficacy and impression, which is proportional when the agent by impression supplies what the recipient lacks; and this is to save and nourish it, which appears especially in taste and touch. And thus through delight the external pleasures enter into the soul by similitudes in a triple mode of delighting.

6. After the delight of apprehension comes judgment. By this we not only judge whether something is white or black, for this pertains to a special sense, not only whether it is healthful or harmful, for this pertains to the inner sense, but also why something is delightful. And in this act the question is raised about the reasons for our delight which sense derives from the object. This happens when we ask why something is beautiful, pleasant, and wholesome. And it is discovered that the answer is equality of proportion. equality, however, is the same in the great and the small, and is not spread out through a thing's dimensions; nor does it change and pass away when there is alteration through change or motion. Therefore it abstracts from place, time, and motion, and thus is unchangeable, inimitable, without ends, and in all ways spiritual. Judgment is, therefore, an action which causes the sensible species, received sensibly through sense, to enter the intellective faculty by purification and abstraction. And thus the whole world can enter into the human soul through the doors of the senses by the three aforesaid operations.

7. These all, however, are traces in which we can see the reflection of our God. For since the apprehended species is a likeness produced in the medium and then impressed upon the organ itself, and by means of that impression leads to its principle and source--that is to say, to the object of knowledge--manifestly it follows that the eternal light generates out of itself a likeness or coequal radiance which is consubstantial and coeternal. And He Who is the image and likeness of the invisible God [Col., 1, 15] and "the brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance" [Hebr., 1, 3], He Who is everywhere through His primal generation, as an object generates its likeness in the whole medium, is united by the grace of union to an individual of rational nature--as a species to a corporeal organ--so that by that union He may lead us back to the Father as to the primordial source and object. If then all knowable things can generate their likeness (species), obviously they proclaim that in them as in a mirror can be seen the eternal generation of the Word, the Image, and the Son, eternally emanating from God the Father.

8. In this way the species, delighting us as beautiful, pleasant, and wholesome, implies that in that first species is the primal beauty, pleasure, and wholesomeness in which is the highest proportionality and equality to the generator. In this is power, not through imagination, but entering our minds through the truth of apprehension. Here is impression, salubrious and satisfying, and expelling all lack in the apprehending mind. If, then, delight is the conjunction of the harmonious, and the likeness of God alone is the most highly

beautiful, pleasant, and wholesome, and if it is united in truth and in inwardness and in plenitude which employs our entire capacity, obviously it can be seen that in God alone is the original and true delight, and that we are led back to seeking it from all other delights.

9. By a more excellent and immediate way are we led by judgment into seeing eternal truths more surely. For if judgment comes about through the reason's abstracting from place, time, and change, and therefore from dimension, succession, and transmutation, by the immutable, illimitable, and endless reason, and if there is nothing immutable, inimitable, and endless except the eternal, then all which is eternal is God or is in God. If, then, all things of which we have more certain this mode of reasoning, it is clear that this is the reason of all things and the infallible rule and light of truth, in which all things shine forth infallibly, indestructibly, indubitably, irrefragably, unquestionably, unchangeably, boundlessly, endlessly, indivisibly, and intellectually. And therefore those laws by which we make certain judgments concerning all sensible things which come into our consideration-- since they [the laws] are infallible and indubitable rules of the apprehending intellect--are indelibly stored up in the memory as if always present, are irrefragable and unquestionable rules of the judging intellect. And this is so because, as Augustine says [Lib. Arb., II, ch. 4], no one judges these things except by these rules. It must thus be true that they are incommutable and incorruptible since they are necessary, and boundless since they are inimitable, endless since eternal. Therefore they must be indivisible since intellectual and incorporeal, not made but uncreated, eternally existing in eternal art, by which, through which, and in accordance with which all things possessing form are formed. Neither, therefore, can we judge with certainty except through that which was not only the form producing all things but also the preserver of all and the distinguisher of all, as the being who preserves the form in all things, the directing rule by which our mind judges all things which enter into it through the senses.

10. This observation is extended by a consideration of the seven different kinds of number by which, as if by seven steps, we ascend to God. Augustine shows this in his book "On the True Religion" and in the sixth book "On Music," wherein he assigns the differences of the numbers as they mount step by step from sensible things to the Maker of all things, so that God may be seen in all. For he says that numbers are in bodies and especially in sounds and words, and he calls these "sonorous." Some are abstracted from these and received into our senses, and these he calls "heard." Some proceed from the soul into the body, as appears in gestures and bodily movements, and these he calls "uttered." Some are in the pleasures of the senses which arise from attending to the species which have been received, and these he calls "sensual." Some are retained in the memory, and these he calls remembered. Some are the bases of our judgments about all these, and these he calls "judicial," which, as has been said above, necessarily transcend our minds because they are infallible and incontrovertible. By these there are imprinted on our minds the "artificial" numbers which Augustine does not include in this classification because they are connected with the judicial number from which flow the uttered numbers out of which are created the numerical forms of those things made by art. Hence, from the highest through the middles to the lowest, there is an ordered descent. Thence do we ascend step by step from the sonorous numbers by means of the uttered, the sensual, and the remembered. Since, therefore, all things are beautiful and in some way delightful, and beauty and delight do not exit apart from proportion, and proportion is primarily in number, it needs must be that all things are rhythmical. And for this reason number is the outstanding exemplar in the mind of the Maker, and in things it is the outstanding trace leading to wisdom. Since this is most evident to all and closest to God, it leads most directly to God as if by the seven differentiae. It causes Him to be known in all corporeal and sensible thing while we apprehend the rhythmical, delight in rhythmical proportions, and though the laws of rhythmical proportions judge irrefragably.

11. From these two initial steps by which we are led to seeing God in His traces, as if we had two wings falling to our feet, we can determine that all creatures of this sensible world lead the mind of the one contemplating and attaining wisdom to the eternal God; for they are shadows, echoes, and pictures, the traces, simulacra, and reflections of that First Principle most powerful, wisest, and best; of that light and plenitude; of that art productive, exemplifying, and ordering, given to us for looking upon God. They are

signs divinely bestowed which, I say, are exemplars or rather exemplifications set before our yet untrained minds, limited to sensible things, so that through the sensibles which they see they may be carried forward to the intelligibles, which they do not see, as if by signs to the signified.

12. The creatures of this sensible world signify the invisible things of God [Rom., 1, 20], partly because God is of all creation the origin, exemplar, and end, and because every effect is the sign of its cause, the exemplification of the exemplar, and the way to the end to which it leads; partly from its proper representation; partly from prophetic prefiguration; partly from angelic operation; partly from further ordination. For every creature is by nature a sort of picture and likeness of that eternal wisdom, but especially that which in the book of Scripture is elevated by the spirit of prophecy to the prefiguration of spiritual things. But more does the eternal wisdom appear in those creatures in whose likeness God wished to appear in angelic ministry. And most specially does it appear in those which He wished to institute for the purpose of signifying which are not only signs according to their common name but also Sacraments.

13. From all this it follows that the invisible things of God are clearly seen, from the creation of the world, being understood by the things that are made; so that those who are unwilling to give heed to them and to know God in them all, to bless Him and to love Him, are inexcusable [Rom., 1, 20], while they are unwilling to be carried forth from the shadows into the wonderful light of God [I Cor., 15, 57]. But thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who has transported us out of darkness into His wonderful light, when through these lights given from without we are disposed to re-enter into the mirror of our mind, in which the divine lights shine [I Peter, 2, 9].

### **Chapter Three**

#### **Of the Reflection of God in His Image Stamped upon our Natural Powers**

1. The two steps mentioned above, by leading us to God by means of His Traces, whereby He shines forth in all creatures, have led us to the point of entering into ourselves, that is, into our minds in which the divine image shines. Now in the third place, as we enter into ourselves, as if leaving the vestibule and coming into the sanctum, that is, the outer part of the tabernacle, we should strive to see God through a mirror. In this mirror the light of truth is shining before our minds as in a candelabrum, for in it gleams the resplendent image of the most blessed Trinity. Enter then into yourselves and see, for your mind loves itself most fervently. Nor could it love itself unless it knew itself. Nor would it know itself unless it remembered itself, for we receive nothing through intelligence which is not present to our memory. And from this be advised, not with the eye of the flesh but with that of reason, that your soul has a threefold power. Consider then the operations and the functions of these three powers, and you will be able to see God in yourselves as in an image, which is to see through a glass darkly [I Cor., 13, 12].

2. The operation of memory is retention and representation, not only of things present, corporeal, and temporal, but also of past and future things, simple and eternal. For memory retains the past by recalling it, the present by receiving it, the future by foreseeing it. It retains the simple, as the principles of continuous and discrete quantities--the point, the instant, the unit--without which it is impossible to remember or to think about those things whose source is in these. Nonetheless it retains the eternal principles and the axioms of the sciences and retains them eternally. For it can never so forget them while it uses reason that it will not approve of them when heard and assent to them, not as though it were perceiving them for the first time, but as if it were recognizing them as innate and familiar, as appears when someone says to another, "One must either affirm or deny," or "Every whole is greater than its part," or any other law which cannot be rationally contradicted.

From the first actual retention of all temporal things, namely, of the past, present, and future, it has the likeness of eternity whose indivisible present extends to all times. From the second it appears that it is not only formed from without by images [phantasms], but also by receiving simple forms from above and retaining them in itself--forms which cannot enter through the doors of the senses and the images of sensible things. From the third it follows that it has an undying light present to itself in which it remembers

unchangeable truths. And thus, through the operations of the memory, it appears that the soul itself is the image of God and His likeness, so present to itself and having Him present that it receives Him in actuality and is susceptible of receiving Him in potency, and that it can also participate in Him.

3. The operation of the intellect is concerned with the meaning of terms, propositions, and inferences. The intellect however, understands the meaning of terms when it comprehends what anything is through its definition. But a definition must be made by higher terms and these by still higher, until one comes to the highest and most general, in ignorance of which the lower cannot be defined. Unless, therefore, it is known what is being-in-itself, the definition of no special substance can be fully known. For can being-in-itself be known unless it be known along with its conditions: the one, the true, the good. Since being, however, can be known as incomplete or complete, as imperfect or perfect, as potential or actual, as relative or absolute, as partial or total, as transient or permanent, as dependent or independent, as mixed with non-being or as pure, as contingent or necessary (per se), as posterior or prior, as mutable or immutable, as simple or composite; since privations and defects can be known only through affirmations in some positive sense, our intellect cannot reach the point of fully understanding any of the created beings unless it be favored by the understanding of the purest, most actual, most complete, and absolute Being, which is simply and eternally Being, and in which are the principles of all things in their purity. For how would the intellect know that a being is defective and incomplete if it had no knowledge of being free from all defect? And thus for all the aforesaid conditions. The intellect is said to comprehend truly the meaning of propositions when it knows with certitude that they are true. And to know this is simply to know, since error is impossible in comprehension of this sort. For it knows that such truth cannot be otherwise than it is. It knows, therefore, that such truth is unchangeable. But since our mind itself is changeable, it cannot see that truth shining forth unchangeably except by some light shining without change in any way; and it is impossible that such a light be a mutable creature. Therefore it knows in that light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world [John, 1, 9], which is true light and the Word which in the beginning was with God [John, 1, 1]. Our intellect perceives truly the meaning of inference when it sees that a conclusion necessarily follows from its premises. This it sees not only in necessary terms but also in contingent. Thus if a man is running, a man is moving. It perceives, however, this necessary connection, not only in things which are, but also in things which are not. Thus if a man exists, it follows that if he is running, he is moved. And this is true even if the man is not existing. The necessity of this mode of inference comes not from the existence of the thing in matter, because that is contingent, nor from its existence in the soul because then it would be a fiction if it were not in the world of things. Therefore it comes from the archetype in eternal art according to which things have an aptitude and a comportment toward one another by reason of the representation of that eternal art. As Augustine says in his "On True Religion" [Ch. 39, 72], "The light of all who reason truly is kindled at that truth and strives to return to it." From which it is obvious that our intellect is conjoined with that eternal truth so that it cannot receive anything with certainty except under its guidance. Therefore you can see the truth through yourself, the truth that teaches you, if concupiscence and phantasms do not impede you and place themselves like clouds between you and the rays of truth.

4. The operation of the power of choice is found in deliberation, judgment, and desire. Deliberation is found in inquiring what is better, this or that. But the better has no meaning except by its proximity to the best. But such proximity is measured by degrees of likeness. No one, therefore, can know whether this is better than that unless he knows that this is closer to the best. But no one knows that one of two things is more like another unless he knows the other. For I do not know that this man is like Peter unless I know or am acquainted with Peter. Therefore the idea of the good must be involved in every deliberation about the highest good. Certain judgment of the objects of deliberation comes about through some law. But none can judge with certainty through law unless he be certain that that law is right and that he ought not to judge it. But the mind judges itself. Since, then, it cannot judge the law it employs in judgment, that law is higher than our minds, and through this higher law one makes judgments according to the degree with which it is impressed upon it. But there is nothing higher than the human mind except Him Who made it. Therefore our deliberative faculty in judging reaches upward to divine laws if it solves its problems completely. Now desire is of that which especially moves one. But that especially moves one which is especially loved. But

happiness is loved above all. But happiness does not come about except through the best and ultimate end. Human desire, therefore, seeks nothing unless it be the highest good or something which leads to it or something which has some resemblance to it. So great is the force of the highest good that nothing can be loved except through desire for it by a creature which errs and is deceived when it takes truth's image and likeness for the truth. See then how close the soul is to God and how memory in its operations leads to eternity, intelligence to truth, the power of choice to the highest goodness.

5. Following the order and origin and comportment of these powers, we are led to the most blessed Trinity itself. From memory arises intelligence as its offspring, for then do we know when a likeness which is in the memory leaps into the eye of the intellect, which is nothing other than a word. From memory and intelligence is breathed forth love, which is the tie between the two. These three--the generating mind, the word, and love--are in the soul as memory, intelligence, and will, which are consubstantial, coequal, and coeval, mutually immanent. If then God is perfect spirit, He has memory, intelligence, and will; and He has both the begotten Word and spirated Love. These are necessarily distinguished, since one is produced from the other--distinguished, not essentially or accidentally, but personally. When therefore the mind considers itself, it rises through itself as through a mirror to the contemplation of the Blessed Trinity--Father, Word, and Love--three persons coeternal, coequal, and consubstantial; so that each one is in each of the others, though one is not the other, but all three are one God.

6. This consideration which the soul has of its threefold and unified principle through the trinity of its powers, by which it is the image of God, is supported by the light of knowledge which perfects it and informs it, and represents in three ways the most blessed Trinity. For all philosophy is either natural or rational or moral. The first deals with the cause of being, and therefore leads to the power of the Father. The second deals with the principle of understanding, and therefore leads to the wisdom of the Word. The third deals with the order of living, and therefore leads to the goodness of the Holy Spirit. Again, the first is divided into metaphysics, mathematics, and physics. The first concerns the essences of things; the second, numbers and figures; the third, natures, powers, and extensive operations. Therefore the first to the First leads Principle, the Father; the second, to His image, the Son; the third, to the gift of the Holy Spirit. The second is divided into grammar, which gives us the power of expression; logic, which gives us skill in argumentation; rhetoric, which makes us skillful in persuasion or stirring the emotions. And this similarly images the mystery of the most blessed Trinity. The third is divided into individual, family, and political problems. And therefore the first images the First Principle, which has no birth; the second, the family relationship of the Son; the third, the liberality of the Holy Spirit.

7. All these sciences have certain and infallible rules, like rays of light descending from the eternal law into our minds. And thus our minds, illumined and suffused by such great radiance, unless they be blind, can be led through themselves alone to the contemplation of that eternal light. The irradiation and consideration of this light holds the wise suspended in wonder; and, on the other hand, it leads into confusion the foolish, who do not believe that they may understand. Hence this prophecy is fulfilled: "Thou enlightenest wonderfully from the everlasting hills. All the foolish of heart were troubled" [Ps., 75, 5-6].

#### Chapter Four

##### Of the Reflection of God in His Image Reformed by the Gifts of Grace

1. But since not only by passing through ourselves but also within ourselves is it given to us to contemplate the First Principle, and this is greater than the preceding, therefore this mode of thought reaches to the fourth level of contemplation. It seems amazing, however, when it is clear that God is so near to our minds, that there are so few who see the First Principle in themselves. But the reason is close at hand. For the human mind, distracted by cares, does not enter into itself through memory; obscured by phantasms, it does not return into itself through intelligence; allured by concupiscence, it never returns to itself through the desire for inner sweetness and spiritual gladness. Thus, lying totally in this sensible world, it cannot return to itself as to the image of God.

2. And since, when anyone lies fallen, he must remain there prostrate unless someone give a helping hand and he falls in order to rise again [Isaiah, 24, 20], our soul has not been able to be raised perfectly from the things of sense to an intuition of itself and of the eternal Truth in itself unless the Truth, having assumed human form in Christ, should make itself into a ladder, repairing the first ladder which was broken in Adam. Therefore, however much anyone is illuminated only by the light of nature and of acquired science, he cannot enter into himself that he may delight in the Lord in himself, unless Christ be his mediator, Who says, "I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved; and he shall go in, and go out, and shall find pastures" [John, 10, 9]. We do not, however, approach this door unless we believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him. It is therefore necessary, if we wish to enter into the fruition of Truth, as into Paradise, that we enter through the faith, hope, and charity of the Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, Who is as the tree of life in the middle of Paradise.

3. The image of our mind must therefore be clothed also in the three theological virtues by which the soul is purified, illuminated, and perfected; and thus the image is repaired and is made like the heavenly Jerusalem and part of the Church militant, which, according to the Apostle, is the child of the heavenly Jerusalem. For he says: "But that Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother" [Gal., 4, 26]. Therefore the soul which believes in, hopes in, and loves Jesus Christ, Who is the Word incarnate, uncreated, and spirated, that is, the way and the truth and the life, where by faith he believes in Christ as in the uncreated Word, which is the Word and the splendor of the Father, he recovers spiritual hearing and vision: hearing to receive the lessons of Christ, vision to look upon the splendor of His light. When, however, he yearns with hope to receive the spirated Word, through desire and affection he recovers spiritual olfaction. When he embraces the incarnate Word in charity, as one receiving from Him delight and passing into Him through ecstatic love, he recovers taste and touch. When these senses are recovered, when he sees his spouse and hears, smells, tastes, and embraces Him, he can sing like the Bride a Cantic of Canticles, as was done on the occasion of this fourth stage of contemplation, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it [Apoc., 2, 17]. For it occurs in affective experience rather than in rational consideration. On this level, when the inner senses are renewed in order to perceive the highest beauty, to hear the highest harmony, smell the highest fragrance, taste the highest delicacy, apprehend the highest delights, the soul is disposed to mental elevation through devotion, wonder, and exultation, in accordance with those three exclamations which are in the Cantic of Canticles. Of these the first arises from the abundance of devotion, by which the soul becomes like a pillar of smoke of aromatic spices, of myrrh and frankincense [Cant., 3, 6]; the second, from the excellence of wonder, by which the soul becomes as the dawn, the moon, and the sun, like the series of illuminations which suspend the soul in wonder as it considers its spouse; the third, from the superabundance of exultation, by which the soul, overflowing with the sweetest delight, leans totally upon its beloved [Cant., 8, 5].

4. When this is accomplished, our spirit is made hierarchical to mount upward through its conformity to the heavenly Jerusalem, into which no one enters unless through grace it has descended into his heart, as John saw in his Apocalypse [21, 2]. But then it descends into one's heart when, by the reformation of the image through the theological virtues and through the delights of the spiritual senses and ecstatic elevation, our spirit has been made hierarchical, that is, purged, illuminated, and perfected. Likewise the soul is stamped by the following nine steps when it is disposed in an orderly way: perception, deliberation, self-impulsion, ordination, strengthening, command, reception, divine illumination, union,[1] which one by one correspond to the nine orders of angels, so that the first three stages correspond to nature in the human mind, the next three to industry, and the last three to grace.[2] With these acquired, the soul, entering into itself, enters into the heavenly Jerusalem, where, considering the orders of the angels, it sees God in them, Who living in them causes all their operations. Whence Bernard said to Eugenius that--"God in the seraphim loves as Charity, in the Cherubim He knows as Truth, in the Thrones He is seated as Equity, in the Dominations He dominates as Majesty, in the Principalities He rules as the First Principle, in the Powers He watches over us as Salvation, in the Virtues He operates as Virtue, in the Archangels He reveals as Light, in the Angels He aids as Piety." From all of which God is seen to be all in all through the contemplation of Him in the minds in which He dwells through the gifts of His overflowing Charity.



5. For this grade of contemplation there is especially and outstandingly added as a support the consideration of Holy Scripture divinely issued, as philosophy was added to the preceding. For Holy Scripture is principally concerned with the works of reparation. Wherefore it especially deals with faith, hope, and charity, by which the soul is reformed, and most of all with charity. Concerning this the Apostle says that the end of the Commandments is reached by a pure heart and a good conscience and an unfeigned faith [I Tim., 1, 5]. This is the fulfillment of the Law, as he says. And our Saviour adds that all the Law and the Prophets depend upon these two Commandments: the love of God and of one's neighbor. Which two are united in the one spouse of the Church, Jesus Christ, Who is at once neighbor and God, at once brother and Lord, at once king and friend, at once Word uncreated and incarnate, our maker and remaker, the alpha and omega. He is the highest hierarch, purging and illuminating and perfecting His spouse, the whole Church and any holy soul.

6. Of this hierarch and this ecclesiastical hierarchy is the entire Holy Scripture by which we are taught to be purified, illuminated, and perfected, and this according to the triple law handed down to us in it: the law of Nature, of Scripture, and of Grace; or rather according to the triple principal part of it: the Mosaic Law purifying, the prophetic revelation illuminating, and evangelical teaching perfecting; or above all, according to the triple spiritual meaning of it--the tropological which purifies us for an honest life, the allegorical which illuminates us for the clarity of understanding, the analogical which perfects us by mental elevation and the most delightful perceptions of wisdom--in accordance with the three aforesaid theological virtues and the spiritual senses reformed and the three above-mentioned stages of elevation and hierarchical acts of the mind, by which our mind retreats into itself so that it may look upon God in the brightness of the saints [Ps., 109, 3] and in them, as in a chamber, it may sleep in peace and take its rest [Ps., 4, 9] while the spouse adjures it that it stir not up till she pleases [Cant., 2, 7].

7. Now from these two middle steps, by which we proceed to contemplate God within ourselves as in the mirrors of created images--and this as with wings opened for flying which hold the middle place--we can understand that we are led into the divine by the powers of the rational soul itself placed therein by nature as far as their operations, habits, and knowledge are concerned, as appears from the third stage. For we are led by the powers of the soul reformed by virtues freely granted, by the spiritual senses, and by mental elevation, as appears from the fourth stage. We are nonetheless led through hierarchical operations, that is, by purgation, illumination, and perfection of human minds through the hierarchical revelations of the Holy Scriptures given to us, according to the Apostle, through the Angels in the hand of a mediator [Gal., 3, 19]. And finally we are led by hierarchies and hierarchical orders which are found to be ordered in our minds in the likeness of the heavenly Jerusalem.

8. Our mind, filled with all these intellectual illuminations, is inhabited by the divine wisdom as the house of God; become the daughter, the spouse, and the friend of God; made a member of Christ the head, the sister, and the fellow-heir; made nonetheless the temple of the Holy Spirit, founded by faith, elevated by hope, and dedicated to God by the sanctity of the mind and the body. All of this has been brought about by the most sincere love of Christ which is poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, Who is given to us [Rom., 5, 5], without which Spirit we cannot know the secrets of God. For just as no one can know the things of a man except the spirit of a man that is in him, so the things also that are of God no man knoweth but the spirit of God [I Cor., 2, 11] In charity then let us be rooted and founded, that we may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length of eternity, the breadth of liberality, the height of majesty and the depth of the wisdom which judges us [Eph., 3, 17 18].

## Chapter Five

Of the Reflection of the Divine Unity in its Primary Name which is Being

1. It happens that we may contemplate God not only outside of us but also within us and above us. [Thus we contemplate Him] outside through His traces, inside through His image, and above us through His light, which has signed upon our minds the light of eternal Truth, since the mind itself is immediately formed by Truth itself. Those who exercise themselves in the first manner have already entered into the atrium of the

tabernacle; the second have entered into the sanctum; but the third have entered into the Holy of Holies with the High Priest, the Holy of Holies where above the ark are the Cherubim of glory overshadowing the propitiatory. By these modes we understand two ways or degrees of contemplation of the invisible and eternal things of God, of which one deals with God's essential attributes, the other with the properties of the Persons.

2. The first way first and foremost signifies Him in Being itself, saying He Who Is is the primary name of God. The second signifies Him in His goodness, saying this [goodness] is the primary name of God. The former refers above all to the Old Testament, which preaches the unity of the divine essence, whence it was said to Moses, "I am Who I am." The second refers to the New Testament, which lays down the plurality of the Persons, by baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Therefore our Master Christ, wishing to elevate the youth who had served the law to evangelical perfection, attributed the name of goodness principally and precisely to God. No one, He said, is good but God alone [Luke, 18, 19]. Damascenus ["De fide orthodox.," 1, 9] therefore, following Moses, says that "He Who Is" is the primary name of God. Dionysius, following Christ, says that goodness is God's primary name.

3. If you wish then to contemplate the invisible traits of God in so far as they belong to the unity of His essence, fix your gaze upon Being itself, and see that Being is most certain in itself; for it cannot be thought not to be, since the purest Being occurs only in full flight from Non-Being, just as nothingness is in full flight from Being. Therefore, just as the utterly nothing contains nought of Being nor of its conditions, so contrariwise Being itself contains no Non-Being, neither in actuality nor in potency, neither in matters of fact nor in our thinking. Since, however, Non-Being is the privation of Being, it cannot enter the intellect except through Being; Being, however, cannot enter through anything other than itself. For everything which is thought of is either thought of as Non-Being or as Being-in-potency or as Being-in-actuality. If, therefore, Non-Being is intelligible only through Being, and if Being-in-potency can be understood only through Being-in-actuality, and if Being is the name of that pure actuality of Being, Being then is what first enters the intellect, and that Being is pure actuality. But this is not particular Being, which is restricted Being, since that is mixed with potentiality. Nor is this analogous Being, for such has a minimum of actuality since it has only a minimum of being. It remains, therefore, that that Being is divine Being.

4. Marvelous then is the blindness of the intellect which does not consider that which is its primary object and without which it can know nothing. But just as the eye intent upon the various differences of the colors does not see the light by which it sees the other things and, if it sees it, does not notice it, so the mind's eye, intent upon particular and universal beings, does not notice Being itself, which is beyond all genera, though that comes first before the mind and through it all other things. Wherefore it seems very true that just as the bat's eye behaves in the light, so the eye of the mind behaves before the most obvious things of nature. Because accustomed to the shadows of beings and the phantasms of the sensible world, when it looks upon the light of the highest Being, it seems to see nothing, not understanding that darkness itself is the fullest illumination of the mind [Ps., 138, 11], just as when the eye sees pure light it seems to itself to be seeing nothing.

5. See then purest Being itself, if you can, and you will understand that it cannot be thought of as derivative from another. And thus necessarily that must be thought of as absolutely primal which can be derivative neither from nothing nor from anything. For what exists through itself if Being does not exist through itself and of itself? You will understand that, lacking Non-Being in every respect and therefore having no beginning nor end, it is eternal. You will understand also that it contains nothing in itself save Being itself, for it is in no way composite, but is most simple. You will understand that it has no potentialities within it, since every possible has in some way something of Non-Being, but Being is the highest actuality. You will understand that it has no defect, for it is most perfect. Finally, you will understand that it has no diversity, for it is One in the highest degree. Being, therefore, which is pure Being and most simply Being and absolutely Being, is Being primary, eternal, most simple, most actual, most perfect, and one to the highest degree.

6. And these things are so certain that Being itself cannot be thought of by an intellect as opposed to these, and one of these traits implies the others. For since it is simply Being, therefore it is simply primary; because it is simply primary, therefore it is not made from another nor from itself, and therefore it is eternal. Likewise, since it is primary and eternal, and therefore not from others, it is therefore most simple. Furthermore, since it is primary, eternal, and most simple, therefore it contains no potentiality mixed with actuality, and therefore it is most actual. Likewise, since it is primary, eternal, most simple, most actual, it is most perfect. To such a Being nothing is lacking, nor can anything be added, Since it is primary, eternal, most simple, most actual, most perfect, it is therefore one to the highest degree. For what is predicated because of its utter superabundance is applicable to all things. For what is simply predicated because of superabundance cannot possibly be applied to anything but the one.[1] Wherefore, if God is the name of the primary, eternal, most simple, most actual, most perfect Being, it is impossible that He be thought of as not being nor as anything save One alone. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God." If you see this in the pure simplicity of your mind, you will somehow be infused with the illumination of eternal light.

7. But you have ground for rising in wonder. For Being itself is first and last, is eternal and yet most present, is simplest and greatest, is most actual and immutable, is perfect and immense, is most highly one and yet all inclusive. If you wonder over these things with a pure mind, while you look further, you will be infused with a greater light, until you finally see that Being is last because it is first. For since it is first, it produces all things for its own sake alone; and therefore it must be the very end, the beginning and the consummation, the alpha and the omega. Therefore it is most present because it is eternal. For since it is eternal, it does not come from another; nor does it cease to be nor pass from one thing to another, and therefore has no past nor future but only present being. Therefore it is greatest because most simple. For since it is most simple in essence, therefore it is greatest in power; because power, the more greatly it is unified, the closer it is to the infinite. Therefore it is most immutable, because most actual. For that which is most actual is therefore pure act. And as such it acquires nothing new nor does it lose what it had, and therefore cannot be changed. Therefore it is most immense, because most perfect. For since it is most perfect, nothing can be thought of which is better, nobler, or more worthy. And on this account there is nothing greater. And every such thing is immense. Therefore it is all-inclusive ("omnimodal"), because it is one to the highest degree. For that which is one to the highest degree is the universal source of all multiplicity. And for this reason it is the universal efficient cause of all things, the exemplary and the final cause, as the cause of Being, the principle of intelligibility, the order of living. And therefore it is all-inclusive, not as the essence of all things, but as the superexcellent and most universal and most sufficient cause of all essences, whose power, because most highly unified in essence, is therefore most highly infinite and most fertile in efficacy.

8. Recapitulating, let us say: Because, then, Being is most pure and absolute, that which is Being simply is first and last and, therefore, the origin and the final cause of all. Because eternal and most present, therefore it encompasses and penetrates all duration, existing at once as their center and circumference. Because most simple and greatest, therefore it is entirely within and entirely without all things and, therefore, is an intelligible sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference nowhere. Because most actual and most immutable, then "remaining stable it causes the universe to move" [Boethius, Cons. III, met. 9]. Because most perfect and immense, therefore within all, though not included in them; beyond all, but not excluded from them; above all, but not transported beyond them; below all, and yet not cast down beneath them. Because most highly one and all-inclusive, therefore all in all, although all things are many and it is only one. And this is so since through most simple unity, clearest truth, and most sincere goodness there is in it all power, all exemplary causality, and all communicability. And therefore from it and by it and in it are all things. And this is so since it is omnipotent, omniscient, and all-good. And to see this perfectly is to be blessed. As was said to Moses, "I will show thee all good" [Exod. 33, 19].

## Chapter Six

On the Reflection of the Most Blessed Trinity in Its Name, which is Good

1. After a consideration of the essential traits [of God] the eye of the intelligence must be raised to look upon the most Blessed Trinity, in order that the second Cherub may be placed next to the first. Just as Being is the

root and name of the vision of the essential traits, so Good is the principal foundation of our contemplation of the divine emanations [of the Trinity].

2. See then and pay heed, since the best which exists simply is that than which nothing better can be thought of. And this is such that it cannot be rightly thought not to be. For Being is in all ways better than Non-Being. This is such that it cannot rightly be thought of unless conceived of as both three and one. For the Good is said to be self-diffusive. The highest good is therefore the most self-diffusive. The greatest diffusion, however, can exist only if it is actual and intrinsic, substantial and hypostatic, natural and voluntary, free and necessary, lacking nothing and perfect. Unless, then, there be eternally in the highest good a production which is actual and consubstantial, and an hypostasis as noble as the producer through generation and spiration, so that it would be from the eternal principle eternally co-producing and would be beloved ("dilectus") in itself and co-loved ("condilectus"), generated, and spirated as are the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, in no way would it be the highest good, for it would not diffuse itself most highly. For temporal diffusion in creation is nothing else than central and punctiform with respect to the immensity of the eternal goodness. Whence also can some diffusion be conceived as greater than that--to wit, that in which the diffusive power communicates its whole substance and nature to another. Therefore the highest good would not exist if it could lack that characteristic either in existence or in thought. If then you can look with the mind's eye upon the purity of goodness, which is the pure actualization of the principle of Charity, pouring forth free and due love, and both mingled together, which is the fullest diffusion according to nature and will--the diffusion as Word, in which all things are expressed, and as Gift, in which all other gifts are given--you may see by the highest communicability of the Good that a Trinity of Father and Son and Holy Spirit is necessary. Because of the greatest goodness, it is necessary that there be in them the greatest communicability, and out of the greatest communicability the greatest consubstantiality, and from the greatest consubstantiality the greatest configurability, and from all these the greatest coequality; and therefore the greatest coeternity as well as, because of all the aforesaid, the greatest co-intimacy, by which one is in the other necessarily through the highest degree of mutual penetration and one operates with the other through the complete identity of substances and power and operation of the most Blessed Trinity itself.

3. But when you contemplate these things, see that you do not think yourself able to understand the incomprehensible. For you have still in these six stages to consider what most strongly leads our mind's eye into the stupor of wonder. For there in the Trinity is the greatest communicability with individuality of the persons, the greatest consubstantiality with plurality of the hypostases, the greatest configurability with distinct personality, the greatest co-equality with order, the greatest co-eternity with emanation, the greatest mutual intimacy with mission. Who in the face of such great marvels would not start in wonder? But we understand with greatest certitude that all these exist in the most Blessed Trinity if we raise our eyes to the goodness that excels all goodness. For if there is the greatest communication and true diffusion, there is also true origin and true distinction. And because the whole and not the part is communicated, therefore it is itself given as a whole and not as a part. Therefore the one emanating and the one producing are distinguished by their properties, and yet are essentially one. Since, then, they are distinguished by their properties, therefore they have personal properties and a plurality of hypostases and an emanation of origin and an order which is not of posteriority but of origin, and a mission not of local change but of free spiration, because of the authority of the producer which every sender has in respect to that which is sent. Because they are substantially one, therefore it must be true that there is unity in essence and in form, In dignity and in eternity, in existence and inimitability While therefore you consider these things one by one in themselves, you have a reason for contemplating the truth; when you compare them with one another, you have the wherewithal to hover in highest wonder; and therefore, that your mind may ascend in wonder to wonderful contemplation these things should be considered all together.

4. For these Cherubim signify this also, since they look at each other. Nor is this free from mystery, that they look toward each, their faces being turned toward the propitiatory [Exod., 25, 20], that there may be verified what the Lord said in John, "Now this is the eternal life: That they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom thou hast sent" [John, 17, 3]. For we should wonder not only at the essential and

personal traits of God in themselves, but also in comparison with the superwonderful union of God and man in the unity of Christ's person.

5. For if you are the Cherub when you contemplate the essentials of God and you wonder because the divine Being is at once primary and last Being, eternal and most present most simple and greatest or unlimited, all everywhere and yet never bounded, most actual and never moved, most perfect and having nothing superfluous or lacking, and yet immense and infinite without bounds, one to the highest degree and yet all-inclusive as having all things in itself, as total power, total truth, total goodness, look to the propitiatory and wonder that in it the primal principle is joined to the last term, God joined with man formed on the sixth day, the eternal joined with temporal man, born in the fullness of time of a Virgin--the most simple joined with the most composite, the most actual with the most passive and mortal, the most perfect and immense with the little, the most highly unified and all-inclusive with the composite individual distinct from all else, namely, Jesus Christ.

6. If, however, you are the other Cherub when you contemplate the properties of the Persons, you will also wonder that communicability exists with individuality, consubstantiality with plurality, configurability with personality, co-equality with order, co-eternity with production, co-intimacy with mission, for the Son was sent by the Father, and the Holy Spirit by both, Who nevertheless is always with Them and never withdraws from Them. Look to the propitiatory and wonder because in Christ is a personal union with a trinity of substances and a duality of natures, an absolute agreement with a plurality of wills, a common speech between God and man with plurality of properties, an equal worship with plurality of ranks, an equal exaltation above all things with plurality of dignities, a condominium with plurality of powers

7. In this consideration is the perfection of the mind's illumination, when, as if on the sixth day, it sees man made in the image of God. If then the image is an express likeness when our mind contemplates in Christ the Son of God, Who is the natural image of the invisible God, our humanity now wonderfully exalted, now ineffably united, by seeing at once in one Being the first and the last, the highest and the lowest, the circumference and the center, the alpha and the omega, the caused and the cause, the creator and the creature, the book written within and without, it [the mind] arrives at a perfect being in order that it may arrive with God at the perfection of His illuminations on the sixth level, as if on the sixth day; nor does anything more remain save the day of rest, on which, by the elevation of the mind, its insight rests from all work which He had done.

#### Chapter Seven

Of Mental and Mystical Elevation, in which Repose is Given to the Intellect when the Affections Pass Entirely into God through Elevation

1. Now that these six considerations have been studied as the six steps of the true throne of Solomon by which one ascends to peace, where the truly peaceful man reposes in peace of mind as if in the inner Jerusalem; as if, again, on the six wings of the Cherub by which the mind of the truly contemplative man grows strong to rise again, filled with the illumination of supreme wisdom; as if, once again, during the first six days in which the mind has to be exercised that it may finally arrive at the Sabbath of rest after it has beheld God outside itself through His traces and in His traces, within itself by His image and in His image, above itself by the likeness of the divine light shining down upon us and in that light, in so far as is possible in this life and the exercise of our mind-- when, finally, on the sixth level we have come to the point of beholding in the first and highest principle and the Mediator of God and men, Jesus Christ, those things of which the likeness cannot in any wise be found in creatures and which exceed all the insight of the human intellect, there remains that by looking upon these things it [the mind] rise on high and pass beyond not only this sensible world but itself also. In this passage Christ is the way and the door, Christ is the stairway and the vehicle, like the propitiatory over the ark of God and the mystery which has been hidden from eternity [Eph, 3, 9].

2. He who with full face looks to this propitiatory by looking upon Him suspended on the cross in faith, hope, and charity, in devotion, wonder, exultation, appreciation, praise, and jubilation, makes a passover--that is, the phase or passage [Exod., 12, 11] with Him--that he may pass over the Red Sea by the staff of the cross from Egypt into the Desert, where he may taste the hidden manna and with Christ may rest in the tomb as if outwardly dead, yet knowing, as far as possible in our earthly condition, what was said on the cross to the thief cleaving to Christ: "Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

3. That was shown to the blessed Francis when, in the transport of contemplation on the high mountain--where I thought out these things which I have written--there appeared to him the Seraph with the six wings nailed to the cross, as I and several others have heard from the companion who was with him when he passed over into God through the transports of contemplation and became the example of perfect contemplation, just as previously he had been of action; as another Jacob is changed into Israel, so through him all truly spiritual men have been invited by God to passage of this kind and to mental transport by example rather than by word.

4. In this passage, if it is perfect, all intellectual operations should be abandoned, and the whole height of our affection should be transferred and transformed into God. This, however, is mystical and most secret, which no man knoweth but he that hath received it [Apoc., 2, 17], nor does he receive it unless he desire it; nor does he desire it unless the fire of the Holy Spirit, Whom Christ sent to earth, has inflamed his marrow. And therefore the Apostle says that this mystic wisdom is revealed through the Holy Spirit.

5. Since, therefore, nature is powerless in this matter and industry but slightly able, little should be given to inquiry but much to unction, little to the tongue but much to inner joy, little to the word and to writings and all to the gift of God, that is, to the Holy Spirit, little or nothing to creation and all to the creative essence, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, saying with Dionysius to God the Trinity: "Trinity, superessential and superdivine and supergood guardian of Christian knowledge of God, direct thou us into the more-than-unknown and superluminous and most sublime summit of mystical eloquence, where new and absolute and unchangeable mysteries of theology are deeply hidden, according to the superluminous darkness of instructive silence--darkness which is supermanifest and super-resplendent, and in which all is aglow, pouring out upon the invisible intellects the splendors of invisible goodness." This to God. To the friend, however, to whom I address this book, let me say with the same Dionysius: "Thou then, my friend, if thou desirest mystic visions, with strengthened feet abandon thy senses and intellectual operations, and both sensible and invisible things, and both all nonbeing and being; and unknowingly restore thyself to unity as far as possible, unity of Him Who is above all essence and knowledge. And when thou hast transcended thyself and all things in immeasurable and absolute purity of mind, thou shalt ascend to the superessential rays of divine shadows, leaving all behind and freed from ties of all."

6. If you should ask how these things come about, question grace, not instruction; desire, not intellect; the cry of prayer, not pursuit of study; the spouse, not the teacher; God, not man; darkness, not clarity; not light, but the wholly flaming fire which will bear you aloft to God with fullest unction and burning affection. This fire is God, and the furnace of this fire leadeth to Jerusalem; and Christ the man kindles it in the fervor of His burning Passion, which he alone truly perceives who says, "My soul rather chooseth hanging and my bones death" [Job, 7, 15]. He who chooses this death can see God because this is indubitably true: "Man shall not see me and live" [Exod., 33, 20]. Let us then die and pass over into darkness; let us impose silence on cares, concupiscence, and phantasms; let us pass over with the crucified Christ from this world to the Father [John, 13, 1], so that when the Father is shown to us we may say with Philip, "It is enough for us" [John, 14, 8]; let us hear with Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee" [II Cor., 12, 9]; let us exult with David, saying, "For Thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away; Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever [Ps. 72, 26]. . . . Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting; and let all the people say: So be it, so be it" [Ps., 105, 48]. AMEN.

**1290 AD**

**Moses De Leon (1250-1305 AD), Rabbi and Kabbalist (or Rabbi Shim'on Bar Yohai)  
The Multiplicity Of Rewards That Await Mankind In The World To Come In the  
Zohar  
The Zohar**

**Zohar Genesis 23a**

What, however, has been said above concerning the Supreme Cause is a secret which has been transmitted only to wise men and prophets. See now how many hidden causes there are enveloped in the Sefiroth and, as it were, mounted on the Sefiroth, hidden from the comprehension of human beings: of them it is said, "for one higher than another watcheth" (Eccl. v, 7). There are lights upon lights, one more clear than another, each one dark by comparison with the one above it from which it receives its light. As for the Supreme Cause, all lights are dark in its presence.

**Zohar Genesis 59a**

"And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me" (Is. LXVI "And ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet" (Mal. In, 24 Happy are the righteous in this world and in the world to come; of them it is written, "the righteous shall for ever inherit the earth" (Is. Lx, 21), and also, "verily the righteous shall praise thy name, the upright shall dwell in thy presence" (Ps. cm, 14 Blessed is the Lord for ever, Amen and Amen.'

Consider this. Every man who fears God is secure in his faith, since he is whole-hearted in the service of his Master. But he who does not constantly fear his Master is not truly possessed of faith, nor is he accounted worthy of a share in the future world.' R. Simeon further discoursed on the text: But the path of the righteous is as the shining light, that shined; more and more unto the perfect day (Prov. Iv, 18). He said: 'Happy are the righteous in this world and the world to come, since God desires to glorify them. For their path is as "the shining light", that is to say, that radiant light which God created at the beginning of things, and which He set aside for the righteous in the future world. This "shined: more and more", for its brightness continually augments. But of the wicked it is written, "The way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble" (Ibid. 10. In truth they do know; but they walk in a crooked path, and will not stop to reflect that one day God will judge them in the future world, and chastise them with the punishments of Gehinnom. Then they will bewail themselves every day, saying, "Woe to us that we did not incline our ears and listen." But as for the righteous, God will illumine them in the future world and will give them their due reward in a place which eye has never beheld, as it is written, "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him."

**Zohar Genesis 62a**

And Noah Begat Three Sons.<sup>1</sup> Said R. Hiya to It. Judah: 'Let me tell you what I have heard regarding this text. A man once entered the recesses of a cavern, and there - issued two or three children together, who differed from one another in their character and conduct: one was virtuous, a second vicious, and a third average. Similarly we find three strands of spirit which flit about and are taken up into three different worlds. The neshamah (spiritual soul) emerges and enters between the gorges of the mountains, where it is joined by the ruah (intellectual spirit). It descends then below where the nefesh (vital spirit) joins the ruah, and all three form a unity.' R. Judah said: The nefesh and the ruah are intertwined together, whereas the neshamah resides in a man's character—an abode which cannot be discovered or located. Should a man strive towards purity of life, he is aided thereto by a holy neshamah, whereby he is purified and sanctified and attains the title of "saint". But should he not strive for righteousness and purity of life, he is animated only by the two grades, nefesh and ruah, and is devoid of a holy neshamah. What is more, he who commences to defile himself is led further into defilement, and heavenly help is withdrawn from him. Thus each is led along the path which he chooses.'

### **Zohar Genesis 63**

The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Daniel, "Thou shalt go towards the end, and wilt rest" (Dan. xII, 13). Daniel asked: "Rest in this world or in the next world?" "Rest in the next World", was the answer (cf. "They will rest in their beds", Is. tot, z), "and thou shalt stand up to thy lot at the end of days". Daniel asked, "Shall I be among the resurrected or not?" God answered, "And thou wilt stand up." Daniel then said, "I know full well that the dead will rise up in various classes, some righteous and some wicked, but I do not know among whom I shall be found." God answered, "To thy lot." Daniel then said, "As there is a right end and a left end, I do not know whether I shall go to the right end (I'gets hayamin) or to the end of days (I'gets hayamim)." The answer was, "To the end of the right (I'gets hayamin)."

### **Zohar 82a-b**

Said Rabbi Isaac: "The words, 'And a river went forth out of Eden to water the garden' refer to the pillar on which the world stands. It is the river that watereth the garden of Eden and causeth fruits to abound that nourish and sustain the world, that also establish the secret doctrine and bring forth the souls of the just who are the fruits of the works of the Holy One, and because they are such, they arise each night and ascend on high, and at midnight the Holy One rules the garden of Eden to delight himself in their midst. It may be asked, whose souls are they?"

Said Rabbi Jose: "With all the souls of the just, whether yet living in the world below or those residing in the heavenly mansions in the world on high, He rejoices with all of them. Observe, the world above must first receive an impulse from the world below and when the soul of a just man ascends into the celestial regions it becomes garbed with a halo of light transcendently bright, which observing, the Holy One is pleased, for such a soul is the fruit of the divine operation within. For this reason such souls are called 'Israelites,' holy children, sons of God, as it is written, 'Ye are children of the Lord your God' (Deuter. XIV. 1)."

### **Zohar Genesis 97b-98a**

And when the time comes for the days to depart from this world, they all approach the Most High King, as it is written, "And the days of David drew nigh that he should die" (1 Kings 11, 1), and again, "And the days of Israel drew nigh that he should die" (Gen. XLVII, z9). Man, however, whilst in this world, considers not and reflects not what it is he is standing on, and each day as it passes he regards as though it has vanished into nothingness. When the soul departs this world she knows not by what path she will be made to travel; for it is not granted to all souls to ascend by the way that leads to the realm of radiance where the choicest souls shine forth. [90] For it is the path taken by man in this world that determines the path of the soul on her departure. Thus, if a man is drawn towards the Holy One, and is filled with longing towards Him in this world, the soul in departing from him is carried upward towards the higher realms, by the impetus given her each day in this world.'

### **Zohar Genesis 128b—129a**

Happy are the penitent who in the space of one day, one hour, nay, one second, can draw near to the Holy One, as near as even the truly righteous in the space of many years. Abraham did not reach that high grade until he was old, as already said. So, too, David, of whom it is written, "and King David was old, he came into ton. (1 Kings I, 1). But the penitent immediately finds entrance, and is brought close to the Holy One, blessed be He.' R. Jose said: 'We have been taught that the place assigned to the penitent in the next world is one where even the wholly righteous are not permitted to enter, as the former are the nearest of all to the King; they are more devoted and strive more intently to draw near to the King. For there are many abodes prepared by the Holy One, blessed be He, for the righteous in the next world, each one according to his grade.

It is written: "Happy is the man whom thou chooses; and bringest near, that he may dwell in thy courts", that is, those whom the Holy One brings near unto Him, those souls who mount from below on high so as to



possess themselves of the heritage prepared for them; "that he may dwell in thy courts", to wit, the outer halls and grades, referred to in the words, "then I will give thee free access among these that stand by" (Zech. in, 7), i.e. a grade among the supernal holy angels. Those who attain that grade are messengers of the Lord, on an equality with the angels, and are constantly being used in the service of their Master, because in life they always strove to remain holy and keep afar from impurity. Contrariwise, whoever pollutes himself in this World draws to himself the spirit of uncleanness, and when his soul leaves him the unclean spirits pollute it, and its habitation is among them. For according to a man's strivings in this world is his habitation— in the next world; hence such a man is polluted by the spirits of uncleanness and cast into Gehinnom. Thus whoever sanctified himself and is on his guard against defilement in this world finds his habitation in the next world among the supernal holy [130a] angels, where they carry out God's messages. These are they who abide in the court—"the court of the Tabernacle" (Ex. mu, 9). But there are others who penetrate further, of whom David said, "we will be satisfied with the goodness of thy house" (Ps. LXV; 5). (The use of the term "we" here instead of "he", as we should have expected, is explained by the dictum that in the Temple Court no seats are permitted save to the kings of the Davidic dynasty.) Still further within is a compartment reserved for the pious of a 'higher grade, referred to in the verse, "and those that were to pitch before the tabernacle eastward, before the tent of meeting toward the sun rising, were Moses and Aaron and his sons, etc." (Num. In, 38). Thus there is in the next world a gradation of glorious abodes and resplendent lights, each outshining the other. 'As the works of the righteous differ in this world, so do their places and lights differ in the next world.

### **Zohar Genesis 193a-b**

And whoever labours in the Torah and clearest unto her is privileged to take hold of the tree of life, as it is written: "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her" (Ibid. in, x8). And whoso takes hold upon the tree of life in this world will also keep hold on it in the world to come, since the grades assigned to souls in the next world correspond to their state on departing from this world. Now the tree of life ramifies into various degrees, all differing from one another, although forming a unity, in the shape of branches, leaves, bark, stock, and roots. All the faithful ones of Israel lay hold upon the tree of life, some grasping the stock, some the branches, some the leaves, and others, again, the roots. But those who exert themselves in the study of the Torah [1936] grasp the very trunk of the tree, and so lay hold upon all; and so we affirm.'

### **Zohar Genesis 206a**

Now the soul is a compound of grades, and hence [206a] it has three names, to wit, nefesh (vital principle), **ruah** (spirit), and neshamah (soul proper). Nefesh is the lowest of the three, ruah is a grade higher, whilst neshamah is the highest of all and dominates the others. These three grades are harmoniously combined in those men who have the good fortune to render service to their Master. For at first man possesses nefesh, which is a holy preparative for a higher stage. After he has achieved purity in the grade of nefesh he becomes fit to be crowned by the holy grade that rests upon it, namely ruah. When he has thus attained to the 'indwelling of nefesh and ruah, and qualified himself for the worship of his Master in the requisite manner, the neshamah, the holy superior grade that dominates all the others, takes up its abode with him and crowns him, so that he becomes complete and perfected on all sides; he becomes worthy of the world to come and is beloved of the Holy One, blessed be He; of him Scripture says: "To cause my beloved ones to inherit substance" (Prov. viii, 20, the "beloved ones" being those who have attained to the holy neshamah.' R. Judah remarked: 'If that be so, how can we understand the verse in the account of the Flood: "All in whose nostrils was the soul of the spirit (nishmath-ruah) of life . . . died" (Gen. vii, 22)?' R. Isaac replied: 'This bears out what I said. Among the generation of the Flood no one was left that possessed the holy neshamah, as, for instance, Enoch or Jered or any of the other righteous who by their merits could have saved the earth from destruction, and its inhabitants from being exterminated. Scripture thus tells us that "all in whose nostrils was the soul of the spirit of life, of all those on dry land, died", that is to say, they had died already and departed this world, so that none was left to shield the world at that time. Observe that nefesh, ruah, and neshamah are an ascending series of grades. The lowest of them, nefesh, has its source in the

perennial celestial stream, but it cannot exist permanently save with the help of ruah, which abides between fire and water. Ruah, in its turn, is sustained by neshamah, that higher grade above it, which is thus the source of both nefesh and ruah. When ruah receives its sustenance from neshamah, then nefesh receives it in turn through ruah, so that the three form a unity.'

### **Zohar Genesis 223b-224a**

Our teachers have said: "Happy the righteous whose days are without reproach and remain for the world to come, so that after death they are all joined together and formed into [2241]) robes of glory through which they are privileged to enjoy the delights of the future world, and in which they are destined to come to life again. But woe for the sinners whose days are defective, so that there is not left from them wherewith to cover themselves when they depart from the world?' We have further learnt that all the virtuous who have acquired a robe of glory through their days are crowned in the future world with crowns like those of the patriarchs, from the stream that flows continually into the Garden of Eden, and of them it is written, "the Lord shall lead thee continually and satisfy thy soul in dry places" (Is. unit, II), but the wicked who have not acquired such a garment will be "like the heath in the desert that shall not see when good cometh, but inhabits the parched places in the wilderness" (Jer. xvii, 6).' R. Isaac said: 'Of all men Jacob had the fairest prospect, because he was entitled to a robe on account both of his own days and of those of his fathers; hence he said: "I shall lie with my fathers." ' R. Judah said: 'When Jacob went in to his father to obtain a blessing, he was wearing the garments of Esau; nevertheless the text says that Isaac smelt his garments (Gen. not, 27), to indicate that he caught the odour of his raiment in the future world, and it was therefore that he blessed him. Hence, too, he said: "See the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed", the reference being to the field of holy apples, in which every day drops dew from the place called heaven; hence he continued: "God give thee of the dew of the heaven." It has been taught that fifteen odours ascend every day from the Garden of Eden to perfume those precious garments in the other world.'

R. Judah asked how many garments there are. R. Eleazar said: 'The authorities differ on this point, but in truth there are three. One is for clothing the spirit (ruah) in the terrestrial Garden of Eden. A second, the most precious of all, is for investing the inner soul (neshamah) when among the bundle of the living in the circle of the King. The third is an outer garment which appears and disappears, and with which the vital soul (nefesh) is clothed. It flits about the world and Sabbaths and New Moons it attaches itself to the spirit in the terrestrial paradise and learns from it certain things which it goes and makes known in this world. It has been taught that on Sabbaths and New Moons the soul (nefesh) makes two visits. First it joins the spirit among the perfumes of the terrestrial paradise, and then in company with the spirit it joins the higher soul in the "bundle of the living", and feasts itself on the glorious radiance coming from both sides. This is hinted in the expression "The Lord shall satisfy thy soul in bright places" (Is. Lviii, 11), the plural including both the outer radiance of the place of the spirit and the radiance within radiance which they enjoy by associating with the higher soul in the "bundle of the living".'

Said R. Simeon: 'When I visit the Companions in Babylon they come together to hear me, and I discourse to them openly, but they go and seal up my teaching under an iron padlock which makes it inaccessible to all. How often have I taught them the ways of the Garden of the King and the doctrine of the King! How often have I taught them all the degrees of the righteous in the future world!

### **Zohar Exodus 24b**

guile in his spirit. Moses was perfected to a higher degree than were the Patriarchs, since the Holy One spoke to him from a higher grade than to them, and Moses stood within the Palace of the King. Hence it says: "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of EL SHADDAI, but by My name YHVH was I not known to them"; and so we affirm.'

### **Zohar Exodus 144b**

There is an infinity of grades in the supernal spheres, each differing from the other.

### **Zohar Leviticus 70b-71a**

In the book of King Solomon it is written that God has made three abodes for the righteous. One is for the souls of the righteous which have not yet left this world and are still here, and oh, how the world is in need of mercy and the living after themselves, these pray for mankind and go and inform those that sleep in Hebron, who being thus awakened go into the terrestrial Paradise where are the souls of the righteous in their crowns of light, and take counsel of them and decide what shall be, and God carries out their desire and has pity on the world. These souls of the righteous are in this world to protect the living and know their troubles, and these are they of whom the Companions say that the dead know the sorrows of the world and the punishment of the wicked. The second rank belongs to the terrestrial Paradise. In it God has made excellent chambers after the pattern of those of this world and of the celestial world, and palaces of two colours without number and sweet-smelling herbs that grow afresh every day. In that place abides that which is called the "spirit" of the righteous, each one being clad in a precious garment after the pattern of this world and of the upper world. The third grade is that holy celestial abode which is called "the bundle of the living", where that holy superior grade called the super-soul (neshamah) regales itself with the supernal delights. Now we have learnt that when the world requires mercy and those righteous ones take note of it, that soul of theirs which is in the world to shield mankind flits about the world to tell the spirit, and the spirit ascends and tells the super-soul, and this tells the Holy One, blessed be He. Then God has pity on the world and the reverse process takes place, the super-soul telling the spirit and the spirit the soul. Thus when the world requires mercy, the living go and inform the spirits of the righteous and weep over their graves, in order that soul may cleave to soul, [71a] and the souls of the righteous then come together and go and inform the sleepers of Hebron of the sorrows of the world, and then all enter the gateway of Paradise and inform the spirit, and those spirits which are crowned in Paradise like celestial angels join them and inform the super-soul, and this informs the Holy One, blessed be He, and God has mercy on the world for their sakes; and regarding this Solomon said: "Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living that are still alive."

### **Zohar Deuteronomy 267b**

Happy those to whom the love of their Master cleaves; there is no limit to their portion in the other world, to which Rabbi Isaac added, Many are the abodes of the righteous in the other world, one above another, and highest of all that of those to whom was attached the love of their Master, for their abode is linked with the palace that surpasses all, the Holy One, blessed be He, being crowned in this one.

### **1300 AD; Translated by Wolf Leslau (1951)**

#### **Pseudepigraphical work in name of Gorgorios**

**Everyone Is Rewarded According To His Deeds; He Who Dies Without Repentance Will Not Witness God's Glory Or His Grace Forever; He Who Feels Him Will Be Freed From This Bad World; He Will Leave It And Will Abide In The Great Abode Of Life**

#### **Apocalypse of Gorgorios**

Blessed be God, the Lord of Israel. This is the book of the prophet Gorgorios.

I said to the angel Michael: "Tell me about death and how the soul goes forth from the body." He said to me: "I shall tell thee how the soul leaves the body," and he said to me: "Death is bitter and painful to the righteous and the sinners as well, but for the man of good deeds it is salvation and rest when soul and body are separated. The bitterness of death is bearable for him because he sees gathered around him the beautiful angels whose faces are fair and full of mercies; they wear bright crowns and

they receive the soul with praise and song. They bless the angel who stayed with him, drive away from him the unclean spirits, and raise his soul to Heaven with blessings, praise, and song."

"The death of the sinner is desolate. His departure from this ephemeral world is as follows: the angels of calamity who have no mercy, the ill-favored, disfigured, are sent to him. The soul of the sinner is entrusted to them in a terrible punishment. Then the evil spirits who were with him and devoured him come to him. When the man sees them he will repent that he did not accomplish good deeds in his lifetime. More punishment is inflicted upon him, and they raise his soul to Heaven in great pain and sore calamity and smite it with sticks of fire."

The angel said to me: "Look down upon the earth." Behold, I saw thousands and thousands of radiant angels, well favored, dressed in ornamented garments, who praised and sanctified God saying: "Praise, glory, and greatness are proper for Thee, for Thou art the grace of the righteous, the crown of the pure, the greatness of the humble, and the strength of the weak."

Then I saw an old good man who had died, and the angels raised his soul aloft. This soul was as bright as the sun. The angels received it and said joyfully: "O soul, thine affliction passed away because of God's word, and thou wilt find mercy at His side forever." After they had raised this soul to Heaven, all the angels shouted and said: "Praise to God alone, the Holy." And they said to this soul: "Peace and felicity to thee, forever," and they blessed the angel who was with her. Then I heard God's voice saying: "Bring this soul that she may rejoice and receive the fruit of her deeds and find her reward." The soul then prostrated herself with fear. The angel said to her: "Fear not, O soul, for thou hast accomplished good deeds before they raised thee. It will be reckoned to thee as righteousness and thou shalt receive the treasures of grace full of joy and gladness." I also heard God saying: "Place this soul with the souls of the hermits who are secluded and live on the mountains and hills serving God."

Then the angel said to me: "Look." And from the earth to Heaven, thousands and thousands of spirits disfigured, angels with dark faces from whose mouths burning charcoal came forth and who held sticks of fire in their hands. I saw it and was frightened and said to the angel: "What is this terrifying sight?" He said to me: "It is for a bad king who abandoned justice and was iniquitous."

And the order came from God to take his soul by force at the hand of bitter Death. And these, the angels of calamity and of wrath, were sent to him. Then I saw a dark one whose odor was bad and whose teeth and nails were of fire. As for the soul, she shouted and lamented: "Pity me, pity me." When she shouted they poured upon her burning charcoal from Heaven. When she drew nigh a sheet of fire like a wave of the sea came and hit her and brought her down to earth. Then the angels said: "Let us take her away." And I saw the angels and the spirits raise her as before, and they brought her to Heaven and said: "Bring not in this soul. She is unclean, since she was rebellious against her Creator and chose the earthly kingdom in vain rather than the Heavenly Kingdom and followed the commandments of Satan." Then a voice came from Heaven saying: "Say to this unclean and bad soul that she confess her faults and the sins she has committed." The soul answered, trembling: "I did things in my kingdom which were not proper, without thinking of the future or of the judgment that will overcome me." The angels said: "Woe unto thee, O soul! Didst thou not hear the words of the prophets and the commandments of God? Didst thou not read the words of the Scriptures? Didst thou not see the wonders of God upon the earth and His marvels in this world?" The soul answered and said: "I have confidence, O Lord, in Thy grace." The angels said to her: "When thou didst walk upon the earth we were gracious to thee there. Hadst thou made thy ways and doings good, thou wouldst have inherited the Heavenly Kingdom, but now thou wilt be rewarded according to thine actions." Then I heard the voice of God saying: "Bring this soul to the rebellious, iniquitous, transgressors, and unclean so that she be there in her punishment until the day of retribution."

Behold, the angels shouted in a loud voice saying: "Holy, Holy, Holy, God of Saba'ot, perfect in His deeds, the merciful and gracious, who exalts the humble and destroys the strong. Thou alone art the King of justice, the Lord of the law, and the Judge of judges."

Then the angel Michael said to me: "I have shown thee the departure of the souls of the sinners and of the just. And now follow me and I shall let thee see the place where the good and pure live." Then he held my hand and brought me into a wide place, the charm of which was like a precious pearl of various colors that shines like bright stars and like lamps that ravish the eyes. There were in it thousands of doors of sapphire brighter than the sun. The floor of this place was white as silver and as mirrors. Behold, a large stream and small springs flowing with light, and the stones of this stream were precious pearls, topazes, carbuncles, hyacinths, and emeralds. And around this stream were tall and short trees. It seemed a valley. Among all the trees there was not a dry one nor a fallen-down leaf nor a spoiled fruit. The odor of these trees was sweeter than all the odors upon the earth. When the dead in the graves smell this odor they will wake up and live. That place had no sun nor moon, but its light exceeded the light of the sun, and the darkness of the night came not near it and found it not.

Then I marveled, praised and blessed God. The angel said to me: "Marvel not, O Gorgorios. This is the Paradise in which Adam and Eve lived; in it there is neither odor nor cold nor sadness. If they had not transgressed the commandment of God they would have remained in it, they and their children, without affliction, sorrow, sickness, death, sin, or iniquity. God knew in advance what would happen." I said to Michael: "Who lives in this place?" He said to me: "Those who observe the law of God will stay here."

Then Michael said to me: "Follow me and I shall let thee see the temple containing the tabernacle built in Paradise of old in the name of the Holy God." I followed him and I saw the Temple of the Most High that preserved its length and width and was built of green emerald, the light of which shone in Paradise. And behold, columns and vaults, topazes, red hyacinths, and gold, and images of sky color adorned with precious pearls. The silent angels praised God and said: "Praise to the most high God who is above." And all the creatures of Heaven and earth were frightened.

There was in it a white sea pearl which shone brightly, and if one opened the interior of this Seyon it would illuminate the ends of the earth. Its light was brighter than the light of the sky. It was made of a shiny pearl and of pure gold, and the crown on its top was made of a green pearl like an emerald, adorned with three white pieces of silver that shone with so brilliant a light that no eye could look at it.

Behold, there were present four angels adorned like a rose-colored pearl and like a pearl of sky color set in pure gold tried in the fire. A voice came out of their mouths saying: "Holy is the King who dwells in the residence of the Holy." And the wood of the ark was like a white pearl, and nothing was like it in length and width. Images appeared whose colors vied with each other; they appeared first red, then green, then sky color, lily color, and other colors. Then I marveled, I fell on my face, and cried. The angel said to me: "What makes thee cry?" I said: "Because of the marvels God did to the sons of men; they are foolish but God maintains them."

The angel said to Gorgorios: "Now thou wilt see something that is greater than anything that is on earth and in Heaven. They are those who serve God with a pure heart. Who can know God?" I perceived a sound of songs and melodies that rejoiced the heart, praise, hymns, and a light that appeared like lightning, and a fragrance that revived the dead. Then I turned back and behold there was a woman dressed in purple and no eye could look at her because of her splendor. I marveled, praised God, then fled and knew not where I was. And when my mind was

restored I said to the angel: "What is this marvel?" And he said to me: "This is the Heavenly Jerusalem." I said to the angel: "For whom is it prepared?" He said to me "Read what is written on the door of the tabernacle of the sanctuary." And behold, I saw a Roman inscription written in various lights that said: "This is the Heavenly Jerusalem for the one who gave himself for God's word, for those who despised the glory of the ephemeral world, for those who retired to the hills and caverns, and for the hermits who served God."

Then Michael said to me: "Now come and follow me and I shall show thee the punishment of Hell for the men who denied God, for the rebellious, the evil, and disobedient who did bad deeds before God." The angel took me and placed me on the top of a high mountain and said to me: "Turn back and look to thy right." And behold, I saw a big deep river flowing with pitch, dark as lead; burning charcoal came out of it, and it boiled like a pot; it was fetid. It flowed like the river of Egypt. Men were in it, suspended by their feet, and their heads were turned downward. They trembled and fainted. Then I wept and wailed; a great trembling and quaking fell upon me. I fell on my face and said to the angel: "Who are those, O Lord?" He said to me: "These are those who denied God and returned to sin. They will undergo this punishment that thou seest forever."

The angel then said to me: "Turn back and look to thy left." I turned and behold, a river as great as the preceding one flowing with pitch and asphalt. Waves of fire reaching the sky were in it; men were lying down in the fire that hit them. Their bodies withered away so that nothing but their bones remained; God again created flesh above them; the waves of fire came back and their bodies withered away as before. Their wailing was great. I said to the angel: "Who are those?" He said to me: "Those who honored not His Holy Name and those who despised a refuge in the name of God, the most high."

And I saw in this river black men standing up with pails of fire in their hands. They drew it and poured it upon them: this is their punishment forever. I said to the angel: "Who are those, O Lord?" He said to me: "These are the kings of the earth, the iniquitous and the oppressors."

Then the angel said to me: "Turn backward and look." And behold, I saw a great darkness, and cries and shouts came out therefrom. And the angel said: "I say to thee, O darkness, I was sent to thee by God in order that I may show to Gorgorios everything that is inside of thee; unveil thyself and then shalt thou become as before." The darkness was unveiled and behold, the bottom in all its length and width appeared, and it was entirely inflamed with darkness and fire. It was fetid. And men were in it, each of whom underwent a particular punishment. Some of them burned, their tongues were split and reached their chest. I said to the angel: "Who are those, O Lord?" He said to me: "Those who bore false witness against men."

Some of them were in a great cold worse than the fire and their teeth chattered; they trembled and wept bitterly. I said to the angel: "Who are these, O Lord?" He said to me: "These are the mighty who afflicted the houses of the poor and the strangers with cold and frost."

Some of them were subjected to the fire and were burned. Scorpions, a span in length, bit their bodies: I said to him: "Who are these?" He said to me: "Those who foreswore by the name of God."

Some of them stood on one foot; they wept bitterly and their teeth chattered. Water dropped upon water and fire upon fire. The angels came to them carrying pearls and rings of fire. Their bodies were frightened. He said to me: "They are those who believed in man and abandoned Him and His law."

Some of them had their hands spread in the middle of the fire and vipers of fire bit them. I said to him: "Who are those, O Lord?" "Those who stole the belongings of others."

Some stood in fire up to their knees; they shouted and wailed, saying: "Woe unto us, we took and inherited the eternal punishment." I said to the angel: "Who are those, O Lord?" He said to me: "Those who judged in iniquity and took bribes."

Some knelt on their knees in the fire and the angels slapped their faces with burning charcoal. They wept bitterly. I said to him: "Who are these, O Lord?" He said to me: "Those who were zealous for divinities other than God."

Others were covered by waves of fire. I said: "Who are these, O Lord?" "They are those who were soothsayers, used divination, led men astray through idols, birds, and charms, and abandoned His law."

Others hung by their feet and their heads were downward. Flames hit them from every side; serpents of fire with doglike heads bit them; angels struck them with swords of fire, dispersed their bodies and flaming charcoal fell upon them like hailstones. I said to him: "Who are those and what is their sin?" He said to me: "Those who killed the just and shed innocent blood."

Other angels took flaming charcoal and threw it into their mouths from all sides. I said to him: "Who are these, O Lord, and what is their sin?" "Those who fornicated with the body of their flesh, who committed adultery, who lusted exceedingly. This is their eternal punishment."

Then I wept, fell upon my face, and said: "Woe unto the children of Adam."

Then the angel took me and said to me: "Now thou wilt see great things; in fact, everyone is rewarded according to his deeds as thou hast seen. He who dies without repentance will not witness God's glory or His grace forever. He who fears Him will be freed from this bad world; he will leave it and will abide in the great abode of life that thou hast seen."

Gorgorios said: "Trembling overtook me, and I knew not where I was. And behold, I found myself alone in the cave on my couch. Then I praised and glorified God. I felt sad and great sorrow overcame me for I had perceived, the places of the holy and I had seen the great punishment prepared for the sons of men. Then I wrote down this spiritual story and sent it to all the countries so that it might be of use to all those who accept knowledge. God is gracious to those who do good deeds and who fear the day of reward and of the last judgment so that they may be prepared for the Heavenly Kingdom. I, Gorgorios, glorify and praise the holy God, the only, the gracious and merciful Lord.

We pray and beseech him that he free us from bad deeds, that he help us to accomplish his will, and give us the heritage through grace and pity forever.

Prayer of the angels! We praise God. Hallelujah. Great praise and glory are proper for Thee, the most high, who dwells up on high, for Thou as the grace of the just, the crown of the pure, the greatness of the humble, and the strength of the weak.

Hallelujah to the only God. Holy, Holy, Holy. Thou art gracious and merciful. Thou magnifiest the humble and destroyest the strong. Thou alone art the King of justice and the Lord of the law. Praise to God, the most high, who dwells on high. All the creatures of Heaven and earth stand in awe of Him, the Holy, the King who sits upon the seat of the holy. He is blessed in the Heaven above, His name is pure and holy. Praise and glory to God.

Blessed be God, the Lord of Israel and of all the creatures of Heaven and earth. Hallelujah to God, the King. Praise to the holy, living, just, gracious, strong, glorified, and terrible who sits upon His throne for the eternal pleasure.

Praise to Him, and blessing and wisdom and strength to our Lord. Hallelujah to God, to the King of praise, for Thou hast created everything, and all the creatures are extant by Thy will.

The angel said to me: "Thou seemest somewhat as a boat upon the sea. As for me, I glorified and praised God. God revealed thee everything, life and death, in a hundred and twenty-three days and showed thee the residences of the just and of the sinners. And now, go and inform all the foolish of thy sort, so that it may be of benefit to them and bring salvation to their souls, that they may understand and seek to do good before their souls and bodies separate, for there is no repentance after death."

"O Gorgorios, know and perceive that everyone who commits sins and transgressions, big or small, and then returns to God, lifts his eyes unto Him, and prays with a constant heart, I say and assert that all his sins, transgressions, and errors will be forgiven him and that he will find grace and pity from God forever. Those who believe not and return not to God and commit many sins and faults and then return to God and believe in Him will have their sins and errors forgiven. But if they return then to committing sins they will find a great punishment, for this sin is greater than the first one."

The angel said to me: "O Gorgorios, know that if a man or woman loves God with all his heart, with all his thoughts, and with all his deeds and does then a little good, God will help him, save him from punishment, and guide his way, for he abstains not from the commandments of God but loves His commandments and His teachings in the ephemeral world. Love not iniquity. As for God, He is praised above all. Humility is accepted in order that it cast out the love of this world."

Gorgorios says thus: "O brothers, come, let us give thanks to the Lord of Heaven and Earth. They will come in his city where there is fire and water and there is no escape. By doing justice only will man be saved.

"O brothers, be not slothful. O brothers, the days pass away while we say we shall return . . . The day of death draws nigh suddenly, like a flower of the valley. Let us thus, brothers, remember the day of our death. Death is bitter and comes suddenly (upon) the sinners like a robber. That day everything will be known and all men will stand before the Creator and will be rewarded according to their deeds. O soul, what wilt thou say if thou didst not good in this world, upon the earth?

"O brothers, deviate not to the right and walk not to the left. This world is a dream, believe not in it. Take the lamp of wisdom for your way so that you may share the heritage of the holy and the just in righteousness and in peace."

He says:

I am God, the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, the house of bondage.

Thou shalt have no other God save me.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven gods of anything that is in the earth beneath and in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not bow before them nor serve them, for I, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. And showing mercy unto thousands of generations that love me and keep my commandments.

Thou shalt not swear falsely by the name of God, thy Lord; for God will not hold him guiltless that so swears.

Keep the Sabbath day as God, thy Lord, commanded thee. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, thy God. In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. May thy manservant and maidservant rest as thou dost. Remember that thou wert a slave in the land of Egypt and that God, thy Lord, brought



thee out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day and to hallow it.

Honor thy father and thy mother, as God commanded thee; that it may go well with thee and that thy days may be prolonged upon the land which God, thy Lord, gave thee.

Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his field, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor his cattle, nor anything that is his.

God spoke all these words with a great voice to your assembly on the mountain out of the fire, the obscurity of the tempest, and the thick darkness; and he added no more. And he inscribed them on two tables of stone and delivered them unto me.

And when I heard the voice out of the midst of the fire, for the mountain did burn with fire, you came near unto me, you and the envoys of your tribes and your elders.

### **1300's AD**

**Helmut A. Hatzfeld, Modern Scholar of Religious Studies**

**Linguistic Investigation of Old French High Spirituality (1946)**

**P.M.L.A.**

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The old French mystical texts of the fourteenth century certainly are connected with the theological and ascetical tradition in France up to that time. This evolution is fairly clear. The Fathers of the Church, following the teachings of St. Paul, the interpretation of the Canticle of Canticles, and tinged with the neoplatonic terminology of moral and intuitive progress (Katharsis = purification, photismos = enlightenment, theosis = deification), try to explain the possibility of the union of the human soul with God not only in this world to come, but in this world.

### **1350 AD**

**St Gregory Palamas (1296 – 1359 AD), Archbishop of Thessalonica**

**Illumination & Knowledge Of Incorporeal & Ever-Existing Light Of Savior Transfigured On Tabor, In His Glory, & Of Father From All Eternity, & Life-Creating Spirit, One Radiance, One Godhead, Glory, Kingdom, Power Now & Ever & Unto Ages Of Ages  
Sermon on the Transfiguration**

For an explanation of the present Feast and understanding of its truth, it is necessary for us to turn to the very start of today's reading from the Gospel: "Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James and John his brother, and led them up onto a high mountain by themselves" (Mt 17:1).

First of all we must ask, from whence does the Evangelist Matthew begin to reckon with six days? From what sort of day be it? What does the preceding turn of speech indicate, where the Savior, in teaching His disciples, said to them: "For the Son of Man shall come with his angels in the glory of His Father," and further: "Amen I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death, until they have seen the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom" (Mt 16:27-28)? That is to say, it is the Light of His own forthcoming Transfiguration which He terms the Glory of His Father and of His Kingdom.

The Evangelist Luke points this out and reveals this more clearly saying: “Now it came to pass about eight days after these words, that He took Peter and John and James, and went up the mountain to pray. And as He prayed, His countenance was altered, and His raiment became a radiant white” (Lk 9:28-29). But how can the two be reconciled, when one of them speaks definitively about the interval of time as being eight days between the sayings and the manifestation, whereas the other (says): “after six days?”

There were eight on the mountain, but only six were visible. Three, Peter, James and John, had come up with Jesus, and they saw Moses and Elias standing there and conversing with Him, so altogether there were six of them. However, the Father and the Holy Spirit were invisibly with the Lord: the Father, with His Voice testifying that this was His Beloved Son, and the Holy Spirit shining forth with Him in the radiant cloud. Thus, the six are actually eight, and there is no contradiction regarding the eight. Similarly, there is no contradiction with the Evangelists when one says “after six days,” and the other says “eight days after these words.”

But these twofold sayings as it were present us a certain format set in mystery, and together with it that of those actually present upon the Mount. It stands to reason, and everyone rationally studying in accordance with Scripture knows that the Evangelists are in agreement one with another. Luke spoke of eight days without contradicting Matthew, who declared “after six days.” There is not another day added on to represent the day on which these sayings were uttered, nor is the day on which the Lord was transfigured added on (which a rational person might reasonably imagine to be added to the days of Matthew).

The Evangelist Luke does not say “after eight days” (like the Evangelist Matthew says “after six days”), but rather “it came to pass eight days after these words.” But where the Evangelists seem to contradict one another, they actually point out to us something great and mysterious. In actual fact, why did the one say “after six days,” but the other, in ignoring the seventh day, have in mind the eighth day? It is because the great vision of the Light of the Transfiguration of the Lord is the mystery of the Eighth Day, i.e., of the future age, coming to be revealed after the passing away of the world created in six days.

About the power of the Divine Spirit, through Whom the Kingdom of God is to be revealed, the Lord predicted: “There are some standing here who shall not taste death, until they have seen the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom” (Mt 16:28). Everywhere and in every way the King will be present, and everywhere will be His Kingdom, since the advent of His Kingdom does not signify the passing over from one place to another, but rather the revelation of its power of the Divine Spirit. That is why it is said: “come in power.” And this power is not manifest to simply ordinary people, but to those standing with the Lord, that is to say, those who have affirmed their faith in Him like Peter, James and John, and especially those who are free of our natural abasement. Therefore, and precisely because of this, God manifests Himself upon the Mount, on the one hand coming down from His heights, and on the other, raising us up from the depths of abasement, since the Transcendent One takes on mortal nature. Certainly, such a manifest appearance by far transcends the utmost limits of the mind’s grasp, as effectualized by the power of the Divine Spirit.

Thus, the Light of the Transfiguration of the Lord is not something that comes to be and then vanishes, nor is it subject to the sensory faculties, although it was contemplated by corporeal eyes for a short while upon an inconsequential mountaintop. But the initiates of the Mystery, (the disciples) of the Lord at this time passed beyond mere flesh into spirit through a transformation of their senses, effectualized within them by the Spirit, and in such a way that they beheld what, and to what extent, the Divine Spirit had wrought blessedness in them to behold the Ineffable Light.

Those not grasping this point have conjectured that the chosen from among the Apostles beheld the Light of the Transfiguration of the Lord by a sensual and creaturely faculty, and through this they attempt to reduce to a creaturely level (i.e., as something “created”) not only this Light, the Kingdom and the Glory of God, but also the Power of the Divine Spirit, through Whom it is meet for Divine Mysteries to be revealed. In all likelihood, such persons have not heeded the words of the Apostle Paul: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor

has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love Him. But to us God has revealed them through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God” (1 Cor 2:9-10).

So, with the onset of the Eighth Day, the Lord, taking Peter, James and John, went up on the Mount to pray. He always prayed alone, withdrawing from everyone, even from the Apostles themselves, as for example when with five loaves and two fish He fed the five thousand men, besides women and children (Mt 14:19-23). Or, taking with Him those who excelled others, as at the approach of His Saving Passion, when He said to the other disciples: “Sit here while I go over there and pray” (Mt 26:36). Then He took with Him Peter, James and John. But in our instance right here and now, having taken only these same three, the Lord led them up onto a high mountain by themselves and was transfigured before them, that is to say, before their very eyes.

“What does it mean to say: He was transfigured?” asks the Golden-Mouthed Theologian (Chrysostomos). He answers this by saying: “It revealed something of His Divinity to them, as much and insofar as they were able to apprehend it, and it showed the indwelling of God within Him.” The Evangelist Luke says: “And as He prayed, His countenance was altered” (Lk 9:29); and from the Evangelist Matthew we read: “And His face shone as the sun” (Mt 17:2). But the Evangelist said this, not in the context that this Light be thought of as subsistent for the senses (let us put aside the blindness of mind of those who can conceive of nothing higher than what is known through the senses). Rather, it is to show that Christ God, for those living and contemplating by the Spirit, is the same as the sun is for those living in the flesh and contemplating by the senses. Therefore, some other Light for the knowing the Divinity is not necessary for those who are enriched by Divine gifts.

That same Inscrutable Light shone and was mysteriously manifest to the Apostles and the foremost of the Prophets at that moment, when (the Lord) was praying. This shows that what brought forth this blessed sight was prayer, and that the radiance occurred and was manifest by uniting the mind with God, and that it is granted to all who, with constant exercise in efforts of virtue and prayer, strive with their mind towards God. True beauty, essentially, can be contemplated only with a purified mind. To gaze upon its luminance assumes a sort of participation in it, as though some bright ray etches itself upon the face.

Even the face of Moses was illumined by his association with God. Do you not know that Moses was transfigured when he went up the mountain, and there beheld the Glory of God? But he (Moses) did not effect this, but rather he underwent a transfiguration. However, our Lord Jesus Christ possessed that Light Himself. In this regard, actually, He did not need prayer for His flesh to radiate with the Divine Light; it was but to show from whence that Light descends upon the saints of God, and how to contemplate it. For it is written that even the saints “will shine forth like the sun” (Mt 13:43), which is to say, entirely permeated by Divine Light as they gaze upon Christ, divinely and inexpressibly shining forth His Radiance, issuing from His Divine Nature. On Mount Tabor it was manifest also in His Flesh, by reason of the Hypostatic Union (i.e., the union of the two perfect natures, divine and human, within the divine Person [Hypostasis] of Christ, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity). The Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon defined this Hypostatic union of Christ’s two natures, divine and human, as “without mingling, without change, without division, without separation.”

We believe that at the Transfiguration He manifested not some other sort of light, but only that which was concealed beneath His fleshly exterior. This Light was the Light of the Divine Nature, and as such, it was Uncreated and Divine. So also, in the teachings of the Fathers, Jesus Christ was transfigured on the Mount, not taking upon Himself something new nor being changed into something new, nor something which formerly He did not possess. Rather, it was to show His disciples that which He already was, opening their eyes and bringing them from blindness to sight. For do you not see that eyes that can perceive natural things would be blind to this Light?

Thus, this Light is not a light of the senses, and those contemplating it do not simply see with sensual eyes, but rather they are changed by the power of the Divine Spirit. They were transformed, and only in this way did they see the transformation taking place amidst the very assumption of our perishability, with the deification through union with the Word of God in place of this.

So also she who miraculously conceived and gave birth recognized that the One born of her is God Incarnate. So it was also for Simeon, who only received this Infant into his arms, and the aged Anna, coming out [from the Jerusalem Temple] for the Meeting, since the Divine Power illumined, as through a glass windowpane, giving light for those having pure eyes of heart.

And why did the Lord, before the beginning of the Transfiguration, choose the foremost of the Apostles and lead them up onto the Mount with Him? Certainly, it was to show them something great and mysterious. What is particularly great or mysterious in showing a sensory light, which not only the foremost, but all the other Apostles already abundantly possessed? Why would they need a transforming of their eyes by the power of the Holy Spirit for a contemplation of this Light, if it were merely sensory and created? How could the Glory and the Kingdom of the Father and the Holy Spirit project forth in some sort of sensory light? Indeed, in what sort of Glory and Kingdom would Christ the Lord come at the end of the ages, when there would not be necessary anything in the air, nor in expanse, nor anything similar, but when, in the words of the Apostle, “God will be all in all” (1 Cor 15: 28)? That is to say, will He alter everything for all? If so, then it follows that light is included.

Hence it is clear that the Light of Tabor was a Divine Light. And the Evangelist John, inspired by Divine Revelation, says clearly that the future eternal and enduring city “has no need of the sun or moon to shine upon it. For the Glory of God lights it up, and the Lamb will be its lamp” (Rev 21:23). Is it not clear, that he points out here that this [Lamb] is Jesus, Who is divinely transfigured now upon Tabor, and the flesh of Whom shines, is the lamp manifesting the Glory of divinity for those ascending the mountain with Him?

John the Theologian also says about the inhabitants of this city: “they will not need light from lamps, nor the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shed light upon them, and night shall be no more” (Rev 22:5). But how, we might ask, is there this other light, in which “there is no change, nor shadow of alteration” (Jas 1:17)? What light is there that is constant and unsetting, unless it be the Light of God? Moreover, could Moses and Elias (and particularly the former, who clearly was present only in spirit, and not in flesh [Elias having ascended bodily to Heaven on the fiery chariot]) be shining with any sort of sensory light, and be seen and known? Especially since it was written of them: “they appeared in glory, and spoke of his death, which he was about to fulfill at Jerusalem” (Lk 9:30-31). And how otherwise could the Apostles recognize those whom they had never seen before, unless through the mysterious power of the Divine Light, opening their mental eyes?

But let us not tire our attention with the furthestmost interpretations of the words of the Gospel. We shall believe thus, as those same ones have taught us, who themselves were enlightened by the Lord Himself, insofar as they alone know this well: the Mysteries of God, in the words of a prophet, are known to God alone and His perpetual proximity. Let us, considering the Mystery of the Transfiguration of the Lord in accord with their teaching, strive to be illumined by this Light ourselves and encourage in ourselves love and striving towards the Unfading Glory and Beauty, purifying our spiritual eyes of worldly thoughts and refraining from perishable and quickly passing delights and beauty which darken the garb of the soul and lead to the fire of Gehenna and everlasting darkness. Let us be freed from these by the illumination and knowledge of the incorporeal and ever-existing Light of our Savior transfigured on Tabor, in His Glory, and of His Father from all eternity, and His Life-Creating Spirit, Whom are One Radiance, One Godhead, and Glory, and Kingdom, and Power now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

**1350 AD**

**St. Gregory Palamas (1296-1359 AD); Monk of Mount Athos in Greece, Archbishop of Thessaloniki, Preeminent Theologian of Hesychasm.**

**Then Shall We Be Children Of God, Seeing & Experiencing God's Radiance, With Rays Of Christ's Glory Shining Around Us, & Ourselves Shining As Moses & Elijah Proved To Us When They Appeared With Him In Glory On Mount Tabor; "Righteous Shall Shine Forth As Sun In Kingdom Of Their Father"**

**Homily Fifty-Seven, Delivered On The Sunday Of The Fathers**

Concerning The Genealogy According To The Flesh Of Our Lord Jesus Christ And The Ever-Virgin Mother Of God Who Bore Him In Virginity

1. David indicates that our Lord Jesus Christ has no genealogy with regard to His divinity (Ps. 110:4), Isaiah says the same (Isa. 53:8), and later so does the apostle (Heb. 7:3). How can the descent be traced of Him "who is in the beginning, and is with God, and is God, and is the Word and Son of God" (cf John 1:1-2, 18)? He does not have a Father who was before Him, and shares with His Father "a name which is above every name" and all speech (Phil. 2:9). For the most part, genealogies are traced back through different surnames but there is no surname for God (cf. Gen. 32:29), and whatever may be said of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, They are one and do not differ in any respect.

2. Impossible to recount is Christ's descent according to His divinity, but His ancestry according to His human nature can be traced, since He who deigned to become Son of man in order to save mankind was the offspring of men. And it is this genealogy of His that two of the evangelists, Matthew and Luke, recorded. But although Matthew, in the passage from his Gospel read today, begins with those born first, he makes no mention of anyone before Abraham. He traces the line down from Abraham until he reaches Joseph to whom, by divine dispensation, the Virgin Mother of God was betrothed (Matt. 1:1—16), being of the same tribe and homeland as him, that her own stock might be shown from this to be in no way inferior. Luke, by contrast, begins not with the earliest forebears but the most recent, and working his way back from Joseph the Betrothed, does not stop at Abraham, nor, having included Abraham's predecessors, does he end with Adam, but lists God among Christ's human forebears (Luke 3:23-38); wishing to show, in my opinion, that from the beginning man was not just a creation of God, but also a son in the Spirit, which was given to him at the same time as his soul, through God's quickening breath (Gen. 2:7). It was granted to him as a pledge that, if, waiting patiently for it, he kept the commandment, he would be able to share through the same Spirit in a more perfect union with God, by which he would live for ever with Him and obtain immortality

3. By heeding the evil counsel of the pernicious angel, man transgressed the divine commandments, was shown to be unworthy, forfeited the pledge and interrupted God's plan. God's grace, however, is unalterable and His purpose cannot prove false, so some of man's offspring were chosen, that, from among many, a suitable receptacle for this divine adoption and grace might be found, who would serve God's will perfectly, and would be revealed as a vessel worthy to unite divine and human nature in one person, not just exalting our nature, but restoring the human race. The holy Maid and Virgin Mother of God was this vessel, so she was proclaimed by the archangel Gabriel as full of grace (Luke 1:28),"being the chosen one among the chosen, blameless, undefiled and worthy to contain the person of the God-man and to collaborate" with Him. Therefore God pre-ordained her before all ages, chose her from among all who had ever lived, and deemed her worthy of more grace than anyone else, making her the holiest of saints, even before her mysterious childbearing. For that reason, He graciously willed that she should make her home in the Holy of Holies, and accepted her as His companion to share His dwelling from her childhood. He did not simply choose her from the masses, but from the elect of all time, who were admired and renowned for their piety and wisdom, and for their character, words and deeds, which pleased God and brought benefit to all.

4. Note where this choice began. The excellent Seth was chosen from among Adam's children, because by his well-ordered conduct, his control over his senses and his glorious virtue he showed himself to be a living

heaven and so came to be one of the elect, from whom the Virgin would spring forth, that truly heavenly and divinely appropriate chariot of the supra-celestial God, and through whom He would call men back to eternal sonship. Therefore all Seth's stock were called sons of God (cf. Gen. 6:2), because it was from this race that the Son of God was to become the Son of man. That is why the name Seth can be interpreted to mean "resurrection", or rather "a rising up from", which really refers to the Lord, who promises and gives eternal life to those who believe in Him.

5. And how worthy a type of Christ is Seth? "Seth was born to Eve", as she herself says, "instead of Abel" (cf. Gen. 4:25), whom Cain envied and murdered, whereas the Virgin's son, Christ, was born to the human race instead of Adam, whom the prince and father of evil killed out of envy. Seth, however, did not raise up Abel, as he was merely a pre-figuration of the resurrection, whereas our Lord Jesus Christ resurrected Adam, for He is the true life and resurrection of mankind (cf. John 11:25), through whom Seth's descendants were deemed worthy in hope, of divine adoption, being called sons of God. That they were referred to as God's sons on account of this hope, is demonstrated by the first person to be so called and to inherit God's election. This was Seth's son Enos who, as Moses wrote, "was the first to hope to be called by the Lord's name" (cf. Gen. 4:26 LXX).

6. Do you see clearly that it was through hope that he came to be so called? If the Seventy say "He was the first to hope to call upon the Lord's name", they are not at all in disagreement with the others; because Enos lived in a way that pleased God more than anyone else in his day and was the first to receive this hope from God. He called upon this hope and was called after it. Seth was chosen by God from among Adam's sons, and so Luke, in preparing his genealogy traces back to him the whole race from which Christ was born according to the flesh. Then Enos was chosen in preference to Seth's other children, as we have said. From his descendants Enoch was chosen, who proved through what happened to him that virtue does not go unrewarded, and that this fleeting world is not worthy of those who are well-pleasing to God, for he was translated because he pleased God (Gen. 5:24, Heb. 11:5). Lamech was chosen and preferred to Enoch's other descendants, and after him his son, Noah, attained to God's election and became the only father of everyone in the world after the flood. Only he and his entire family were found to live chastely at that time when the sons of God took wives from among the daughters of men, as Moses tells us (Gen. 6:1-2). This

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repentance, all ye that labour and are heavy laden with sins, and I will give you rest" (cf Matt. 11:211), bestowing freedom, ease and eternal life upon you.

10. Lamech, who gave Noah this name, because he saw in him Christ, who was later to come from their stock, and would be the comfort of all God-fearing people down through the ages, clearly prophesied through this name concerning Christ "He called his name Noah", says the Scripture, "saying; This same shall bring us rest from our works, and from the toils of our hands, and from the earth, which the Lord our God hath cursed" (Gen. 5:29 LXX). These words are not about the flood which came to pass, for Lamech's death preceded the flood, yet he says that Noah will "bring us rest", including himself as a partaker in the comfort he foretold. In those days it had not yet come about that in each man "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5) throughout his life, which was why the universal destruction of everyone on earth came upon the earth from God. So to whom do his words refer when he says, "He will bring us rest?" He also says, "He shall bring us rest from the earth, which God hath cursed". Who else gives us rest from this earth except Him who opened heaven, raised our nature thither and taught us, through words and deeds, the way up to heaven, calling us towards it? But if the flood too prefigured this rest, it did so by cutting off sins and laying them to rest, not by bringing comfort and ease to sinners.

11. In this way and for these reasons, Noah attained to God's election. Of his children, Shem was accepted among those chosen to be the blessed family of the Mother of God. That is why, although Japheth also appears to have been well-pleasing to his father, only Shem heard from his father, "Blessed be the Lord God

of Shem" (Gen. 9:26), as his progeny was to be divine. For it was from him that Abraham was descended, who was preferred according to God's election above all Shem's offspring and was called to be part of the lineage of the Virgin Mother. He was given a new name by God, and received that great promise that all the families of the earth would be blessed in his seed (Gen. 17:5; 12:3). According to Paul, Christ our God, who was born of the Virgin, is his seed according to the flesh (Gal. 3:16). And who could describe the divine visions that Abraham experienced, or the signs and promises from God which foreshadowed and prophesied concerning the ever-virgin Mother of God and her ineffable childbearing? Let us, however, quickly pass over what happened next, as time does not permit us to speak at length. From among Abraham's children Isaac was chosen, then Jacob from among his sons, and the tribe of Judah from Jacob's offspring. From this tribe the root of Jesse was selected, and from those who sprang from this root, David the psalmist and prophet and king, of whom God says, "Thy seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me; and as the moon that is established for ever, and the witness in heaven is faithful" (cf Ps. 89:36-37 LXX).

12. Who is this witness? Obviously He who sits upon the heavenly throne, of whom it says elsewhere: "His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in him" (Ps. 72:17 LXX). From this the lineage of the Mother of God and Joseph, to whom she was betrothed, seems somehow double, for both were of the same tribe and descent according to the law. Thus the family's ancestral line is twofold, made up both of natural children and children according to the law, often converging into one, but sometimes divided into two, so that the same child, strange as it may seem, might be the son of two fathers who are brothers, of the one from a legal point of view, as not having been begotten of him physically, and of the other, according to nature, as having been raised up as seed for his brother (cf. Matt. 22:24, Deut. 25:5-6, Gen. 38:8); inasmuch as the child traces his ancestry back to David through both his fathers. It is possible to see the dual nature of this lineage in another respect, because the royal line was united on many occasions and in numerous ways with the priestly one. Thus in the holy ancestral line of the Mother of God, Zerubbabel traces his lineage back to David through the descendants of Nathan, who was counted among the priests, as well as through those of Solomon, who inherited the kingdom. For this reason the Lord's genealogy according to the flesh is drawn up differently by the evangelists Luke and Matthew, because, one takes into account natural fathers, the other, fathers according to the law and one mentions only those of royal descent, whereas Luke brings in those of the Levitical race and those of the royal house, who were bound together by priesthood or marriage.

13. As for Zerubbabel, because he was also favoured among the Mother of God's forebears, he too prefigured Christ and was honoured with great titles and authority. Born in captivity, he was admired by Cyrus, king of the Medes and Persians, for his virtue and understanding. He taught both Hebrews and foreigners the power of the truth, set his race free from servitude and restored God's Temple (Esd. 4:33-63, Ezra 3:1-13). Later, Christ did something similar, not renewing the inanimate Temple, but that living, rational temple, our nature, and redeeming it, not from perceptible and temporary, but spiritual and primeval captivity. Nor did he move His followers from one country to another, but transferred them from earth to heaven. Zerubbabel was the forefather of both the Virgin and Joseph to whom she was betrothed, but whereas he was the Virgin's forebear by nature alone, he was Joseph's according to nature and the law. For Joseph had two fathers, Heli according to Luke (Luke 3:23), and Jacob according to Matthew (Matt. 1:16). Heli and Jacob were brothers descended from Zerubbabel, and when Heli died without children, Jacob fathered a child, Joseph, by his brother's wife, who according to the law belonged to Heli.

14. Now these things are examples and types of greater mysteries, since it was necessary that the royal line be united in many ways with the priestly race, which would bring forth the family of Christ according to the flesh; because in many ways Christ is truly the eternal King and High Priest. And the fact that adopted sons are counted as sons, that the law approves of adoptive fathers no less and sometimes more than natural fathers, and that the same, appropriately, applies to other kinds of kinship, was a clear example and type of our adoption by Christ, our kinship with Him and our calling according to the Spirit and the law of grace. For the Lord Himself says in the Gospels, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. 12:50).

15. Do you see that the family and kin of Christ are not engendered according to nature, but according to grace and the law that comes from grace? This law is so far superior to the law given through Moses that, whereas those called sons according to the law of Moses are neither born of God nor do they transcend human nature, those styled sons by the Law of grace are born of God, brought to perfection above nature and made sons of Abraham through Christ, more closely associated with him than sons according to blood. All who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, according to Paul (Gal. 3:27), and although they are other people's children according to nature, they are born supernaturally of Christ, who in this way conquers nature. For as He became incarnate without seed of the Holy Spirit and the ever-virgin Mary, so He grants potential and power to those who believe in His name to become children of God. For "as many as received him", says the evangelist, "to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13).

16. Why, when he says, "which were born of God", does he not say "and became sons of God", but "received power to become" sons? Because he was looking towards the end and the universal restoration, the perfection of the age to come. The same evangelist says in his epistles, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but when he shall appear, we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2). Then shall we be children of God, seeing and experiencing God's radiance, with the rays of Christ's glory shining around us, and ourselves shining as Moses and Elijah proved to us when they appeared with Him in glory on Mount Tabor (Matt. 17:3, Luke 9:3)). "The righteous", it says, "shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43). We receive power for this purpose now through the grace of divine baptism. Just as a newborn infant has received potential from his parents to become a man and heir to their house and fortune, but does not yet possess that inheritance because he is a minor, nor will he receive it if he dies before coming of age, so a person born again in the Spirit through Christian baptism has received power to become a son and heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ (cf Rom. 8:17). And in the age to come he will, with all certainty, receive the divine and immortal adoption as a son, which will not be taken from him, unless he has forfeited this by spiritual death. Sin is spiritual death, and whereas physical death is annulled when the future age arrives, spiritual death is confirmed for those who bring it with them from here.

17. Everyone who has been baptized, if he is to obtain the eternal blessedness and salvation for which he hopes, should live free from all sin. Peter and Paul, the leaders of the highest company of the holy apostles made this clear. Paul said of Christ, "In that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God", adding, "likewise we also ought to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God" (cf. Rom. 6:10-11); whereas Peter wrote, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath died for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: that ye no longer should live the rest of your time by the lusts of men, but by the will of God" (I Pet. 4:1-2). If it was for our sake that the Lord lived His time on earth, to leave us an example, and He passed His life without sin, we too must live without sin, in imitation of Him. Since He said even to Abraham's descendants according to the flesh, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham" (John 8:39), how much more will He say to us who have no physical kinship with Him, "If you were My children, you would do My works"? It is therefore consistent and just that anyone who, after divine baptism, after the covenants he made then to God and the grace he received from it, does not follow Christ's way of life step by step, but transgresses and offends against the benefactor, should be utterly deprived of divine adoption and the eternal inheritance!

18. But, O Christ our King, who can worthily extol the greatness of Your love for mankind? What was unnecessary for Him and what He did not do, namely, repentance (for He never needed to repent, being sinless (cf. Heb. 4:15), He granted to us as a mediator, for when we sin even after receiving grace. Repentance means returning once again to Him and to a life according to His will out of remorse. Even if someone commits a deadly sin, if he turns away from it with all his soul, abstains from it and turns back to the Lord in deed and truth, he should take courage and be of good hope, for he shall not lose eternal life and salvation. When a child according to the flesh meets his death, he is not brought back to life by his father; but



someone born of Christ, even though he fall into deadly sins, if he turns again and runs to the Father who raises the dead, is made alive once more, obtains divine adoption, and is not cast out from the company of the just.

19. May we all attain to this, to the glory of Christ and of His Father without beginning and of the life-giving Spirit, now and for ever, and unto unceasing ages. Amen.

**1370 AD (First Flemish Publication in 1848)**

**John of Ruysbroeck ((1293 – 1381), Flemish Christian Mystic and Saint**

**It Is Same Sun, One Radiance, Which Enlightens Both Our Wilderness & High Mountains; But State Of Saints Will Be Transparent & Shining & Therefore They Receive Brightness Without Intermediary**

**The Sparkling Stone**

**1916 Publication and English Translation from the Flemish by C. A. Wynschenk Dom.**

**The Sparkling Stone**

**Prologue**

THE man who would live in the most perfect state of Holy Church must be a good and zealous man; an inward and ghostly man; an uplifted and God-seeing man; and an outflowing man to all in common. Whenever these four things are together in a man, then his state is perfect; and through the increase of grace he shall continually grow and progress in all virtues, and in the knowledge of truth, before God and before all men.

**Chapter IV - Of the Sparkling Stone, and Of the New Name Written in the Book of the Secrets of God**

AND therefore the Spirit of our Lord speaks thus in the Book of the Secrets of God, which St John wrote down: TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH, He says, that is, to him who overcometh and conquereth himself and all else, WILL I GIVE TO EAT OF THE HIDDEN MANNA, that is, an inward and hidden savour and celestial joy; AND WILL GIVE HIM A SPARKLING STONE, AND IN THE STONE A NEW NAME WRITTEN WHICH NO MAN KNOWETH SAVING HE THAT RECEIVETH IT. This stone is called a pebble, for it is so small that it does not hurt when one treads on it. This stone is shining white and red like a flame of fire; and it is small and round, and smooth all over, and very light. By this sparkling stone we mean our Lord Christ Jesus, for He is, according to His Godhead, a shining forth of the Eternal Light, and an irradiation of the glory of God, and a flawless mirror in which all things live.

Now to him who overcomes and transcends all things, this sparkling stone is given; and with it he receives light and truth and life. This stone is also like to a fiery flame, for the fiery love of the Eternal Word has filled the whole world with love and wills that all loving spirits be burned up to nothingness in love. This stone is also so small that a man hardly feels it, even though he treads it underfoot. And that is why it is called CALCULUS, that is, "treadling." And this is made clear to us by St Paul, where he says that the Son of God EMPTIED HIMSELF , AND HUMBLED HIMSELF, AND TOOK UPON HIM THE FORM OF A SERVANT AND BECAME OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS.

And He Himself spoke through the mouth of the Prophet, saying: I AM A WORM, AND NO MAN: A REPROACH OF MEN AND DESPISED OF THE PEOPLE. And He made Himself so small in time that the Jews trod Him under their feet. But they felt Him not; for, had they recognized the Son of God, they had not dared to crucify Him. He is still little and despised in all men's hearts that do not love Him well. This noble stone of which I speak is wholly round and smooth and even all over. That the stone is round teaches us that the Divine Truth has neither beginning nor end; that it is smooth and even all over teaches us that the Divine

Truth shall weigh all things evenly, and shall give to each according to his merits; and that which he gives shall be with each throughout eternity.

The last property of this stone of which I will speak is, that it is particularly light; for the Eternal Word of the Father has no weight, nevertheless It bears heaven and earth by Its strength. And It is equally near to all things; yet none can attain It, for It is set on high and goes before all creatures, and reveals Itself where It wills and when It wills; and, in Its lightness, our heavy human nature has climbed above all the heavens, and sits crowned at the right hand of the Father.

Behold, this is the sparkling stone which is given to the God-seeing man, and in this stone A NEW NAME IS WRITTEN, WHICH NO MAN KNOWETH SAVING HE THAT RECEIVETH IT. You should know that all spirits in their return towards God receive names; each one in particular, according to the nobleness of its service and the loftiness of its love. For only the first name of innocence, which we receive at baptism, is adorned with the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. And when we have lost this name of innocence through sin, if we are willing still to follow God—especially in three works which He wishes to work in us—we are baptized once more in the Holy Ghost. And thereby we receive a new name which shall remain with us throughout eternity.

#### **Chapter VI - Of the Difference Between the Hirelings and the Faithful Servants of God**

NOW you may mark this: that some men receive the gifts of God as hirelings, but others as faithful servants of God; and these differ one from another in all inward works, that is, in love and intention, in feeling and in every exercise of the inward life.

Now understand this well: all those who love themselves so inordinately that they will not serve God, save for their own profit and because of their own reward, these separate themselves from God, and dwell in bondage and in their own selfhood; for they seek, and aim at, their own, in all that they do. And therefore, with all their prayers and with all their good works, they seek after temporal things, or may be strive after eternal things for their own benefit and for their own profit. These men are bent upon themselves in an inordinate way; and that is why they ever abide alone with themselves, for they lack the true love which would unite them with God and with all His beloved.

And although these men seem to keep within the law and the commandments of God and of Holy Church, they do not keep within the law of love; for all that they do, they do, not out of love, but from sheer necessity, lest they shall be damned. And, because they are inwardly unfaithful, they dare not trust in God; but their whole inward life is doubt and fear, travail and misery. For they see on the right hand eternal life, and this they are afraid of losing; and they see on the left hand the eternal pains of hell, and these they are afraid of gaining. But all their prayers, all their labour and all the good works, whatsoever they do, to cast out this fear, help them not; for the more inordinately they love themselves, the more they fear hell. And from this you may learn that their fear of hell springs from self-love, which seeks its own.

Now the Prophet, and also the Preacher, say: THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM; but by this is meant that fear which is exercised upon the right side, where one considers the loss of eternal blessedness, for this fear arises from the natural tendency which every man has in himself to be blessed, that is, to see God. And therefore, even though a man may be faithless to God, yet whenever he truly observes himself from within, he feels himself to be leaning out from himself towards that blessedness which is God. And this blessedness he fears to lose; for he loves himself better than God, and he loves blessedness wholly for his own sake. And therefore he dare not trust in God. And yet this is that FEAR OF THE LORD WHICH IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM and is a law to the unfaithful servants of God: for it compels a man to leave sin, and to strive after virtue, and to do good deeds, and these things prepare a man from without to receive the grace of God and become a faithful servant.

But from that very hour in which, with God's help, he can overcome his selfhood—that is to say when he is so detached from himself that he is able to leave in the keeping of God everything of which he has need—behold, through doing this he is so well pleasing to God that God bestows upon him His grace. And, through grace, he feels true love: and love casts out doubt and fear, and fills the man with hope and trust, and thus he becomes a faithful servant, and means and loves God in all that he does. Behold, this is the difference between the faithful servant and the hireling.

### **Chapter VII - Of the Difference Between the Faithful Servants and the Secret Friends of God**

WE must now observe the great difference which there is between the faithful servants and the inward friends of God. For through grace and the help of God, the faithful servants have chosen to keep the commandments of God, that is, to be obedient to God and Holy Church in all virtues and goodly behaviour: and this is called the outward or active life. But the inward friends of God choose to follow, besides the commandments, the quickening counsels of God, and this is a loving and inward cleaving to God for the sake of His eternal glory, with a willing abandonment of all that one may possess outside God with lust and love. All such friends God calls and invites inwards, and He teaches them the distinctions of inward exercises and many a hidden way of ghostly life. But He sends His servants outwards, that they may be faithful to Him and to His House in every service and in every kind of outward good works.

Behold, thus God gives His grace and His help to each man according to his fitness; that is, according to the way in which he is in tune with God, whether in outward good works or in the inward practice of love. But none can do and feel the inward exercises unless he be wholly turned inward to God. For as long as a man is divided of heart, so long he looks outwards, and is unstable of mind, and is easily swayed by joy and grief in temporal things, for these are still alive within him. And though he may live according to the commandments of God, inwardly he abides in darkness, and knows not what inward exercises may be, nor how these should be practised. But, since he knows and feels that he has God in mind, and in all his works desires to fulfil His dearest will, with this he may be content; for then he knows himself to be free from hypocrisy in his intention, and faithful in his service.

And by these two things he contents himself; and it seems to him that outward good works done with a pure intention are more holy and more profitable than any inward exercise whatever, for by the help of God, he has chosen an outward active way of virtue. And therefore he had rather exercise himself in the diversity of outward works than serve with inward love that same One for Whom he works. And that is the cause why his mind is more filled with the works which he does, than with God, for Whom he does them. And through this tendency to images in his works, he remains an outward man, and is not able to follow the counsels of God; for his exercise is more outward than inward, more of the senses than of the spirit.

Though he is indeed a faithful servant of God in outward works, yet that which the secret friends of God experience remains hidden from, and unknown to him. And this is why certain gross and outward men always condemn and blame the inward and contemplative men, because they have in mind that these are idle. And this was also the reason why Martha complained to our Lord of her sister Mary, because she did not help her in serving; for she believed that she was doing much service and much usefulness, and that her sister was sitting idle and doing nothing. But our Lord gave His judgment and decided between them: He did not blame Martha for her diligence, for her service was good and useful; but He blamed her for her care, and because she was troubled and cast down by a multitude of outward things. And He praised Mary for her inward exercise, and said that One Thing was needful, and that she had chosen the better part, which should not be taken away from her.

That One Thing which is needful for all men is Divine love. The better part is an inward life, with loving adherence to God. This Mary Magdalen had chosen, and this is chosen by the secret friends of God. But Martha chose an outward, unenclosed, and active life; and that is the other part, in which one may serve God, but which is neither so perfect nor so good. And this part is chosen out of love by the faithful servants of God.

But there are found some foolish men who would be so inward that they would neither act nor serve, even in those things of which their neighbour has need. Behold, these are neither secret friends nor faithful servants of God; but they are altogether false and deceived. For no man can follow the counsels of God who will not keep His commandments. And therefore all secret friends of God are also at the same time faithful servants, wherever this is needful; but all the faithful servants are not secret friends, for the exercise which belongs thereto is unknown to them.

This is the difference between the faithful servants and the secret friends of God.

### **Chapter VIII - Of the Difference Between the Secret Friends and the Hidden Sons of God**

BUT further we find a more subtle and inward difference, between the secret friends and the hidden sons of God; and yet both these alike by their inward exercise maintain themselves in the Presence of God. But the friends possess their inwardness as an attribute, for they choose the loving adherence to God as best and highest of all that they ever can and will reach: and that is why they cannot with themselves and their own activity penetrate to the imageless Nudity. For they have, as images and intermediaries between God and themselves, their own being and their own activity. And though in their loving adherence they feel united with God, yet, in this union, they always feel a difference and an otherness between God and themselves. For the simple passing into the Bare and Wayless, they do not know and love: and therefore their highest inward life ever remains in Reason and in Ways. And though they have clear understanding and discernment of all virtues that may be conceived, the simple staring with open heart into the Divine Brightness remains unknown of them. And though they feel themselves uplifted to God in a mighty fire of love, yet they keep something of their own selfhood, and are not consumed and burnt to nothingness in the unity of love. And though they may desire to live for ever more in the service of God and to please Him eternally, they will not die in God to all the selfhood of their spirit, and receive from Him a God-formed life. And even though they esteem little and count as nothing all consolation and all rest which may come from without, yet they greatly value the gifts of God, and also their own inward works and the solace and sweetness which they feel within and thus they rest upon the way, and do not so wholly die to themselves, as to be able to attain the highest beatitude in bare and wayless love.

And even if they could practise and apprehend with clear discernment the perfection of loving adherence to God, and all the inward and upward going ways by which one may pass into the Presence of God; yet the wayless passing, and the glorious wandering, in the Superessential Love, wherein neither end, nor beginning, nor way, nor manner, can ever be found, would remain hidden from, and unknown of them.

And so there is a great difference between the secret friends and the hidden sons of God. For the friends feel nought else but a loving and living ascent to God in some wise, but, above this, the sons experience a simple and death-like passing which is in no wise.

The inward life of the friends of our Lord is an upward-striving exercise of love, wherein they desire to remain for ever with their own selfhood; but how one possesses God through bare love above every exercise, in freedom from one's self, this they do not feel. Hence they are always striving upwards towards God in true faith, and await God and eternal blessedness with sincere hope, and are fastened and anchored to God through perfect charity. And therefore good things have befallen them, for they please God, and God is complaisant unto them: yet for all this, they are not assured of eternal life, for they have not entirely died to themselves and to all selfhood.

But all those who abide and endure in their exercise and in that turning to God which they have chosen above all else, these God has chosen in eternity, and their names together with their works are written from eternity in the living book of the Providence of God. But those who choose other things, and turn their inward faces away from God toward sin, and endure therein (even though their names were written and known of God because of the temporal righteousness which they had practised before), their names shall be blotted out and

erased from the Book of Life because they did not persevere unto death, and they shall never more be able to taste of God, nor of any fruit which springs from virtue.

And therefore we must needs observe ourselves with diligence, and adorn our turning towards God, from within with inward love, and from without with good works: thus we can await in hope and joy the judgment of God and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. But could we renounce ourselves, and all selfhood in our works, we should, with our bare and imageless spirit, transcend all things: and, without intermediary, should be led of the Spirit of God into the Nudity. And then we should feel the certainty that we are indeed the sons of God: for **AS MANY AS ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THEY ARE THE SONS OF GOD**, says the Apostle St Paul.

Nevertheless, you should know that all good and faithful men are the sons of God; for they are all born of the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God lives in them. And He moves and stirs them—each according to his own capacity—to virtues and good works, wherein they are well pleasing to God. But because of the inequality of their adherence and their exercises, I call some the faithful servants of God and others I call His secret friends, and others again His hidden sons: nevertheless, they are all servants, friends, and sons, for they all serve and love and mean one God, and they live and work only by the free Spirit of God. And God permits and allows that His friends do and leave undone all those things which are not contrary to His commandments; and for those who are bound by the counsels of God, then this bond also is a commandment. And so no one is disobedient or contrary to God save he

who does not keep His commandments; but all those things which God commands and forbids in Scripture or by Holy Church, or in our conscience, all these things we must do and leave undone, or else be disobedient to God, and lose His grace. But if we fall into venial sins, this is suffered both by God and by our reason, for we cannot wholly guard against them. And therefore such failings do not make us disobedient, for they do not drive out the grace of God nor our inward peace: nevertheless, we should always lament such lapses, how small soever they may be, and guard against them with all our might.

And by these words I have explained to you what I said at the beginning: namely, that every man must needs be obedient in all things to God and to Holy Church and to his own conscience; for I do not wish that any should be unjustly offended by my words. And herewith I leave it even as I have said it.

### **Chapter IX - How We may Become Hidden Sons of God, and Attain to the God-Seeing Life**

BUT I still longed to know how we may become hidden sons of God, and may attain to the God-seeing life. And as to this I have apprehended the following. As it has been said before, we must always live and be watchful in all virtues, and beyond all virtues must forsake this life and die in God; for we must die to sin and be born of God into a life of virtue, and we must renounce ourselves and die in God into an eternal life. And as to this ensues the following instruction: If we are born of the Spirit of God, we are the sons of grace; and so our whole

life is adorned with virtues. Thereby we overcome all that is contrary to God; for St John says, **WHATSOEVER IS BORN OF GOD OVERCOMETH THE WORLD**. In this birth all good men are sons of God. And the Spirit of God kindles and stirs each one of them in particular to those virtues and to those good works for which he is in readiness and of which he is capable. And so they please God all in common, and each in particular, according to the measure of his love and the nobleness of his exercise; nevertheless, they do not feel established nor possessed of God, nor assured of eternal life, for they may still turn away and fall into sin. And that is why I call them rather servants and friends, than sons. But when we transcend ourselves, and become in our ascent towards God, so simple that the naked love in the height can lay hold of us, where love enfolds love, above every exercise of virtue—that is, in our Origin, of Which we are spiritually born—then we cease, and we and all our selfhood die in God. And in this death we become hidden sons of God, and find a new life within us: and that is eternal life. And of these sons, St Paul says: **YOU ARE DEAD, AND YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD**.

Now understand, the explanation of this is as follows. In our approach to God, we must carry with us ourselves and all our works, as a perpetual sacrifice to God; and in the Presence of God, we must forsake ourselves and all our works, and, dying in love, go forth from all creatureliness into the superessential richness of God: there we shall possess God in an eternal death to ourselves. And that is why the Spirit of God says in the book of the Divine Secrets: **BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD.** Justly He calls them the blessed dead, for they remain eternally dead and lost to themselves in the fruitive Unity of God. And they die in love ever anew, through the indrawing transformation of that same Unity. Further, the Spirit of God says: **THEY MAY REST FROM THEIR LABOURS, AND THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM .** In the ordinary state of grace, when we are born of God into a ghostly and virtuous life, we carry our works before us, as an offering to God; but in the wayless state, where we die back into God in an eternal and blessed life, there our good works follow us, for they are one life with us. When we go towards God by means of the virtues, God dwells in us; but when we go out from ourselves and from all else, then we dwell in God. So soon as we have faith, hope and charity, we have received God, and He dwells in us with His grace, and He sends us out as His faithful servants, to keep His commandments. And He calls us in again as His secret friends, so soon as we are willing to follow His counsels; and He names us openly as His sons so soon as we live in opposition to the world.

But if above all things we would taste God, and feel eternal life in ourselves, we must go forth into God with our feeling, above reason; and there we must abide, onefold, empty of ourselves, and free from images, lifted up by love into the simple bareness of our intelligence. For when we go out in love beyond and above all things, and die to all observation in ignorance and in darkness, then we are wrought and transformed through the Eternal Word, Who is the Image of the Father. In this idleness of our spirit, we receive the Incomprehensible Light, which enwraps us and penetrates us, as the air is penetrated by the light of the sun. And this Light is nothing else than a fathomless staring and seeing. What we are, that we behold; and what we behold, that we are: for our thought, our life, and our being are uplifted in simplicity, and made one with the Truth which is God. And therefore in this simple staring we are one life and one spirit with God: and this I call a contemplative life. As soon as we cleave to God through love, we practise the better part; but when we gaze thus into our superessence, we possess God utterly. With this contemplation, there is bound up an exercise which is wayless, that is to say, a noughting of life; for, where we go forth out of ourselves into darkness and the abysmal Waylessness, there shines perpetually the simple ray of the Splendour of God, in which we are grounded, and which draws us out of ourselves into the superessence, and into the immersion of love. And with this sinking into love there is always bound up a practice of love which is wayless; for love cannot be lazy, but would search through and through and taste through and through the fathomless richness which lives in the ground of her being, and this is a hunger which cannot be appeased.

But a perpetual striving after the unattainable—this is swimming against the stream. One can neither leave it nor grasp it, neither do without it nor attain it, neither be silent on it nor speak of it, for it is above reason and understanding, and it transcends all creatures; and therefore we can never reach nor overtake it. But we should abide within ourselves: there we feel that the Spirit of God is driving us and enkindling us in this restlessness of love. And we should abide above ourselves. And then we feel that the Spirit of God is drawing us out of ourselves and burning us to nothingness in His Selfhood; that is, in the Superessential Love with which we are one, and which we possess more deeply and more widely than all else.

This possession is a simple and abysmal tasting of all good and of eternal life; and in this tasting we are swallowed up above reason and without reason, in the deep Quiet of the Godhead, which is never moved. That this is true we can only know by our own feeling, and in no other way. For how this is, or where, or what, neither reason nor practice can come to know: and therefore our ensuing exercise always remains wayless, that is, without manner. For that abysmal Good which we taste and possess, we can neither grasp nor understand; neither can we enter into it by ourselves or by means of our exercises. And so we are poor in ourselves, but rich in God; hungry and thirsty in ourselves, drunken and fulfilled in God; busy in ourselves, idle in God. And thus we shall remain throughout eternity. But without the exercise of love, we can never

possess God; and whosoever thinks or feels otherwise is deceived. And thus we live wholly in God, where we possess our blessedness; and we live wholly in ourselves, where we exercise ourselves in love towards God. And though we live wholly in God and wholly in ourselves, yet it is but one life; but it is twofold and opposite according to our feeling, for poor and rich, hungry and satisfied, busy and idle, these things are wholly contrary to one another.

Yet with this our highest honour is bound up, now and in eternity: for we cannot wholly become God and lose our created being, this is impossible. Did we, however, remain wholly in ourselves, sundered from God, we should be miserable and unblest. And therefore we should feel ourselves living wholly in God and wholly in ourselves; and between these two feelings we should find nothing else but the grace of God and the exercise of our love. For out of our highest feeling, the brightness of God shines into us, which teaches us truth, and moves us towards every virtue and in eternal love towards God. If we follow this brightness without pause, back into that Source from whence it comes forth, there we feel nothing but a quenching of our spirit and an irretrievable down-sinking into simple and fathomless love. Could we continue to dwell there with our simple gaze, we should always so feel it; for our immersion and transformation in God continues without ceasing in eternity, if we have gone forth from ourselves, and God is ours in the immersion of love. For if we possess God in the immersion of love—that is, if we are lost to ourselves—God is our own and we are His own: and we sink ourselves eternally and irretrievably in our own possession, which is God. This immersion is essential, and is closely bound up with the state of love: and so it continues whether we sleep or whether we wake, whether we know it or whether we know it not.

And so it does not earn for us any new degree of reward; but it maintains us in the possession of God and of all that good which we have received. And this down-sinking is like a river, which without pause or turning back ever pours into the sea; since this is its proper resting-place.

So likewise when we possess God alone, the down-sinking of our being, with the love that belongs to it flows forth, without return, into a fathomless experience which we possess, and which is our proper resting-place.

Were we always simple, and could we always contemplate with the same recollection, we should always have the same experience. Now this immersion is above all virtues, and above every exercise of love; for it is nothing else than an eternal going out from ourselves, with a clear looking forward, into an otherness or difference towards which, outside ourselves, we tend as towards our blessedness. For we feel an eternal yearning toward something other than what we are ourselves. And this is the most inward and hidden distinction which we can feel between God and ourselves, and beyond it there is no difference any more.

But our reason abides here with open eyes in the darkness, that is, in an abysmal ignorance; and in this darkness, the abysmal splendour remains covered and hidden from us, for its overwhelming unfathomableness blinds our reason. But it enwraps us in simplicity, and transforms us through its selfhood: and thus we are brought forth by God, out of our selfhood, into the immersion of love, in which we possess blessedness, and are one with God.

When we are thus made one with God, there abides within us a quickening knowledge and an active love; for without our own knowledge, we cannot possess God; and without the practice of love, we cannot be united with God, nor remain one with Him. For if we could be blessed without our knowledge, then a stone, which has no knowledge, could also be blessed. Were I lord over all the world and knew it not, how would it profit me? And therefore we shall ever know and feel that we taste and possess; and this is testified by Christ Himself, where He speaks thus of us to His Father: THIS, HE SAYS, IS LIFE ETERNAL, THAT THEY SHOULD KNOW THEE, THE ONLY TRUE GOD, AND JESUS CHRIST, WHOM THOU HAST SENT. And by this you may understand that our eternal life consists in knowledge with discernment.

## **Chapter X - How We, Though One With God, Must Eternally Remain Other Than God**

THOUGH I have said before that we are one with God and this is taught us by Holy Writ, yet now I will say that we must eternally remain other than God, and distinct from Him, and this too is taught us by Holy Writ. And we must understand and feel both within us, if all is to be right with us.

And therefore I say further: that from the Face of God, or from our highest feeling, a brightness shines upon the face of our inward being, which teaches us the truth of love and of all virtues: and especially are we taught in this brightness to feel God and ourselves in four ways. First, we feel God in His grace; and when we apprehend this, we cannot remain idle. For like as the sun, by its splendour and its heat, enlightens and gladdens and makes fruitful the whole world, so God does to us through His grace: He enlightens and gladdens and makes fruitful all men who desire to obey Him.

If, however, we would feel God within us, and have the fire of His love ever more burning within us, we must, of our own free will, help to kindle it in four ways:

We must abide within ourselves, united with the fire through inwardness.

And we must go forth from ourselves towards all good men with loyalty and brotherly love.

And we must go beneath ourselves in penance, betaking ourselves to all good works, and resisting our inordinate lusts.

And we must ascend above ourselves with the flame of this fire, through devotion, and thanksgiving, and praise, and fervent prayer, and must ever cleave to God with an upright intention and with sensible love. And thereby God continues to dwell in us with His grace.

For in these four ways is comprehended every exercise which we can do with the reason, and in some wise, but without this exercise no one can please God. And he who is most perfect in this exercise, is nearest to God. And therefore it is needful for all men; and above it none can rise save the contemplative men. And thus, in this first way, we feel God within us through His grace, if we wish to belong to Him.

Secondly: when we possess the God-seeing life, we feel ourselves to be living in God; and from out of that life in which we feel God in ourselves, there shines forth upon the face of our inward being a brightness which enlightens our reason, and is an intermediary between ourselves and God. And if we with our enlightened reason abide within ourselves in this brightness, we feel that our created life incessantly immerses itself in its eternal life. But when we follow the brightness above reason with a simple sight, and with a willing leaning out of ourselves, toward our highest life, there we experience the transformation of our whole selves in God; and thereby we feel ourselves to be wholly enwrapped in God.

And, after this, there follows the third way of feeling; namely, that we feel ourselves to be one with God; for, through the transformation in God, we feel ourselves to be swallowed up in the fathomless abyss of our eternal blessedness, wherein we can nevermore find any distinction between ourselves and God. And this is our highest feeling, which we cannot experience in any other way than in the immersion in love. And therefore, so soon as we are uplifted and drawn into our highest feeling, all our powers stand idle in an essential fruition; but our powers do not pass away into nothingness, for then we should lose our created being. And as long as we stand idle, with an inclined spirit, and with open eyes, but without reflection, so long we can contemplate and have fruition.

But, at the very moment in which we seek to prove and to comprehend what it is that we feel, we fall back into reason, and there we find a distinction and an otherness between ourselves and God, and find God outside ourselves in incomprehensibility.

And hence the fourth way of distinction; which is, that we feel God and ourselves. Hereby we now find ourselves standing in the Presence of God; and the truth which we receive from the Face of God teaches us that God would be wholly ours and that He wills us to be wholly His. And in that same moment in which we feel that God would be wholly ours, there arises within us a gaping and eager craving which is so hungry and



so deep and so empty that, even though God gave all that He could give, if he gave not Himself, we should not be appeased. For, whilst we feel that He has given Himself and yielded Himself to our untrammelled craving, that we may taste of Him in every way that we can desire—and of this we learn the truth in His sight—yet all that we taste, against all that we lack, is but like to a single drop of water against the whole sea: and this makes our spirit burst forth in fury and in the heat and the restlessness of love. For the more we taste, the greater our craving and our hunger; for the one is the cause of the other.

And thus it comes about that we struggle in vain. For we feed upon His Immensity, which we cannot devour, and we yearn after His Infinity, which we cannot attain: and so we cannot enter into God nor can God enter into us, for in the untamed fury of love we are not able to renounce ourselves. And therefore the heat is so unmeasured that the exercise of love between ourselves and God flashes to and fro like the lightning in the sky; and yet we cannot be consumed in its ardour. And in this storm of love our activity is above reason and wayless; for love longs for that which is impossible to it, and reason teaches that love is in the right, but reason can neither counsel love nor dissuade her. For as long as we inwardly perceive that God would be ours, the goodness of God touches our eager craving: and therefrom springs the wildness of love, for the touch which pours forth from God stirs up this wildness, and demands our activity, that is, that we should love eternal love. But the inward-drawing touch draws us out of ourselves, and calls us to be melted and noughted in the Unity. And in this inward-drawing touch, we feel that God wills us to be His; and therefore, we must renounce ourselves and leave Him to work our blessedness.

But where He touches us by the outpouring touch, He leaves us to ourselves, and makes us free, and sets us in His Presence, and teaches us to pray in the spirit and to ask in freedom, and shows us His incomprehensible riches in such manifold ways as we are able to grasp. For everything that we can conceive, wherein is consolation and joy, this we find in Him without measure. And therefore, when our feeling shows us that He with all these riches would be ours and dwell in us for ever more, then all the powers of the soul open themselves, and especially the desirous power; for all the rivers of the grace of God pour forth, and the more we taste of them, the more we long to taste; and the more we long to taste, the more deeply we press into contact with Him; and the more deeply we press into contact with God, the more the flood of His sweetness flows through us and over us; and the more we are thus drenched and flooded, the better we feel and know that the sweetness of God is incomprehensible and unfathomable.

And therefore the prophet says: O TASTE, AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS SWEET. But he does not say how sweet He is, for God's sweetness is without measure and therefore we can neither grasp it nor swallow it.

And this is also testified by the bride of God in the Song of Songs, where she says: I SAT DOWN UNDER HIS SHADOW, WITH GREAT DELIGHT, AND HIS FRUIT WAS SWEET TO MY TASTE.

### **Chapter XI - Of the Great Difference Between the Brightness of the Saints and the Highest Brightness to Which We Can Attain in This Life**

THERE is a great difference between the brightness of the saints and the highest brightness or enlightenment to which we may attain in this life. For it is only the shadow of God which enlightens our inward wilderness, but on the high mountains of the Promised Land there is no shadow: and yet it is one and the same Sun, and one radiance, which enlightens both our wilderness and the high mountains. But the state of the saints is transparent and shining, and therefore they receive the brightness without intermediary: but our state is still mortal and gross, and this sets up an obstacle which causes the shadow, which so darkens our understanding that we cannot know God and heavenly things so clearly as the saints can and do.

For as long as we dwell in the shadow, we cannot see the sun in itself; but NOW WE SEE THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY, says St Paul. Yet the shadow is so enlightened by the sunshine that we can perceive the distinctions between all the virtues, and all the truth which is profitable to our mortal state. But if we would become one with the brightness of the Sun, we must follow love, and go out of ourselves into the Wayless,

and then the Sun will draw us with our blinded eyes into Its own brightness, in which we shall possess unity with God. So soon we feel and understand ourselves thus, we are in that contemplative life which is within reach of our mortal state.

The state of the Jews, according to the Old Testament, was cold and in the night, and they walked in darkness. And they DWELT IN THE LAND OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, says the prophet Isaias. The shadow of death came forth from original sin; and therefore they had all to endure the lack of God. But though our state in the Christian faith is but still in the cool and morning hour; yet for us the day has dawned. And therefore we shall walk in the light, and shall sit down in the shadow, of God; and His grace shall be an intermediary between ourselves and God.

And, through it, we shall overcome all things, and shall die to all things, and shall pass without hindrance into the unity of God. But the state of the saints is warm and bright; for they live and walk in the noon-tide, and see with open and enlightened eyes the brightness of the Sun, for the glory of God flows through them and overflows in them. And each one according to the degree of his enlightenment, tastes and knows the fruits of all the virtues which have there been gathered together by all spirits.

But that they taste and know the Trinity in the Unity, and the Unity in the Trinity, and know themselves united therewith, this is the highest and all-surpassing food which makes them drunken, and causes them to rest in Its Selfhood. And This it was that the bride in the Book of Love desired, when she said unto Christ: TELL ME, O THOU WHOM MY SOUL LOVETH, WHERE THOU FEEDEST, WHERE THOU MAKEST THY FLOCK TO REST AT NOON, that is, in the light of glory, as St Bernard says; for all the food which is given to us here, in the morning hour and in the shadow, is but a foretaste of the food that is to come in the noon-tide of the glory of God.

Yet the bride of our Lord gloried in having sat under the shadow of God, and that His fruit was sweet to her taste. Whenever we feel that God touches us from within, we taste of His fruit and His food: for His touch is His food. And His touch is both indrawing and outpouring, as I have said before. In His indrawing, we must be wholly His: thereby we learn to die and to behold. But in His outpouring He wills to be wholly ours: and then He teaches us to live in the riches of the virtues. In His indrawing-touch all our powers forsake us, and then we sit under His shadow, and His fruit is sweet to our taste, for the Fruit of God is the Son of God, Whom the Father brings forth in our spirit. This Fruit is so infinitely sweet to our taste that we can neither swallow It nor assimilate It, but It rather absorbs us into Itself and assimilates us with Itself. And whenever this Fruit draws us inward and touches us, we abandon, forsake, and overcome all other things. And in this overcoming of all things, we taste of the hidden manna, which shall give us eternal life; for we receive the sparkling stone, of which I have spoken heretofore, in which our new names were written before the beginning of the world.

This is the NEW NAME WHICH NO MAN KNOWETH BUT HE THAT RECEIVETH IT. And whosoever feels himself to be for ever united with God, he possesses his name according to the measure of his virtues, and of his introversion, and of his union. And, that every one may obtain his name and possess it in eternity, the Lamb of God, that is, the manhood of our Lord, has delivered Itself up to death; and has opened for us the Book of Life, wherein are written all the names of the elect. And these names cannot be blotted out, for they are one with the Living Book, which is the Son of God. And that same death has broken for us the seals of the Book, so that all virtues may be fulfilled according to the eternal Providence of God. And so, in the measure in which each man can overcome himself, and can die to all things, he feels the touch of the Father drawing him inward; and then he tastes the sweetness of the Inborn Fruit, Which is the Son; and in this tasting the Holy Ghost teaches him that he is the heir of God.

But in these three points no one is like to another in every respect. And therefore each one has been named separately, and his name is continually made new through new graces and new works of virtue. And therefore every knee shall bow before the Name of Jesus, for He has fought for our sake, and has conquered.

And He has enlightened our darkness, and has fulfilled all the virtues in the highest degree. And so His name is lifted up above all other names, for He is the King and the Prince over all the elect. And in His name we are called and chosen, and adorned with grace and with virtues, and look for the glory of God.

## **Chapter XII - Of the Transfiguration of Christ on Mount Thabor**

AND so, that the Name of Christ may be exalted and glorified in us, we should follow Him up the mountain of our bare intelligence, even as Peter, James and John followed Him on to mount Thabor. Thabor means in our tongue an increase of light.

So soon as we are like Peter in knowledge of truth, and like James in the overcoming of the world, and like John in fulness of grace possessing the virtues in righteousness; then Jesus brings us up on to the mountain of our bare intelligence to a hidden solitude, and reveals Himself to us in glory and in Divine brightness.

And, in His name, His Father in heaven opens to us the living book of His Eternal Wisdom. And the Wisdom of God enfolds our bare vision and the simplicity of our spirit in a wayless, simple fruition of all good without distinction; and here there are indeed seeing and knowing, tasting and feeling, essence and life, having and being; and all this is one in our transcendence in God. And before this transcendence we are all set, each in his own particular way; and our heavenly Father, of His wisdom and goodness, endows each one in particular according to the nobility of his life and his practice. And therefore, if we ever remained with Jesus on mount Thabor, that is, upon the mountain of our bare thought, we should continually experience a growth of new light and new truth; for we should ever hear the voice of the Father, Who touches us, pouring forth with grace, and drawing us inward into the unity.

The voice of the Father is heard by all who follow our Lord Jesus Christ, for He says of them all: "These are My chosen sons, in whom I am well pleased." And, through this good pleasure, each one receives grace, according to the measure and the way in which God is well-pleasing unto him. And therefrom, between our pleasure in God, and God's pleasure in us, there arises the practice of true love. And so each one tastes of his name and his office and the fruit of his exercise. And here all good men abide, hidden from those who live in the world; for these are dead before God and have no name, and therefore they can neither feel nor taste that which belongs to those who live indeed.

The outpouring touch of God quickens us with life in the spirit, and fulfills us with grace, and enlightens our reason, and teaches us to know truth and to discern the virtues, and keeps us stable in the Presence of God, with such a great strength that we are able to endure all the tasting, all the feeling, and all the outpouring gifts of God without our spirits failing us. But the indrawing-touch of God demands of us, that we should be one with God, and go forth from ourselves, and die into blessedness, that is, into the Eternal Love Which embraces the Father and the Son in one fruition. And therefore when we have climbed with Jesus on to the mountain of our bare thought; and if, then, we follow Him with a single and simple gaze, with inward pleasure, and with fruitive inclination, we feel the fierce heat of the Holy Ghost, burning and melting us into the Unity of God.

For when we are one with the Son, and lovingly return towards our Beginning, then we hear the voice of the Father, touching us and drawing us inward; for He says to all His chosen in His Eternal Word: **THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED.** For you should know that the Father with the Son, and the Son with the Father, have conceived an eternal satisfaction in regard to this: that the Son should take upon Himself our manhood, and die, and bring back all the chosen to their Beginning.

And so soon as we are uplifted through the Son into our Origin, we hear the voice of the Father, which draws us inward, and enlightens us with eternal truth. And truth shows to us the wide-opened good-pleasure of God, in which all good-pleasure begins and ends. There all our powers fail us, and we fall from ourselves into our wide-opened contemplation, and become all One and one All, in the loving embrace of the Threefold

Unity. Whenever we feel this union, we are one being and one life and one blessedness with God. And there all things are fulfilled and all things are made new; for when we are baptized into the wide embrace of the Love of God, the joy of each one of us becomes so great and so special that he can neither think of nor care for the joy of anyone else; for then each one is himself a Fruition of Love, and he cannot and dare not seek for anything beyond his own.

### **Chapter XIII - How We Ought to Have Fruition of God**

IF a man would have fruition of God, three things are needful thereto; these are, true peace, inward silence, and loving adherence.

Whosoever would find true peace between himself and God must love God in such a way that he can, with a free heart, renounce for the glory of God everything which he does or loves inordinately, or which he possesses, or can possess, contrary to the glory of God. This is the first thing which is needful to all men.

The second thing is an inward silence; that is, that a man should be empty and free from images of all things which he ever saw or of which he ever heard.

The third thing is a loving adherence to God, and this adherence is itself fruition; for whosoever cleaves to God out of pure love, and not for his own profit, he enjoys God in truth, and feels that he loves God and that God loves him.

There are still three other points, which are higher still, and which establish a man and make him able to enjoy and to feel God continually, if it be His good will to have it so.

The first of these points is to rest in Him Whom one enjoys; that is, where love is overcome by the lover, and love is taken possession of by the lover, in bare Essential Love. There love has fallen in love with the lover, and each is all to the other, in possession and in rest.

From this there follows the second: and this is called a falling asleep in God; that is, when the spirit immerses itself, and knows not how, nor where, nor in what it is.

And therefrom follows the last point that can be put into words, that is, when the spirit beholds a Darkness into which it cannot enter with the reason. And there it feels itself dead and lost to itself, and one with God without difference and without distinction. And when it feels itself one with God, then God Himself is its peace and its enjoyment and its rest. And this is an unfathomable abyss wherein man must die to himself in blessedness, and must live again in virtues, whenever love and its stirring demand it.

Lo! if you feel these six points within you, then you feel all that I have, or could have, said before. And introversion is as easy to you, and contemplation and fruition are as ready to you, as your life according to nature.

And from these riches there comes that common life of which I promised to speak to you at the beginning.

### **Chapter XIV - Of That Common Life Which Comes From the Contemplation and Fruition of God**

THE man who is sent down by God from these heights into the world is full of truth and rich in all virtues. And he seeks not his own but the glory of Him Who has sent him. And hence he is just and truthful in all things, and he possesses a rich and a generous ground, which is set in the richness of God: and therefore he must always spend himself on those who have need of him; for the living fount of the Holy Ghost, which is his wealth, can never be spent. And he is a living and willing instrument of God, with which God works whatsoever He wills and howsoever He wills; and these works he reckons not as his own, but gives all the glory to God.

And so he remains ready and willing to do in the virtues all that God commands, and strong and courageous in suffering and enduring all that God allows to befall him. And by this he possesses a universal life, for he is ready alike for contemplation and for action, and is perfect in both of them. And none can have this universal life save the God-seeing man; and none can contemplate and enjoy God save he who has within himself the six points, ordered as I have described heretofore. And therefore, all those are deceived who fancy themselves to be contemplative, and yet inordinately love, practice, or possess, some creaturely thing; or who fancy that they enjoy God before they are empty of images, or that they rest before they enjoy. All such are deceived; for we must make ourselves fit for God with an open heart, with a peaceful conscience, with naked contemplation, without hypocrisy, in sincerity and truth.

And then we shall mount up from virtue unto virtue, and shall see God, and shall enjoy Him, and in Him shall become one with Him, in the way which I have shown to you. That this be done in all of us, so help us God. AMEN.

**1393 AD**

**St. Julian of Norwich (1342-1416), Catholic Abbess and Christian Mystic**

**God Shewed Three Degrees Of Bliss That Every Soul Shall Have In Heaven That Willingly Hath Served God In Any Degree In Earth; & The Harder Our Pains Have Been With Him In His Cross, The More Shall Our Worship; I.E. Glory, Be With Him In His Kingdom**  
**Revelations of Divine Love**

**Sixth Revelation (God Shewed Three Degrees Of Bliss That Every Soul Shall Have In Heaven That Willingly Hath Served God In Any Degree In Earth)**

#### **Chapter 14**

The age of every man shall be acknowledged before him in Heaven, and every man shall be rewarded for his willing service and for his time.

After this our good Lord said: I thank thee for thy travail, and especially for thy youth.

And in this Shewing mine understanding was lifted up into Heaven where I saw our Lord as a lord in his own house, which hath called all his dear worthy servants and friends to a stately feast. Then I saw the Lord take no place in His own house, but I saw Him royally reign in His house, fulfilling it with joy and mirth, Himself endlessly to gladden and to solace His dear worthy friends, full homely and full courteously, with marvellous melody of endless love, in His own fair blessed Countenance. Which glorious Countenance of the Godhead fulfilleth the Heavens with joy and bliss.

God shewed three degrees of bliss that every soul shall have in Heaven that willingly hath served God in any degree in earth. The first is the worshipful thanks of our Lord God that he shall receive when he is delivered of pain. This thanking is so high and so worshipful that the soul thinketh it filleth him though there were no more. For me thought that all the pain and travail that might be suffered by all living men might not deserve the worshipful thanks that one man shall have that willingly hath served God. The second is that all the blessed creatures that are in Heaven shall see that worshipful thanking, and He maketh his service known to all that are in Heaven. And here this example was shewed.—A king, if he thank his servants, it is a great worship to them, and if he maketh it known to all the realm, then is the worship greatly increased.—The third is, that as new and as gladdening as it is received in that time, right so shall it last without end.

And I saw that homely and sweetly was this shewed, and that the age of every man shall be made known in Heaven, and he shall be rewarded for his willing service and for his time. And specially the age of them that willingly and freely offer their youth unto God, passingly is rewarded and wonderfully is thanked.

For I saw that whene'er what time a man or woman is truly turned to God,—for one day's service and for his endless will he shall have all these three decrees of bliss. And the more the loving soul seeth this courtesy of God, the likelier is to serve him all the days of his life.

**Ninth Revelation (The Harder Our Pains Have Been With Him In His Cross, The More Shall Our Worship; I.E. Glory, Be With Him In His Kingdom; & I Saw Three Heavens; And Though I See Three Heavens—And All In The Blessed Manhood Of Christ—None Is More, None Is Less, None Is Higher, None Is Lower, But They Are Even-Like In Bliss)**

## **Chapter 20**

“For every man's sin that shall be saved He suffered, and every man's sorrow and desolation He saw, and sorrowed for Kinship and Love”

AND thus I saw our Lord Jesus languoring long time. For the oneing with the Godhead gave strength to the manhood for love to suffer more than all men might suffer: I mean not only more pain than all men might suffer, but also that He suffered more pain than all men of salvation that ever were from the first beginning unto the last day might tell or fully think, having regard to the worthiness of the highest worshipful King and the shameful, despised, painful death. For He that is highest and worthiest was most fully made-nought and most utterly despised.

For the highest point that may be seen in the Passion is to think and know what He is that suffered. And in this [Shewing] He brought in part to mind the height and nobleness of the glorious Godhead, and therewith the preciousness and the tenderness of the blessed Body, which be together united; and also the lothness that is in our Kind to suffer pain. For as much as He was most tender and pure, right so He was most strong and mighty to suffer.

And for every man's sin that shall be saved He suffered: and every man's sorrow and desolation He saw, and sorrowed for Kindness and love. (For in as much as our Lady sorrowed for His pains, in so much He suffered sorrow for her sorrow;—and more, in as greatly as the sweet manhood of Him was worthier in Kind.) For as long as He was passible He suffered for us and sorrowed for us; and now He is uprisen and no more passible, yet He suffereth with us.

And I, beholding all this by His grace, saw that the Love of Him was so strong which He hath to our soul that willingly He chose it with great desire, and mildly He suffered it with well-pleasing.

For the soul that beholdeth it thus, when it is touched by grace, it shall verily see that the pains of Christ's Passion pass all pains: [all pains] that is to say, which shall be turned into everlasting, o'erpassing joys by the virtue of Christ's Passion.

## **Chapter 21**

“We be now with Him in His Pains and His Passion, dying. We shall be with Him in Heaven. Through learning in this little pain that we suffer here, we shall have an high endless knowledge of God which we could never have without that”

IT is God's will, as to mine understanding, that we have Three Manners of Beholding His blessed Passion. The First is: the hard Pain that He suffered,—[beholding it] with contrition and compassion. And that shewed our Lord in this time, and gave me strength and grace to see it.

And I looked for the departing with all my might, and thought to have seen the body all dead; but I saw Him not so. And right in the same time that methought, by the seeming, the life might no longer last and the Shewing of the end behoved needs to be,—suddenly (I beholding in the same Cross), He changed [the look

of] His blessed Countenance. His "blisful chere," or blessed Cheer; lxxii. and Note. The changing of His blessed Countenance changed mine, and I was as glad and merry as it was possible. Then brought our Lord merrily to my mind: Where is now any point of the pain, or of thy grief? And I was full merry.

I understood that we be now, in our Lord's meaning, in His Cross with Him in His pains and His Passion, dying; and we, willingly abiding in the same Cross with His help and His grace unto the last point, suddenly He shall change His Cheer to us, and we shall be with Him in Heaven. Betwixt that one and that other shall be no time, and then shall all be brought to joy. And thus said He in this Shewing: Where is now any point of thy pain, or thy grief? And we shall be full blessed.

And here saw I verily that if He shewed now [to] us His Blissful Cheer, there is no pain in earth or in other place that should aggrieve us; but all things should be to us joy and bliss. But because He sheweth to us time of His Passion, as He bare it in this life, and His Cross, therefore we are in distress and travail, with Him, as our frailty asketh. And the cause why He suffereth [it to be so,] is for [that] He will of His goodness make us the higher with Him in His bliss; and for this little pain that we suffer here, we shall have an high endless knowing in God which we could never have without that. And the harder our pains have been with Him in His Cross, the more shall our worship; i.e. glory. be with Him in His Kingdom.

## Chapter 22

"The Love that made Him to suffer passeth so far all His Pains as Heaven is above Earth"

THEN said our good Lord Jesus Christ: Art thou well pleased that I suffered for thee? I said: Yea, good Lord, I thank Thee; Yea, good Lord, blessed mayst Thou be. Then said Jesus, our kind Lord: If thou art pleased, I am pleased: it is a joy, a bliss, an endless satisfying to me that ever suffered I Passion for thee; and if I might suffer more, I would suffer more.

In this feeling my understanding was lifted up into Heaven, and there I saw three heavens: of which sight I marvelled greatly. And though I see three heavens—and all in the blessed manhood of Christ—none is more, none is less, none is higher, none is lower, but [they are] even-like in bliss.

For the First Heaven, Christ shewed me His Father; in no bodily likeness, but in His property and in His working. That is to say, I saw in Christ that the Father is. The working of the Father is this, that He giveth meed to His Son Jesus Christ. This gift and this meed is so blissful to Jesus that His Father might have given Him no meed that might have pleased Him better. The first heaven, that is the pleasing of the Father, shewed to me as one heaven; and it was full blissful: for He is full pleased with all the deeds that Jesus hath done about our salvation. Wherefore we be not only His by His buying, but also by the courteous gift of His Father we be His bliss, we be His meed, we be His worship, we be His crown. (And this was a singular marvel and a full delectable beholding, that we be His crown!) This that I say is so great bliss to Jesus that He setteth at nought all His travail, and His hard Passion, and His cruel and shameful death.

And in these words: If that I might suffer more, I would suffer more,—I saw in truth that as often as He might die, so often He would, and love should never let Him have rest till He had done it. And I beheld with great diligence for to learn how often He would die if He might. And verily the number passed mine understanding and my wits so far that my reason might not, nor could, comprehend it. And when He had thus oft died, or should, yet He would set it at nought, for love: for all seemeth for al thynketh him but litil in reward of His love" [in comparison with]. Him but little in regard of His love.

For though the sweet manhood of Christ might suffer but once, the goodness in Him may never cease of proffer: every day He is ready to the same, if it might be. For if He said He would for my love make new Heavens and new Earth, it were but little in comparison (MS. "Reward.") for this might be done every day if He would, without any travail. But to die for my love so often that the number passeth creature's reason, it is the highest proffer that our Lord God might make to man's soul, as to my sight. Then meaneth He thus: How

should it not be that I should not do for thy love all that I might of deeds which grieve me not, sith I would, for thy love, die so often, having no regard (MS. "Reward.") to my hard pains?

And here saw I, for the Second. Beholding in this blessed Passion the love that made Him to suffer passeth as far all His pains as Heaven is above Earth. For the pains was a noble, worshipful deed done in a time by the working of love: but (MS. "and," probably here, as in other places, with something of the force of "but.") Love was without beginning, is, and shall be without ending. For which love He said full sweetly these words: If I might suffer more, I would suffer more. He said not, If it were needful to suffer more: for though it were not needful, if He might suffer more, He would.

This deed, and this work about our salvation, was ordained as well as God might ordain it. And here I saw a Full Bliss in Christ: for His bliss should not have been full, if it might any better have been done.

### **Chapter 23**

“The Glad Giver”

“All the Trinity wrought in the Passion of Jesus Christ”

AND in these three words: It is a Joy, a bliss, an endless satisfying to me, were shewed three heavens, as thus: For the joy, I understood the pleasure of the Father; and for the bliss, the worship of the Son; and for the endless satisfying ("lykyng"; "lykith.") the Holy Ghost. The Father is pleased, the Son is worshipped, the Holy Ghost is satisfied ("lykyng"; "lykith.")

And here saw I, for the Third Beholding in His blissful Passion: that is to say, the Joy and the Bliss that make Him to be well-satisfied in it. For our Courteous Lord shewed His Passion to me in five manners: of which the first is the bleeding of the head; the second is, discolouring of His face; the third is, the plenteous bleeding of the body, in seeming [as] from the scourging; the fourth is, the deep dying:—these four are aforetold for the pains of the Passion. And the fifth is [this] that was shewed for the joy and the bliss of the Passion.

For it is God's will that we have true enjoying with Him in our salvation, and therein He willeth [that] we be mightily comforted and strengthened; and thus willeth He that merrily with His grace our soul be occupied. For we are His bliss: for in us He enjoyeth without end; and so shall we in Him, with His grace.

And all that He hath done for us, and doeth, and ever shall, was never cost nor charge to Him, nor might be, but only that [which] He did in our manhood, beginning at the sweet Incarnation and lasting to the Blessed Uprise on Easter-morrow ("Esterne morrow" = Easter morning) so long dured the cost and the charge about our redemption in deed: of [the] which deed He enjoyeth endlessly, as it is aforesaid.

Jesus willeth that we take heed to the bliss that is in the blessed Trinity [because] of our salvation and that we desire to have as much spiritual enjoying, with His grace, (as it is aforesaid): that is to say, that the enjoying of our salvation be [as] like to the joy that Christ hath of our salvation as it may be while we are here.

All the Trinity wrought in the Passion of Christ, ministering abundance of virtues and plenty of grace to us by Him: but only the Maiden's Son suffered: whereof all the blessed Trinity endlessly enjoyeth. All this was shewed in these words: Art thou well pleased?—and by that other word that Christ said: If thou art pleased, then am I pleased;—as if He said: It is joy and satisfying enough to me, and I ask nought else of thee for my travail but that I might well please thee.

And in this He brought to mind the property of a glad giver. A glad giver taketh but little heed of the thing that he giveth, but all his desire and all his intent is to please him and solace him to whom he giveth it. And if the receiver take the gift highly and thankfully, then the courteous giver setteth at nought all his cost and all



his travail, for joy and delight that he hath pleased and solaced him that he loveth. Plenteously and fully was this shewed.

Think also wisely of the greatness of this word "ever." For in it was shewed an high knowing of Experience of loving (?) that He hath in our salvation, with manifold joys that follow of the Passion of Christ. One is that He rejoiceth that He hath done it in deed, and He shall no more suffer; another, that He bought us from endless pains of hell.

**1472 (Italian); 1814 (English)**

**Dante Alighieri (1265 – 1321): Italian Poet**

**While There Are Different Degrees Of Reward In Heaven (The Light Shining More In Some Places, In Other Places Less), Light Of God Still Shines Abundantly For All; Dante Sees Divisions Of Heaven; Just As There Are Three Parts To Hell & Purgatory, So Three Parts Of Heaven**

**Divine Comedy: Paradise**

**(Summary of medieval Christian view of Heavenly Hierarchy)**

After an initial ascension (Canto I), Beatrice guides Dante through the nine spheres of Heaven. These are concentric and spherical, similar to Aristotelian and Ptolemaic cosmology. The addition of a moral dimension means that a soul that has reached Paradise stops at the level applicable to it. Souls are allotted to the point of heaven that fits with their human ability to love God. Thus, there is a heavenly hierarchy. All parts of heaven are accessible to the heavenly soul. That is to say all experience God but there is a hierarchy in the sense that some souls are more spiritually developed than others. This is not determined by time or learning as such but by their proximity to God (how much they allow themselves to experience Him above other things). It must be remembered in Dante's schema that all souls in Heaven are on some level always in contact with God.

While there are different degrees of reward in heaven (the light shining more in some places, in other places less) the light of God still shines abundantly for all. This emphasis on light probably reflects the influence of the writings which go under the name of St. Dionysios the Areopagite, who was a Christian theologian of late antiquity quite influenced by Neo-Platonism.

Dante sees divisions of heaven; just as there are three parts to Hell and Purgatory, so there are three parts of Heaven. Dante also sees the nine orders of angels who are grouped in three groups of threes -- Seraphim, Cherubim Thrones -- Dominions, Virtues and Powers -- Principalities, Archangels and Angels. This classification of angels again owes much to Christian neo-Platonism and St. Dionysios the Areopagite.

**1474 (Published in Latin); 1487 (French)**

**Ludolphe le Chartreux / Ludolph of Saxony (c. 1300 — 1378) Catholic Philosopher**

**Des Peines De L'enfer Et De La Gloire Céleste**

**La Grande Vie de Jesus-Christ. Tome 6. Vie souffrante**

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**Des Peines De L'enfer Et De La Gloire Céleste**

Les peines éternelles de l'enfer, châtement des réprouvés, et la gloire du ciel, récompense des élus, suivront immédiatement le jugement général. De même qu'en ce monde il y a diversité de crimes, ainsi en enfer il y

aura diversité de supplices. L'homme ici-bas par le péché mortel se détourne de son Créateur pour s'attacher à la créature, préférant ainsi à un bien immuable et éternel un bien fragile et éphémère, et, en s'abandonnant au désordre de sa volonté, il agit contre le sentiment naturel de la droite raison; c'est pourquoi dans l'enfer les supplices seront différents. Ainsi, parce que le pécheur se sera éloigné volontairement de Dieu, il sera privé à jamais de sa vue béatifique; parce qu'il se sera attaché aux créatures, il souffrira la peine du feu matériel qui le brûlera sans le consumer; enfin parce qu'il aura suivi le dérèglement de sa volonté et de sa raison, il subira un châtement général, universel, qui consiste dans les diverses afflictions dont il sera cruellement et perpétuellement accablé. Les damnés dans l'enfer souffriront tous les excès de la chaleur et du froid; environnés de toute part de ténèbres et de fumée, de soufre et de feu, ils auront sans cesse devant les yeux les affreux démons, instruments de leur supplice; au milieu des dragons et des serpents, ils entendront les gémissements, les plaintes, les cris horribles de leurs compagnons d'infortune; tourmentés intérieurement par le ver rongeur de leurs propres consciences, ils seront couverts de honte et de confusion à la vue de leurs péchés dévoilés à tous les yeux; ils seront en proie à la faim, à la soif, à toutes les privations, à l'envie, à la haine, à la tristesse, à la fureur contre eux-mêmes et contre les autres, et tout cela sans aucun espoir de consolation ni de salut. La vie elle-même qui fait l'objet des désirs de toutes les créatures, leur sera à charge, ils désireront, ils chercheront la mort sans jamais pouvoir l'obtenir. N'est-il pas conforme à la justice du souverain Juge, dit saint Grégoire (lib. IV, Dialog., cap. XLIV) que les damnés dans l'enfer soient soumis à des tourments, à des supplices sans fin, eux qui pendant cette vie mortelle n'ont jamais voulu mettre fin à leurs péchés? Et plus loin le même saint ajoute: Les pécheurs auraient voulu vivre éternellement en ce monde afin de pouvoir pécher éternellement; n'est-il pas juste que Dieu qui voit leur volonté les punisse aussi par des châtements éternels? Les pécheurs, dit saint Augustin (lib. XXI, de Civit. Dei, cap. xii), sont à juste titre dignes de supplices éternels, puisque par leurs péchés ils ont fait mourir en eux le bien par lequel ils eussent pu vivre perpétuellement avec Dieu.

Les damnés dans l'enfer se verront les uns les autres, et cette vue, loin d'être pour eux un sujet de consolation, augmentera au contraire leurs tourments. Le feu de l'enfer, dit saint Grégoire (lib. IX, Moral., cap. XLVIII), éclairera les damnés non pour les consoler, mais bien plutôt pour accroître leur supplice; ils verront associés à leurs propres châtements ceux dont ils auront, en ce monde, préféré l'amour infâme à l'amour de leur Créateur, et cette vue, loin d'adoucir leurs souffrances, les rendra plus violentes encore. Et saint Jérôme ajoute: Les douleurs qu'éprouveront les damnés dans l'enfer seront si horribles, qu'ils ne pourront penser à rien autre chose sinon à leurs propres malheurs. Si un damné dans l'enfer versait seulement chaque jour la moindre larme, ces larmes quotidiennes dans la suite des temps finiraient par remplir tous les vases qui sont dans cet univers, que dis-je, elles rempliraient tous les fleuves, toutes les mers de ce monde avant que ses supplices fussent terminés. O terrible et cruelle éternité de souffrances! Pensons-y sérieusement et pendant que nous en avons encore le loisir et le pouvoir, efforçons-nous de prévenir de si grands malheurs; pleurons, gémissons sur nos péchés passés afin d'en obtenir de Dieu le pardon. Ah! si le moindre de tous ces instants que nous perdons en cette vie si facilement et avec tant d'indifférence était donné à un damné, comme il en profiterait pour faire pénitence et pour obtenir sa grâce! Mais, hélas! par un juste jugement de Dieu, cet espoir même d'obtenir le moindre moment lui est enlevé. Voulez-vous vous faire une faible idée de l'éternité des peines de l'enfer? Supposez même des choses impossibles; supposez, par exemple, une meule de moulin assez grande pour occuper toute la circonférence des deux; supposez encore qu'un petit oiseau vienne tous les cent mille ans enlever de cette pierre une parcelle grosse comme la dixième partie d'un grain de millet et qu'au bout d'un million d'années il en ait par conséquent enlevé la grosseur d'un grain entier, eh bien! les damnés seraient consolés s'ils pouvaient espérer d'être délivrés de leurs maux quand cette meule serait entièrement détruite; mais, hélas! cette espérance même leur est refusée.

Parmi les supplices des damnés dans l'enfer, le plus grand de tous est la privation de la vue de Dieu. Quelques ignorants, nous dit saint Chrysostôme (Uomil. 47, ndpopul. Antiocli., tom. y), s'imaginent que le vœu le plus ardent des damnés dans l'enfer, c'est d'être délivrés de la peine du feu qui les dévore sans cesse; pour moi, je crois qu'il y a pour eux un supplice bien plus affreux, bien plus terrible encore, c'est celui d'être à jamais privés de Dieu et de la gloire éternelle. Oui, la pensée d'être à toujours exclus de la société des saints et du bonheur qui leur était réservé dans le ciel, produit dans le cœur des damnés un si grand regret, une si

grande douleur, que même, seraient-ils exempts de toutes les peines, de toutes les souffrances extérieures, ce supplice seul suffirait pour les rendre éternellement malheureux; c'est le plus cruel qu'on puisse jamais imaginer. En ce monde, dit saint Augustin (litl. XXII, de Civit. Dei), et même dans les enfers, il n'est ni supplice ni tourment, quelque cruels qu'ils puissent être, qui soient comparables à la peine, à la douleur qu'éprouveront les damnés, lorsqu'au grand jour du jugement, ils seront à jamais bannis du royaume céleste, de la vue de Dieu de la gloire éternelle et de la société des élus. Mais, me direzvous peut-être, si la privation de la vue de Dieu est le plus grand de tous les supplices de l'enfer, il s'ensuit que les enfants morts sans baptême sont condamnés au plus cruel de tous les tourments, ce qui est contraire au sentiment de saint Augustin qui nous dit que la peine de ces enfants est très-douce. A cela je vous répondrai que cette privation de la vue de Dieu doit être considérée sous deux rapports différents: si elle est la punition de fautes personnelles et volontaires, elle est alors la plus terrible de toutes les peines; si au contraire elle est le châtement d'une faute involontaire et sans aucun démérite, elle devient une peine légère, et c'est celle des petits enfants morts avant le baptême. Malheur à nous si nous oublions ces châtements terribles réservés aux pécheurs dans les enfers, et si, indifférents à notre salut, nous nous exposons de gaité de cœur à y être un jour condamnés!

Parlons maintenant des joies du ciel; elles sont si nombreuses que nul calculateur ne pourrait les compter; si étendues que nul géomètre ne pourrait les mesurer; si incompréhensibles que nul rhéteur ne saurait les expliquer par ses discours. En effet, l'œil n'a jamais vu, l'oreille n'a jamais entendu, le cœur de l'homme n'a jamais compris ce que Dieu a préparé pour ceux qui l'aiment. Les saints dans le ciel seront comblés de joie par la vision béatifique de Dieu, par la beauté extérieure des cieus et de toutes les créatures corporelles, et par la glorieuse réunion des anges et des élus. Chacun se réjouira du bonheur d'autrui comme de son bonheur propre. Tous se connaîtront, tous liront dans la pensée les uns des autres. Nulle pensée, dit saint Grégoire (lib. IX, Dialog.), nul sentiment ne sera caché pour les élus; ils se verront tous tels qu'ils sont, et leur joie en sera plus grande; ils verront également les supplices des damnés, et cette vue augmentera leur reconnaissance envers Dieu qui les a préservés d'un tel malheur. Dans le ciel, nous verrons Dieu en lui-même, nous le verrons en nous et nous nous verrons en lui. Dieu sera tout en tous, c'est-à-dire, selon saint Augustin, qu'il sera tout à la fois, selon le désir des créatures, la vie, le salut, l'honneur, la gloire, la paix et tous les autres biens. La beauté de Dieu, dit saint Grégoire, est si merveilleuse et si désirable que les anges eux-mêmes qui sont sept fois plus beaux, plus éclatants que la lumière du soleil, désirent la contempler sans cesse et ne peuvent jamais en être rassasiés. Là, les sens intérieurs de l'homme, dit encore saint Augustin (lib. XX, de Civit. Dei, cap. xxx), seront rassasiés par la contemplation de l'humanité sainte du Sauveur, car Dieu ne s'est fait homme que pour béatifier tout à la fois l'âme et le corps de sa créature. La béatitude céleste, ajoute le même saint (Lib. de Vita beata), consiste surtout en deux choses: dans l'abondance de tous les biens et dans l'absence de tous les maux. Enfin, pour tout dire en deux mots, selon la pensée de saint Augustin (lib. XXII, de Civit. Dei) et de saint Grégoire (lib. XVIII, Moral, cap. xix), le ciel renferme tant de bonheur, tant de douces satisfactions, tant de gloire et tant de joies, que, ne dût-on y demeurer qu'un seul jour, pour ce seul jour on devrait sacrifier tous les biens, tous les trésors, tous les plaisirs et toutes les délices de la terre. C'est ce qui faisait dire au Psalmiste: Un seul jour dans vos tabernacles, ô mon Dieu, vaut mieux que mille ans passés sous la tente des pécheurs!

Le bonheur de la vie éternelle consiste surtout dans les qualités dont l'âme et le corps des justes seront revêtus. Les qualités de l'âme sont au nombre de trois: la claire connaissance de la souveraine Trinité qui succédera à la foi, l'entière jouissance de la Divinité qui remplacera l'espérance, enfin l'amour parfait de Dieu, qui ne sera pas détruit comme l'espérance et la foi, mais qui sera consommé dans l'Être divin. Les qualités du corps sont: la clarté, l'impassibilité, la subtilité et l'agilité. Les qualités de l'âme constituent la récompense essentielle des justes, celles du corps ne sont qu'une récompense accidentelle. La première qualité de l'âme est la connaissance ou l'intuition par laquelle les élus verront toute l'essence divine, mais non dans toute son étendue, puisqu'elle est infinie. Us la verront les uns plus, les autres moins, selon le degré de perfection qu'ils auront acquis en ce monde, et cette différence ne viendra que du côté des élus eux-mêmes et non du côté de Dieu, qui, essentiellement simple, n'admet aucune diversité. La seconde qualité de l'âme est l'amour; or, entre l'amour vertu et l'amour qualité il y a une grande différence; la vertu est ce qui nous fait

passer de l'état de grâce à l'état de gloire; mais la qualité ou douaire (dos) est ce qui est donné à l'épouse sur tout le mérite qu'elle a pu acquérir en ce monde quand elle est conduite en la maison de son céleste Époux. Dans le ciel, la foi et l'espérance que nous avons en cette vie seront détruites, car alors tout ce qui est imparfait sera anéanti, mais la charité subsistera toujours et sera augmentée et perfectionnée, selon la pensée de saint Augustin lui-même (Serm. 53, de Tempore). La troisième qualité de l'âme est la compréhension ou la possession de l'objet qu'elle voit et qu'elle aime, parce qu'alors l'âme embrassant pour ainsi dire la Divinité, s'y attache comme à son propre bien; d'autres appellent cette troisième qualité de l'âme la jouissance. Ainsi, les principales perfections, les plus grands avantages des élus dans le ciel sont: la claire vision de Dieu, son amour parfait et sa possession, assurée, sans jamais craindre de le perdre.

Parmi les quatre qualités des corps dans le ciel, la première sera la clarté, laquelle doit s'entendre de deux manières. Ainsi l'on dit qu'un objet est clair quand il est transparent, diaphane, comme le verre à travers lequel on aperçoit les autres corps; l'on dit aussi qu'un objet est clair quand il est lucide, lumineux, comme les étoiles qui brillent au firmament. Les corps glorifiés réuniront ces deux clartés différentes; ils seront tout à la fois diaphanes et lumineux; ils brilleront d'une lumière sept fois plus éclatante que le soleil, et l'âme, revêtue comme d'un vêtement de son corps lumineux, brillera sept fois plus que lui. Les corps des saints ne brilleront pas tous de la même clarté, et seront plus ou moins lumineux selon le degré de perfection que les âmes auront atteint en cette vie. La seconde qualité du corps sera l'impassibilité; or, cette impassibilité procédera de la forme même de l'âme qui, par sa puissance, dominera tellement le corps que nul objet extérieur ne saura ni l'altérer ni lui nuire, en sorte que si un corps glorifié était placé en enfer il n'en ressentirait aucun mal, aucune douleur. La troisième qualité sera la subtilité qui résulte de la victoire parfaite de la forme sur la matière, laquelle enlève au corps la substance grossière produite par les divers éléments dont il était composé. Enfin la quatrième qualité des corps dans le ciel sera l'agilité, laquelle sera si grande, selon saint Augustin (lib. XXII, de Civit. Dei, cap. xxx), que là où l'âme voudra être, le corps y sera immédiatement. Toutefois, de même que les corps seront plus ou moins brillants et lumineux, selon que les âmes auront été plus ou moins parfaites en cette vie, ils seront également plus ou moins agiles selon le degré de perfection acquise. Pourtant, selon le même saint Augustin (ibidem), la volonté des saints sera toujours conforme à la droite raison, et ils ne désireront jamais rien qui ne puisse être digne d'eux.

Dans l'enfer, comme nous l'avons déjà dit, il y aura différents degrés de supplices, de même dans le ciel il y aura divers degrés de gloire. Quoique dans le royaume des cieux, dit saint Chrysostôme à ce sujet, il y ait plusieurs degrés de gloire, selon la différence des mérites, et que dans l'enfer il y ait divers degrés de châtiments proportionnés à la grandeur et au nombre des crimes commis; cependant tous les damnés seront enveloppés dans la même peine éternelle, et tous les élus qui ont travaillé à la vigne du Père de famille recevront pour salaire le même denier, c'est-à-dire la vie éternelle, Dieu lui-même, dont tous jouiront, mais d'une manière inégale. Les corps des élus dans le ciel différeront entre eux par la clarté dont ils seront revêtus, et les âmes différeront aussi entre elles par la gloire et la béatitude dont elles jouiront diversement. Comme au firmament une étoile diffère d'une autre étoile en clarté, de même dans le royaume des cieux, un juste sera différent d'un autre juste par la gloire de son âme et de son corps. Les uns contempleront la Majesté divine de plus près et plus clairement que les autres, et c'est cette différence que nous appelons degrés. Il n'y a qu'un paradis, mais il y a plusieurs demeures ou degrés, c'est-à-dire différence de gloire dans la béatitude, qui elle-même est une, est le souverain bien et la vie de tous. Nul doute, dit saint Augustin (Kb. XXII, de Civit. Dei, cap. xxx), que ceux qui entreront dans le ciel auront divers degrés d'honneur et de gloire, selon les divers degrés de mérite qu'ils auront acquis en ce monde, car les uns verront plus clairement que les autres la Majesté de l'Éternel, selon la pureté de cœur qu'ils auront eue en cette vie. Cependant chacun sera content de ce qu'il aura reçu sans porter envie à celui qui sera élevé plus haut, de même que dans le corps humain, le doigt n'envie pas la place que l'œil occupe.

## **1510 (Latin)**

**St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Catholic Scholastic**

**The Happiness Of The Saints And Their Mansions; & Of The Aureoles (Circles Of Light Or Radiance Surrounding The Head Or Body Of Sanctified Persons, Saints & Angels)**  
**Summa Theologica**

**Question 93. The Happiness Of The Saints And Their Mansions**

1. Will the happiness of the saints increase after the judgment?
2. Should the degrees of happiness be called mansions?
3. Do the various mansions differ according to various degrees of charity?

**Article 1. Whether The Happiness Of The Saints Will Be Greater After The Judgment Than Before?**

Objection 1. It would seem that the happiness of the saints will not be greater after the judgment than before. For the nearer a thing approaches to the Divine likeness, the more perfectly does it participate happiness. Now the soul is more like God when separated from the body than when united to it. Therefore its happiness is greater before being reunited to the body than after.

Objection 2. Further, power is more effective when it is united than when divided. Now the soul is more united when separated from the body than when it is joined to the body. Therefore it has then greater power for operation, and consequently has a more perfect share of happiness, since this consists in action [Cf. I-II, 3, 2].

Objection 3. Further, beatitude consists in an act of the speculative intellect. Now the intellect, in its act, makes no use of a bodily organ; and consequently by being reunited to the body the soul does not become capable of more perfect understanding. Therefore the soul's happiness is not greater after than before the judgment.

Objection 4. Further, nothing can be greater than the infinite, and so the addition of the finite to the infinite does not result in something greater than the infinite by itself. Now the beatified soul before its reunion with the body is rendered happy by rejoicing in the infinite good, namely God; and after the resurrection of the body it will rejoice in nothing else except perhaps the glory of the body, and this is a finite good. Therefore their joy after the resumption of the body will not be greater than before.

On the contrary, A gloss on Apocalypse 6:9, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain," says: "At present the souls of the saints are under the altar, i.e. less exalted than they will be." Therefore their happiness will be greater after the resurrection than after their death.

Further, just as happiness is bestowed on the good as a reward, so is unhappiness awarded to the wicked. But the unhappiness of the wicked after reunion with their bodies will be greater than before, since they will be punished not only in the soul but also in the body. Therefore the happiness of the saints will be greater after the resurrection of the body than before.

I answer that, It is manifest that the happiness of the saints will increase in extent after the resurrection, because their happiness will then be not only in the soul but also in the body. Moreover, the soul's happiness also will increase in extent, seeing that the soul will rejoice not only in its own good, but also in that of the body. We may also say that the soul's happiness will increase in intensity [Cf. I-II, 4, 5, ad 5, where St. Thomas retracts this statement]. For man's body may be considered in two ways: first, as being dependent on the soul for its completion; secondly, as containing something that hampers the soul in its operations, through the soul not perfectly completing the body. As regards the first way of considering the body, its union with the soul adds a certain perfection to the soul, since every part is imperfect, and is completed in its whole; wherefore the whole is to the part as form to matter. Consequently the soul is more perfect in its natural being, when it is in the whole--namely, man who results from the union of soul and body--than when it is a separate part. But as regards the second consideration the union of the body hampers the perfection of the soul, wherefore it is written (Wisdom 9:15) that "the corruptible body is a load upon the soul." If, then, there

be removed from the body all those things wherein it hampers the soul's action, the soul will be simply more perfect while existing in such a body than when separated therefrom. Now the more perfect a thing is in being, the more perfectly is it able to operate: wherefore the operation of the soul united to such a body will be more perfect than the operation of the separated soul. But the glorified body will be a body of this description, being altogether subject to the spirit. Therefore, since beatitude consists in an operation [Cf. I-II, 3, 2, seqq.], the soul's happiness after its reunion with the body will be more perfect than before. For just as the soul separated from a corruptible body is able to operate more perfectly than when united thereto, so after it has been united to a glorified body, its operation will be more perfect than while it was separated. Now every imperfect thing desires its perfection. Hence the separated soul naturally desires reunion with the body and on account of this desire which proceeds from the soul's imperfection its operation whereby it is borne towards God is less intense. This agrees with the saying of Augustine (Gen. ad lit. xii, 35) that "on account of the body's desire it is held back from tending with all its might to that sovereign good."

Reply to Objection 1. The soul united to a glorified body is more like to God than when separated therefrom, in so far as when united it has more perfect being. For the more perfect a thing is the more it is like to God: even so the heart, the perfection of whose life consists in movement, is more like to God while in movement than while at rest, although God is never moved.

Reply to Objection 2. A power which by its own nature is capable of being in matter is more effective when subjected in matter than when separated from matter, although absolutely speaking a power separate from matter is more effective.

Reply to Objection 3. Although in the act of understanding the soul does not make use of the body, the perfection of the body will somewhat conduce to the perfection of the intellectual operation in so far as through being united to a glorified body, the soul will be more perfect in its nature, and consequently more effective in its operation, and accordingly the good itself of the body will conduce instrumentally, as it were, to the operation wherein happiness consists: thus the Philosopher asserts (Ethic. i, 8,10) that external goods conduce instrumentally to the happiness of life.

Reply to Objection 4. Although finite added to infinite does not make a greater thing, it makes more things, since finite and infinite are two things, while infinite taken by itself is one. Now the greater extent of joy regards not a greater thing but more things. Wherefore joy is increased in extent, through referring to God and to the body's glory, in comparison with the joy which referred to God. Moreover, the body's glory will conduce to the intensity of the joy that refers to God, in so far as it will conduce to the more perfect operation whereby the soul tends to God: since the more perfect is a becoming operation, the greater the delight [Cf. I-II, 32, 1], as stated in Ethic. x, 8.

## **Article 2. Whether The Degrees Of Beatitude Should Be Called Mansions?**

Objection 1. It would seem that the degrees of beatitude should not be called mansions. For beatitude implies the notion of a reward: whereas mansion denotes nothing pertaining to a reward. Therefore the various degrees of beatitude should not be called mansions.

Objection 2. Further, mansion seemingly denotes a place. Now the place where the saint will be beatified is not corporeal but spiritual, namely God Who is one. Therefore there is but one mansion: and consequently the various degrees of beatitude should not be called mansions.

Objection 3. Further, as in heaven there will be men of various merits, so are there now in purgatory, and were in the limbo of the fathers. But various mansions are not distinguished in purgatory and limbo. Therefore in like manner neither should they be distinguished in heaven.

On the contrary, It is written (John 14:2): "In My Father's house there are many mansions": and Augustine expounds this in reference to the different degrees of rewards (Tract. lxxvii in Joan.).

Further, in every well-ordered city there is a distinction of mansions. Now the heavenly kingdom is compared to a city (Apocalypse 21:2). Therefore we should distinguish various mansions there according to the various degrees of beatitude.

I answer that, Since local movement precedes all other movements, terms of movement, distance and the like are derived from local movement to all other movements according to the Philosopher (Phys., liber viii, 7). Now the end of local movement is a place, and when a thing has arrived at that place it remains there at rest and is maintained therein. Hence in every movement this very rest at the end of the movement is called an establishment [collocatio] or mansion. Wherefore since the term movement is transferred to the actions of the appetite and will, the attainment of the end of an appetitive movement is called a mansion or establishment: so that the unity of a house corresponds to the unity of beatitude which unity is on the part of the object, and the plurality of mansions corresponds to the differences of beatitude on the part of the blessed: even so we observe in natural things that there is one same place above to which all light objects tend, whereas each one reaches it more closely, according as it is lighter, so that they have various mansions corresponding to their various lightness.

Reply to Objection 1. Mansion implies the notion of end and consequently of reward which is the end of merit.

Reply to Objection 2. Though there is one spiritual place, there are different degrees of approaching thereto: and the various mansions correspond to these.

Reply to Objection 3. Those who were in limbo or are now in purgatory have not yet attained to their end. Wherefore various mansions are not distinguished in purgatory or limbo, but only in heaven and hell, wherein is the end of the good and of the wicked.

### **Article 3. Whether The Various Mansions Are Distinguished According To The Various Degrees Of Charity?**

Objection 1. It would seem that the various mansions are not distinguished according to the various degrees of charity. For it is written (Matthew 25:15): "He gave to every one according to his proper virtue [Douay: 'ability']." Now the proper ability of a thing is its natural power. Therefore the gifts also of grace and glory are distributed according to the different degrees of natural power.

Objection 2. Further, it is written (Psalm 61:12): "Thou wilt render to every man according to his works." Now that which is rendered is the measure of beatitude. Therefore the degrees of beatitude are distinguished according to the diversity of works and not according to the diversity of charity.

Objection 3. Further, reward is due to act and not to habit: hence "it is not the strongest who are crowned but those who engage in the conflict" (Ethic. i, 8) and "he . . . shall not be [Vulgate: 'is not'] crowned except he strive lawfully." Now beatitude is a reward. Therefore the various degrees of beatitude will be according to the various degrees of works and not according to the various degrees of charity.

On the contrary, The more one will be united to God the happier will one be. Now the measure of charity is the measure of one's union with God. Therefore the diversity of beatitude will be according to the difference of charity.

Further, "if one thing simply follows from another thing simply, the increase of the former follows from the increase of the latter." Now to have beatitude follows from having charity. Therefore to have greater beatitude follows from having greater charity.

I answer that, The distinctive principle of the mansions or degrees of beatitude is twofold, namely proximate and remote. The proximate principle is the difference of disposition which will be in the blessed, whence will result the difference of perfection in them in respect to the beatific operation: while the remote principle is the merit by which they have obtained that beatitude. In the first way the mansions are distinguished according to the charity of heaven, which the more perfect it will be in any one, the more will it render him capable of the Divine clarity, on the increase of which will depend the increase in perfection of the Divine vision. In the second way the mansions are distinguished according to the charity of the way. For our actions are meritorious, not by the very substance of the action, but only by the habit of virtue with which they are informed. Now every virtue obtains its meritorious efficacy from charity [Cf. I-II, 114, 4], which has the end itself for its object [Cf. II-II, 24, 3, ad 1]. Hence the diversity of merit is all traced to the diversity of charity, and thus the charity of the way will distinguish the mansions by way of merit.

Reply to Objection 1. In this passage "virtue" denotes not the natural ability alone, but the natural ability together with the endeavour to obtain grace [Cf. II-II, 23, 8]. Consequently virtue in this sense will be a kind of material disposition to the measure of grace and glory that one will receive. But charity is the formal complement of merit in relation to glory, and therefore the distinction of degrees in glory depends on the degrees of charity rather than on the degrees of the aforesaid virtue.

Reply to Objection 2. Works in themselves do not demand the payment of a reward, except as informed by charity: and therefore the various degrees of glory will be according to the various degrees of charity.

Reply to Objection 3. Although the habit of charity or of any virtue whatever is not a merit to which a reward is due, it is none the less the principle and reason of merit in the act: and consequently according to its diversity is the diversity of rewards. This does not prevent our observing a certain degree of merit in the act considered generically, not indeed in relation to the essential reward which is joy in God, but in relation to some accidental reward, which is joy in some created good.

### **Question 96: Of The Aureoles (Differing Circles Of Light Or Radiance Surrounding The Head Or Body Of Sanctified Beings, Saints, and Angels)**

#### **Article. 1 - Whether the aureole is the same as the essential reward which is called the aurea?**

Objection 1: It would seem that the aureole is not distinct from the essential reward which is called the "aurea." For the essential reward is beatitude itself. Now according to Boethius (De Consol. iii), beatitude is "a state rendered perfect by the aggregate of all goods." Therefore the essential reward includes every good possessed in heaven; so that the aureole is included in the "aurea."

Objection 2: Further, "more" and "less" do not change a species. But those who keep the counsels and commandments receive a greater reward than those who keep the commandments only, nor seemingly does their reward differ, except in one reward being greater than another. Since then the aureole denotes the reward due to works of perfection it would seem that it does not signify something distinct from the "aurea."

Objection 3: Further, reward corresponds to merit. Now charity is the root of all merit. Since then the "aurea" corresponds to charity, it would seem that there will be no reward in heaven other than the "aurea."

Objection 4: Further, "All the blessed are taken into the angelic orders" as Gregory declares (Hom. xxxiv in Evang.). Now as regards the angels, "though some of them receive certain gifts in a higher degree, nothing is possessed by any of them exclusively, for all gifts are in all of them, though not equally, because some are endowed more highly than others with gifts which, however, they all possess," as Gregory says (Hom. xxxiv in Evang.). Therefore as regards the blessed, there will be no reward other than that which is common to all. Therefore the aureole is not a distinct reward from the "aurea."



Objection 5: Further, a higher reward is due to higher merit. If, then, the "aurea" is due to works which are of obligation, and the aureole to works of counsel, the aureole will be more perfect than the "aurea," and consequently should not be expressed by a diminutive ["Aureola," i.e. a little "aurea"]. Therefore it would seem that the aureole is not a distinct reward from the "aurea."

On the contrary, A gloss [Ven. Bede, De Tabernaculis i, 6] on Ex. 25:24,25, "Thou shalt make . . . another little golden crown [coronam aureolam]," says: "This crown denotes the new hymn which the virgins alone sing in the presence of the Lamb." Wherefore apparently the aureole is a crown awarded, not to all, but especially to some: whereas the aurea is awarded to all the blessed. Therefore the aureole is distinct from the "aurea."

Further, a crown is due to the fight which is followed by victory: "He . . . is not crowned except he strive lawfully" (2 Tim. 2:5). Hence where there is a special kind of conflict, there should be a special crown. Now in certain works there is a special kind of conflict. Therefore they deserve a special kind of crown, which we call an aureole.

Further, the Church militant comes down from the Church triumphant: "I saw the Holy City," etc. (Apoc. 21:2). Now in the Church militant special rewards are given to those who perform special deeds, for instance a crown to the conqueror, a prize to the runner. Therefore the same should obtain in the Church triumphant.

I answer that, Man's essential reward, which is his beatitude, consists in the perfect union of the soul with God, inasmuch as it enjoys God perfectly as seen and loved perfectly. Now this reward is called a "crown" or "aurea" metaphorically, both with reference to merit which is gained by a kind of conflict---since "the life of man upon earth is a warfare" (Job 7:1)---and with reference to the reward whereby in a way man is made a participator of the Godhead, and consequently endowed with regal power: "Thou hast made us to our God a kingdom," etc. (Apoc. 5:10); for a crown is the proper sign of regal power.

In like manner the accidental reward which is added to the essential has the character of a crown. For a crown signifies some kind of perfection, on account of its circular shape, so that for this very reason it is becoming to the perfection of the blessed. Since, however, nothing can be added to the essential, but what is less than it, the additional reward is called an "aureole." Now something may be added in two ways to this essential reward which we call the "aurea." First, in consequence of a condition attaching to the nature of the one rewarded: thus the glory of the body is added to the beatitude of the soul, wherefore this same glory of the body is sometimes called an "aureole." Thus a gloss of Bede on Ex. 25:25, "Thou . . . shalt make another little golden crown," says that "finally the aureole is added, when it is stated in the Scriptures that a higher degree of glory is in store for us when our bodies are resumed." But it is not in this sense that we speak of an aureole now. Secondly, in consequence of the nature of the meritorious act. Now this has the character of merit on two counts, whence also it has the character of good. First, to wit, from its root which is charity, since it is referred to the last end, and thus there is due to it the essential reward, namely the attainment of the end, and this is the "aurea." Secondly, from the very genus of the act which derives a certain praiseworthiness from its due circumstances, from the habit eliciting it and from its proximate end, and thus is due to it a kind of accidental reward which we call an "aureole": and it is in this sense that we regard the aureole now. Accordingly it must be said that an "aureole" denotes something added to the "aurea," a kind of joy, to wit, in the works one has done, in that they have the character of a signal victory: for this joy is distinct from the joy in being united to God, which is called the "aurea." Some, however, affirm that the common reward, which is the "aurea," receives the name of "aureole," according as it is given to virgins, martyrs, or doctors: even as money receives the name of debt through being due to some one, though the money and the debt are altogether the same. And that nevertheless this does not imply that the essential reward is any greater when it is called an "aureole"; but that it corresponds to a more excellent act, more excellent not in intensity of merit but in the manner of meriting; so that although two persons may have the Divine vision with equal clearness, it is called an "aureole" in one and not in the other in so far as it corresponds to higher merit as regards the way of meriting. But this would seem contrary to the meaning of

the gloss quoted above. For if "aurea" and "aureole" were the same, the "aureole" would not be described as added to the "aurea." Moreover, since reward corresponds to merit, a more excellent reward must needs correspond to this more excellent way of meriting: and it is this excellence that we call an "aureole." Hence it follows that an "aureole" differs from the "aurea."

Reply to Objection 1: Beatitude includes all the goods necessary for man's perfect life consisting in his perfect operation. Yet some things can be added, not as being necessary for that perfect operation as though it were impossible without them, but as adding to the glory of beatitude. Hence they regard the well-being of beatitude and a certain fitness thereto. Even so civic happiness is embellished by nobility and bodily beauty and so forth, and yet it is possible without them as stated in Ethic. i, 8: and thus is the aureole in comparison with the happiness of heaven.

Reply to Objection 2: He who keeps the counsels and the commandments always merits more than he who keeps the commandments only, if we gauge the notion of merit in works from the very genus of those works; but not always if we gauge the merit from its root, charity: since sometimes a man keeps the commandments alone out of greater charity than one who keeps both commandments and counsels. For the most part, however, the contrary happens, because the "proof of love is in the performance of deeds," as Gregory says (Hom. xxx in Evang.). Wherefore it is not the more excellent essential reward that is called an aureole, but that which is added to the essential reward without reference to the essential reward of the possessor of an aureole being greater, or less than, or equal to the essential reward of one who has no aureole.

Reply to Objection 3: Charity is the first principle of merit: but our actions are the instruments, so to speak, whereby we merit. Now in order to obtain an effect there is requisite not only a due disposition in the first mover, but also a right disposition in the instrument. Hence something principal results in the effect with reference to the first mover, and something secondary with reference to the instrument. Wherefore in the reward also there is something on the part of charity, namely the "aurea," and something on the part of the kind of work, namely the "aureole."

Reply to Objection 4: All the angels merited their beatitude by the same kind of act namely by turning to God: and consequently no particular reward is found in anyone which another has not in some way. But men merit beatitude by different kinds of acts: and so the comparison fails.

Nevertheless among men what one seems to have specially, all have in common in some way, in so far as each one, by charity, deems another's good his own. Yet this joy whereby one shares another's joy cannot be called an aureole, because it is not given him as a reward for his victory, but regards more the victory of another: whereas a crown is awarded the victors themselves and not to those who rejoice with them in the victory.

Reply to Objection 5: The merit arising from charity is more excellent than that which arises from the kind of action: just as the end to which charity directs us is more excellent than the things directed to that end, and with which our actions are concerned. Wherefore the reward corresponding to merit by reason of charity, however little it may be, is greater than any reward corresponding to an action by reason of its genus. Hence "aureole" is used as a diminutive in comparison with "aurea."

#### **Article. 4 - Whether Three Fruits Are Fittingly Assigned To The Three Parts Of Continence?**

Objection 1: It would seem that three fruits are unfittingly assigned to the three parts of continence: because twelve fruits of the Spirit are assigned, "charity, joy, peace," etc. (Gal. 5:22). Therefore seemingly we should reckon only three.

Objection 2: Further, fruit denotes a special reward. Now the reward assigned to virgins, widows, and married persons is not a special reward, because all who are to be saved are comprised under one of these

three, since no one is saved who lacks continence, and continence is adequately divided by these three. Therefore three fruits are unfittingly assigned to the three aforesaid.

Objection 3: Further, just as widowhood surpasses conjugal continence, so does virginity surpass widowhood. But the excess of sixtyfold over thirtyfold is not as the excess of a hundredfold over sixtyfold; neither in arithmetical proportion, since sixty exceeds thirty by thirty, and a hundred exceeds sixty by forty; nor in geometrical proportion, since sixty is twice thirty and a hundred surpasses sixty as containing the whole and two-thirds thereof. Therefore the fruits are unfittingly adapted to the degrees of continence.

Objection 4: Further, the statements contained in Holy Writ stand for all time: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Lk. 21:33); whereas human institutions are liable to change every day. Therefore human institutions are not to be taken as a criterion of the statements of Holy Writ: and it would seem in consequence that the explanation of these fruits given by Bede is unfitting. For he says (Expos. in Luc. iii, 8) that "the thirtyfold fruit is assigned to married persons, because in the signs drawn on the 'abacus' the number 30 is denoted by the thumb and index finger touching one another at the tips as though kissing one another: so that the number 30 denotes the embraces of married persons. The number 60 is denoted by the contact of the index finger above the middle joint of the thumb, so that the index finger by lying over the thumb and weighing on it, signifies the burden which widows have to bear in this world. When, however, in the course of enumeration we come to the number 100 we pass from the left to the right hand, so that the number 100 denotes virginity, which has a share in the angelic excellence; for the angels are on the right hand, i.e. in glory, while we are on the left on account of the imperfection of the present life."

I answer that, By continence, to which the fruit corresponds, man is brought to a kind of spiritual nature, by withdrawing from carnal things. Consequently various fruits are distinguished according to the various manners of the spirituality resulting from continence. Now there is a certain spirituality which is necessary, and one which is superabundant. The spirituality that is necessary consists in the rectitude of the spirit not being disturbed by the pleasures of the flesh: and this obtains when one makes use of carnal pleasures according to the order of right reason. This is the spirituality of married persons. Spirituality is superabundant when a man withdraws himself entirely from those carnal pleasures which stifle the spirit. This may be done in two ways: either in respect of all time past, present, and future, and this is the spirituality of virgins; or in respect of a particular time, and this is the spirituality of widows. Accordingly to those who keep conjugal continence, the thirtyfold fruit is awarded; to those who keep the continence of widows, the sixtyfold fruit; and to those who keep virginal continence, the hundredfold fruit: and this for the reason given by Bede quoted above, although another motive may be found in the very nature of the numbers. For 30 is the product of 3 multiplied by 10. Now 3 is the number of everything, as stated in *De Coelo et Mundo* i, and contains a certain perfection common to all, namely of beginning, middle, and end. Wherefore the number 30 is fittingly assigned to married persons, in whom no other perfection is added to the observance of the Decalogue, signified by the number 10, than the common perfection without which there is no salvation. The number six the multiplication of which by 10 amounts to 60 has perfection from its parts, being the aggregate of all its parts taken together; wherefore it corresponds fittingly to widowhood, wherein we find perfect withdrawal from carnal pleasures as to all its circumstances (which are the parts so to speak of a virtuous act), since widowhood uses no carnal pleasures in connection with any person, place, or any other circumstance; which was not the case with conjugal continence. The number 100 corresponds fittingly to virginity; because the number 10 of which 100 is a multiple is the limit of numbers: and in like manner virginity occupies the limit of spirituality, since no further spirituality can be added to it. The number 100 also being a square number has perfection from its figure: for a square figure is perfect through being equal on all sides, since all its sides are equal: wherefore it is adapted to virginity wherein incorruption is found equally as to all times.

Reply to Objection 1: Fruit is not taken there in the sense in which we are taking it now.

Reply to Objection 2: Nothing obliges us to hold that fruit is a reward that is not common to all who will be saved. For not only the essential reward is common to all, but also a certain accidental reward, such as joy in those works without which one cannot be saved. Yet it may be said that the fruits are not becoming to all who will be saved, as is evidently the case with those who repent in the end after leading an incontinent life, for to such no fruit is due but only the essential reward.

Reply to Objection 3: The distinction of the fruits is to be taken according to the species and figures of the numbers rather than according to their quantity. Nevertheless even if we regard the excess in point of quantity, we may find an explanation. For the married man abstains only from one that is not his, the widow from both hers and not hers, so that in the latter case we find the notion of double, just as 60 is the double of 30. Again 100 is 60 X 40, which latter number is the product of 4 X 10, and the number 4 is the first solid and square number. Thus the addition of this number is fitting to virginity, which adds perpetual incorruption to the perfection of widowhood.

Reply to Objection 4: Although these numerical signs are a human institution, they are founded somewhat on the nature of things, in so far as the numbers are denoted in gradation, according to the order of the aforesaid joints and contacts.

### **Article. 11 - Whether Three Aureoles Are Fittingly Assigned, Those Of Virgins, Of Martyrs, And Of Doctors?**

Objection 1: It would seem that the three aureoles of virgins, martyrs, and doctors are unfittingly assigned. For the aureole of martyrs corresponds to their virtue of fortitude, the aureole of virgins to the virtue of temperance, and the aureole of doctors to the virtue of prudence. Therefore it seems that there should be a fourth aureole corresponding to the virtue of justice.

Objection 2: Further, a gloss on Ex. 25:25: "A polished crown, etc. says that a golden [aurea] crown is added, when the Gospel promises eternal life to those who keep the commandments: 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments' (Mat. 19:17). To this is added the little golden crown [aureola] when it is said: 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor'" (Mat. 19:21). Therefore an aureole is due to poverty.

Objection 3: Further, a man subjects himself wholly to God by the vow of obedience: wherefore the greatest perfection consists in the vow of obedience. Therefore it would seem that an aureole is due thereto.

Objection 4: Further, there are also many other works of supererogation in which one will rejoice in the life to come. Therefore there are many aureoles besides the aforesaid three.

Objection 5: Further, just as a man spreads the faith by preaching and teaching, so does he by publishing written works. Therefore a fourth aureole is due to those who do this.

I answer that, An aureole is an exceptional reward corresponding to an exceptional victory: wherefore the three aureoles are assigned in accordance with the exceptional victories in the three conflicts which beset every man. For in the conflict with the flesh, he above all wins the victory who abstains altogether from sexual pleasures which are the chief of this kind; and such is a virgin. Wherefore an aureole is due to virginity. In the conflict with the world, the chief victory is to suffer the world's persecution even until death: wherefore the second aureole is due to martyrs who win the victory in this battle. In the conflict with the devil, the chief victory is to expel the enemy not only from oneself but also from the hearts of others: this is done by teaching and preaching, and consequently the third aureole is due to doctors and preachers.

Some, however, distinguish the three aureoles in accordance with the three powers of the soul, by saying that the three aureoles correspond to the three chief acts of the soul's three highest powers. For the act of the rational power is to publish the truth of faith even to others, and to this act the aureole of doctors is due: the

highest act of the irascible power is to overcome even death for Christ's sake, and to this act the aureole of martyrs is due: and the highest act of the concupiscible power is to abstain altogether from the greatest carnal pleasures, and to this act the aureole of virgins is due.

Others again, distinguish the three aureoles in accordance with those things whereby we are most signally conformed to Christ. For He was the mediator between the Father and the world. Hence He was a doctor, by manifesting to the world the truth which He had received from the Father; He was a martyr, by suffering the persecution of the world; and He was a virgin, by His personal purity. Wherefore doctors, martyrs and virgins are most perfectly conformed to Him: and for this reason an aureole is due to them.

Reply to Objection 1: There is no conflict to be observed in the act of justice as in the acts of the other virtues. Nor is it true that to teach is an act of prudence: in fact rather is it an act of charity or mercy---inasmuch as it is by such like habits that we are inclined to the practice of such an act---or again of wisdom, as directing it.

We may also reply, with others, that justice embraces all the virtues, wherefore a special aureole is not due to it.

Reply to Objection 2: Although poverty is a work of perfection, it does not take the highest place in a spiritual conflict, because the love of temporalities assails a man less than carnal concupiscence or persecution whereby his own body is broken. Hence an aureole is not due to poverty; but judicial power by reason of the humiliation consequent upon poverty. The gloss quoted takes aureole in the broad sense for any reward given for excellent merit.

We reply in the same way to the Third and Fourth Objections.

Reply to Objection 5: An aureole is due to those who commit the sacred doctrine to writing: but it is not distinct from the aureole of doctors, since the compiling of writing is a way of teaching.

Whether one person has an aureole more excellently than another person?

Objection 1: It would seem that one person has not the aureole either of virginity, or of martyrdom, or of doctrine more perfectly than another person. For things which have reached their term are not subject to intension or remission. Now the aureole is due to works which have reached their term of perfection. Therefore an aureole is not subject to intension or remission.

Objection 2: Further, virginity is not subject to being more or less, since it denotes a kind of privation; and privations are not subject to intension or remission. Therefore neither does the reward of virginity, the virgin's aureole to wit, receive intension or remission.

On the contrary, The aureole is added to the aurea. But the aurea is more intense in one than in another. Therefore the aureole is also.

I answer that, Since merit is somewhat the cause of reward, rewards must needs be diversified, according as merits are diversified: for the intension or remission of a thing follows from the intension or remission of its cause. Now the merit of the aureole may be greater or lesser: wherefore the aureole may also be greater or lesser.

We must observe, however, that the merit of an aureole may be intensified in two ways: first, on the part of its cause, secondly on the part of the work. For there may happen to be two persons, one of whom, out of lesser charity, suffers greater torments of martyrdom, or is more constant in preaching, or again withdraws himself more from carnal pleasures. Accordingly, intension not of the aureole but of the aurea corresponds to

the intension of merit derived from its root; while intension of the aureole corresponds to intension of merit derived from the kind of act. Consequently it is possible for one who merits less in martyrdom as to his essential reward, to receive a greater aureole for his martyrdom.

Reply to Objection 1: The merits to which an aureole is due do not reach the term of their perfection simply, but according to their species: even as fire is specifically the most subtle of bodies. Hence nothing hinders one aureole being more excellent than another, even as one fire is more subtle than another.

Reply to Objection 2: The virginity of one may be greater than the virginity of another, by reason of a greater withdrawal from that which is contrary to virginity: so that virginity is stated to be greater in one who avoids more the occasions of corruption. For in this way privations may increase, as when a man is said to be more blind, if he be removed further from the possession of sight.

### **Article. 12 - Whether The Virgin's Aureole Is The Greatest Of All?**

Objection 1: It would seem that the virgin's aureole is the greatest of all. For it is said of virgins (Apoc. 14:4) that they "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," and (Apoc. 14:3) that "no" other "man could say the canticle" which the virgins sang. Therefore virgins have the most excellent aureole.

Objection 2: Further, Cyprian (De Habit. Virg.) says of virgins that they are "the more illustrious portion of Christ's flock." Therefore the greater aureole is due to them.

Objection 3: Again, it would seem that the martyr's aureole is the greatest. For Aymo, commenting on Apoc. 14:3, "No man could say the hymn," says that "virgins do not all take precedence of married folk; but only those who in addition to the observance of virginity are by the tortures of their passion on a par with married persons who have suffered martyrdom." Therefore martyrdom gives virginity its precedence over other states: and consequently a greater aureole is due to virginity.

Objection 4: Again, it would seem that the greatest aureole is due to doctors. Because the Church militant is modelled after the Church triumphant. Now in the Church militant the greatest honor is due to doctors (1 Tim. 5:17): "Let the priests that rule well be esteemed worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." Therefore a greater aureole is due to them in the Church triumphant.

I answer that, Precedence of one aureole over another may be considered from two standpoints. First, from the point of view of the conflicts, that aureole being considered greater which is due to the more strenuous battle. Looking at it thus the martyr's aureole takes precedence of the others in one way, and the virgin's in another. For the martyr's battle is more strenuous in itself, and more intensely painful; while the conflict with the flesh is fraught with greater danger, inasmuch as it is more lasting and threatens us at closer quarters. Secondly, from the point of view of the things about which the battle is fought: and thus the doctor's aureole takes precedence of all others, since this conflict is about intelligible goods. while the other conflicts are about sensible passions. Nevertheless, the precedence that is considered in view of the conflict is more essential to the aureole; since the aureole, according to its proper character, regards the victory and the battle, and the difficulty of fighting which is viewed from the standpoint of the battle is of greater importance than that which is considered from our standpoint through the conflict being at closer quarters. Therefore the martyr's aureole is simply the greatest of all: for which reason a gloss on Mat. 5:10, says that "all the other beatitudes are perfected in the eighth, which refers to the martyrs," namely, "Blessed are they that suffer persecution." For this reason, too, the Church in enumerating the saints together places the martyrs before the doctors and virgins. Yet nothing hinders the other aureoles from being more excellent in some particular way. And this suffices for the Replies to the Objections.

### **Article. 13 - Whether One Person Has An Aureole More Excellently Than Another Person?**

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I answer that, Since merit is somewhat the cause of reward, rewards must needs be diversified, according as merits are diversified: for the intension or remission of a thing follows from the intension or remission of its cause. Now the merit of the aureole may be greater or lesser: wherefore the aureole may also be greater or lesser.

We must observe, however, that the merit of an aureole may be intensified in two ways: first, on the part of its cause, secondly on the part of the work. For there may happen to be two persons, one of whom, out of lesser charity, suffers greater torments of martyrdom, or is more constant in preaching, or again withdraws himself more from carnal pleasures. Accordingly, intension not of the aureole but of the aurea corresponds to the intension of merit derived from its root; while intension of the aureole corresponds to intension of merit derived from the kind of act. Consequently it is possible for one who merits less in martyrdom as to his essential reward, to receive a greater aureole for his martyrdom.

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### **1579 First Publication; 1606 Date of this Edition**

**George Segusien Pacard (Ministre à la Rochefoucaut, Lionnois)**

**Recueil contenant plusieurs arguments, raisons et démonstrations, Prises de la Nature, par Lesquelles est Prouve Manifestement qu'il y a un Seul Dieu, qui par sa providence gouverne cest univers, que le Monde a este Cree, que l' Ame humaine est immortelle, & que l'Escriture Sancte est Céleste & Divine, contre les Epicuriens & Atheistes  
Théologie Naturelle**

*PACARD (george) se surnomme Segusien à la tête d'un de ses Livres , ce qui me fait croire qu'il étoit du Lionnois , ou des environs. Il vivoic au XVI Siècle. Je pense qu'il écoic Ministre à la Rochefoucaut l'an 1574, lors qu'il dédia sa Théologie Naturelle au Comte de la Rochefoucaut. On voit dans la Bibliothèque de Du Verdier Vauprivas que cet Ouvrage, qui contient plusieurs argumens prins de la nature centre les Epicuriens & Atheïstes, fut imprimé à la Rochelle l'an 1579 in 8- H y en a une seconde Edition revue & augmentée par l'Auteur ÇA). Elle est de Niort 1606 in 8Le Manuscrit de ce Traité rendit un très-grand service à George Pacard ÇB).*

*(A) Une seconde Edition revue G? augmentée par F Auteur.} L'Auteur en ôta le Chapitre de l'Antechrist qui étoit dans la première. Il avoit publié un Traité exprès làdeTus à Niort deux années auparavant (1).*

*(5) Le Manuscrit de ce Traité rendit un grand service à l'Auteur. Voici ce qu'il en touche dans l'Épître Dédicatoire. Cesi qu'estant sorti de prison, où s ai esté retenu à Grenoble environ un an, je sus adverti par un gentilhomme peur de Bompar qui avoit moienné ma délivrance, que favoi esté garanti , & sauvé du chemin de mort où avoient passé huit des nostres , pour raison d'une copie de ce recueil que savoi lors qu'on me print prisonnier, laquelle courut par les mains de Messieurs du Parlement du-dit lieu.*

## **Livre Première – Refutation des Fondemens des Epicuriens & Athees**

### **Chapitre 3 – La Fabrique du Corps Humain, & les facultez de l'âme Preschent une Divinite**

**Printed Page 69 (Page 75th Page in Google Books)**

D'Autant que la cognoissance qui est en l'entendement humain vient par les sens, de la se fait que nous avons de coustume souventesfois de iuger, & dire les choses qui sont les plus excellentes es corps être divince; & recerchons par les facultez des choses corporelles la puissance de Dieu: par l'ordre, sa sapience; & par l'utilité sa bonté, & miséricorde. Au chapitre précédent nous avons monstre que tous hommes par la religion, & sentiment qui est naturellement en eux preschent une divinité. Maintenant examinons les tesmoignages que la fabrique, & composition du corps de l'homme nous proposent; de la en apres nous viendrons au reste. Les Platoniques ont dit que l'ame est l'homme, Et pour le regard du corps qu'il est comme un vestement qui l'environne; ou plustost une prison. Mais c'est chose résolue que l'homme consiste de matière & de forme; & que par la matière, on entend le çorps, & par la forme l'ame. Suivant cela Saluste disoit ainsi, que toute notre faculte est au çorps, & en l'âme Nous vivons plustost du commandement de l'ame, & du service du çorps. Nous mons l'un commun avec les Dieux, & l'autre avec les bestes. Or & l'un, & l'autre preschent clairement la divinité. & ce n'est point sans cause que l'homme est appelé des Grecs « Petit Monde »: c'est la plus belle image, & la plus parfaites & un excellent tesmoignage, & indice de la puissance, sapience, & bonté de Dieu. Car il est façonné tellement qu'il semble qu'il veuille que par icelui, comme par un patron tresparfait, nous facions jugement de lui, tant il l'a efléué par dessus les autres créatures, de façon que pour trouver Dieu il ne faut point sortir hors de nous mesmes, pource que par lui nous vivons-, avons mouvement, & sommes, comme le Poet Aratus. Ce qui se cognoistra plus facilement si nous examinons les parties de l'homme l'une âpres l'autre.

Et commençans par le çorps nous trouverons que la science de l'anatomie nous fera comme une guide pour venir a la cognoissance de son facteur. Car comme disoit Galien nous sommes amenez a la cognoissance d'un Dieu par la beauté, & excellence de ses ceuvres. Or il y a quatre choses entre autres au çorps humain et quelles la grandi & admirable sapience de Dieu reluist. Car de dire que l'homme soit de soi même; c'est chose trop eslongnee de raison. Une petite image ne sera sans facteur, & l'homme qui est un ouvrage si parfait se fera il fait somesmes? Il y aen premier lieu la structure, & connexion des membres; de laquelle toutes les sciences ont emprunté les proportions; laquelle est tant ingénieuse qu'il est impossible de l'imiter parfaitement. L'homme à esté prins de terre, façonné droit, eslevé, regardant le Ciel pour par ce moien venir à la cognoissance de Dieu. Les hommes, dit Cicéron, sont de terre, & non en icelle comme habitans, ains comme spectateurs des choses supérieures & celestesl le regard desquelles ne compete a aucun autre genre d'animaux, & ce que Ouide a observé par ces vers.

Et neantmoins que tout autre animal



Jette toujours son regard principal  
Encontre bas, Dieu a l'homme a donné  
La face haute, & lui a ordonné  
De regarder l'excellence des cieux  
Et d'eslever aux Estoiles ses yeux.

## **START HERE**

Les interprètes des sens, & messagers des choses sont mis au chef, comme en une forteresse pour les usages nécessaires. Les yeux comme spectateurs obtiennent une place fort haute de laquelle contemplant plusieurs choses ils puissent mieux faire leur devoir. Les oreilles, d'autant qu'elles doivent recevoir le son; lequel de nature monte en haut, sont mises en lieu esfleue. De mesme les narines, car l'odeur tend aussi en haut, & pource que leur jugement est grand touchant le manger, & le boire, ce n'es point sans cause, qu'elles font situées pres de la bouche. Le goust doit sentir les viandes dont nous usons, & a ceste occasion il habite en la partie par laquelle les viandes, & le breuvage entrent au corps. L'Atouchement est espars esgalement par tout le corps, de sorte que par icelui nous sentons tous les coups, les violentes chaleurs & les froidures. La structure du chef est orbiculaire & en rond sòubs lequel est le corps ayant la façon d'icelui fort longue pour marcher plus aisément. En outre au corps sont joints en long quatre membres droits, & flexibles par lesquels il se peut mouvoir facilement, & apprehender les obiects, demeurer debout, s'arrester, & cheminer, & pour cela les mains, & les jambes nous sont données. Il y a en âpres la forme du corps, & la beauté laquelle on ne sauroit exprimer. La teste seule ravira tous nos sens, il y a les futures y & commissures, les yeux ayans si admirables vertus, & qui sont de diverses çouleurs, & couvers, Il y a aussi la langue, & l'oreille: L'une pour parler, & l'autre, pour ouir. Le visage avec tant d'artifice, tout cela est il de soi mesme, ou a l'avanture? Les os du corps si solides se sont ils assemblez d'eux mesmes? Les nerfs liez, la chair couverte d'une si belle peau? Le pied se sera il eslargi ainsi de soi mesme pour soustenir le corps? Qui auroit ainsi presse la rate, & imprimé au cœur la forme qu'il a? Qui aura tissu les filets du foye, & engravé les tuyaux des poulmons? Le cœur, le foie, & le cerneau ont ils d'eux mesmes prins le lieu qu'ils tiennent pour estre les sièges des facultez irasible, concupissible & raisonnable? Si l'on dit que tout cela est de nature, je répondrai qu'il y a ordre, & raison qui ne peuvent estre sans sujet, & ainsi nature sera quelque chose participante de raison. L'Harmonie suit qui nous fait encores plus admirer l'ouvrier, & facteur d'icelui. Les doigts avec la main, la main avec le bràs, le bras avec le corps, le corps avec le chef. Mais singulièrement ce en quoi consiste la santé du corps, assavoir l'harmonie entre les quatre humeurs. Le sang, le flegme, la colere, & la melancholie; l'intemperie, ou exuperance desquelles cause la maladie, & en fin la mort. Finalement il y a la symmetrie, c'est a dire la proportion des membres, car les pieds, & les jambes, et toutes les autres parties ont leur proportion si bien mesurée, & compassée qu'il est impossible de mieux, estant le corps au milieu, & le chef au deflus, comme maistre. Au reste que pourroit on remarquer en icelui qui fut superflu? Quelle petite parcelle y a il qui ne rende, & exhibe utilement ce a quoi elle est destinée, qui ne se dispose pour soi-mesme, & pour les autres parties? Qui a il plus admirables que le plus grand secret de nature pour nous ravir, que de consider en la multitude infinie des hommes qui sont au monde la variété de leurs trtgestes, la différence de la physiognomie n'aiàs tous qu'une mesme forme, & neantmoins l'un ne semblera l'autre, & iàçoit que çous aient une langue, tant y a toutesfois qu'ils parlent, & chantent diversement, & ainsi de plusieurs autres telles choses. Mais voici qui surpasse tout, & n'y arien qui nous ravisse plus en admiration que la conjunction du corps & de l'ame. Et combien que leur nature soutane disemblable il y aye ce neantmoins entre eux une telle société & harmonie, brésil est entierement impossible de descrire les merveilles de ce corps. La multitude, & diversité des parties, l'accord des membres, l'artifice, & singuliere beauté d'iceux. Il faut donc, d'autant que cela ne peut estre de soi mesme, confesser & reconnoistre qu'il y a quelcun prudent, & merveilleusement

sage qui y a mis la main: puissant di-je pour lui avoir donné être, & de tresgrande, si pience pour l'avoir fait, & forme en la façon que nous le voions.

Venons maintenant à la considération de l'ame laquelle estant de beaucoup plus excellente que le corps, & de nature plus divine, aussi demonstre elle plus evidemment, & amplement la Divinité. Vrai est qu'elle est bien eslongnée de ceste perfection en laquelle elle estoit avant la cheute de l'homme: Car c'est maintenant de l'homme, comme d'un excellent bastimens qui est tombé en ruine. L'on y apperçoit encores quelques vestiges marques, & restes de la pristine splendeur, & beauté, quelles mesmes se sentent de la ruine. Aristôte, Ciceron, & plusieurs autres ont bien recogneu cela quand ils ont dit que si nous fumions nature, que nous ne laudrions jamais. Car par nature ils entendent ceste première affection qui estoit en nous pour juivre le bien. Ils ont bien cogneu la corruption par les effets comme rexprime, au nom de tous, Ouïde, l.j. amor.

Le nostre naturel comme on void tousjours tend  
A vouloir s'efforcer faire ce qu'on défend.  
Conseillé fuis par l'esprit autrement.  
Ce que le lmeilleur je cognoi, & approuve  
Et toutes fois tout soudaine le reprove  
En faisant choix du mals misirement.

Ils ont donc bien cogneu la maladie, & ruine: mais ils en ont ignoré la cause comme Catule le tesmoigne.

Le hayj ejr aime ensemble, oparavant un de demander pourquoi je le fait u as cure^ le te di n'en savoir la cause nullement.

Mais je le sens ainsi, ce qui m'est grand torment, l'estime que pour raison de ceste condition én laquelle est a présent l'homme, Áristote enseigne qu'en ceste vie nous ne pouvons parfaitement cognoistre Dieu. Car il rapporte la cause de cela a l'imbecillité qui est en nostre entendement. Or jaçoit que ceste infirmité tant pour suivre la vertu, que pour cognoistre ce qui de soi est clair, & facile soit en l'homme par le péché, tant y a qu'il lui reste allez deluhiicre pour le convaincre, tant d'ingratitude, que de paresse & d'infidélité. Car nous pouvons en nous mesmes comme toucher la sapience, & puissance de Dieu. Et par át il n'est j'ai besoin d'une longue, & laborieuse démonstration, ou recherche des tesmoignages qui servent pour illustrer la majesté Divine, veu qu'il s'en présente en nous une infinité. Mais singulièrement les facultez, & mouvemens tant agiles de nostre entendement, les dons d'i celui tant rares, le conseil, la prudence, la raison de laquelle celui est dit être justement privé, qui ne recognoist ces choses avoir esté parfaites de la main divine. Où nous rðe merit je vous prie, toutes ces faculté? Que dirons nous de la vertu intelleótive pour composer, pour denîer, pour ratiociner, pour contempler, & apprehender. Que sera ce de la puissance d'appeter, de mouvoir, de sentir & de végéter? Tout cela sera il de soi mesme? Que dirons nous de l'invention des arts, & sciences, de la perfection, & droit usage d'icelles, & de la dextérité que nous appercevons aux uns plus que aux autres, de l'administration des Royaumes, de la police des Republicues, des entreprises, & généreuses exécutions d'icelles, & autant ingénieuses, & voire des choies inusitées. Mais surtout de l'inquisition que fait l'homme de la Divinité, & des choses célestes, dira on que ces choses prouvennent d'un rencontre fortuit des atomes? Pourquoi ne produit il le mesme à présent? Au avoir mon si ce rencontre des atomes digérant la viande, & le breuvage en fait ceste prudéte, & sage dispersion, & séparation; pour en jeter une partie comme extremés; & l'autre comme nourriture aux membres pour exercer & opererieur office? Si quelcun est si effronté que de le

vouloir dire ne le faudra il pas renvoyer avec les bestes & l'efster du rang común des homm., Mais oyons sur ce sujet :

Et A divers méfier sfin industrie efend.  
Ce gentil animal qui régit toute chose.  
En la terre habitable a sa demeure encloses  
L'a donnée au labeur, les animaux a pris,  
S'ejl fait chemin sur mer, & pour n'estre surprit.

S'efi retiré au chef, comme a la forteresse,  
Ou dessus tous les sens la raison ejl maistre  
Leve les yeux au Ciel, ces deux celestes yeúx,  
Et de plus pres encor regarde dans les cieux,  
Il cherche Jupiter, é" finese contente  
Sans plus, du front des Dieux que le Ciel représente,

il fouille jusqu'au fond, ejr tousjours s'approchant Comme un nu du Ciel, au Ciel je vais cherchant.'

Archkas de Tarente prononce son adieus en cès mots. Cela, dit-il, me semble avoir esté qui est aüssi, c'est que l'homme a esté créé par Dieu, par de lui a toutes les facultes. Circeron conclud ainsi. C'est animal, àk il prouviant sage ingénieux-, subtil, memorati forné de raison plein de conseil lequel nous appelions homme en excellente condition, a esté fait du souverain Dieu. Car lui seul entre tant d'animaux a esté formé de la raison de laquelle les autres ont été jriue. En Zenophon il y a un dis, auquel ií prouve qu'il y á un Dîeu: qui a fait l'homme, & à dispose & distingué toutes ses parties, & e par la figure du corps humain; par la perfection des organes sensitifs, par les affections naturelles, & par les admirables actions de l'esprit. Il n'est pas besoin d'insister sur ces choses d'autant qu'elles sont la & ailleurs amplement deduittes sèulement l'advertir ai que comme l'ignorance engendre orgueil: aussi plusieurs ne fache ce que c'est que de l'homme, & de ses facultez l'estiment semblable aux bestes, & mesprisent, avec desdain tour ce qu'ils n'entendent, ou plustost ne veulent pas entendre. Cependant en eux memes ils portent ce qui le» rendra inexcusables. Car outre le sentiment de Divinité qui est en eux de nature, leur corps, la composition de ses membres, leur ame, & ses facultez demonstrent assez manifestement que Dieu en est l'autheur, comme les sages des Gentils ont creu, tenues crit, & confessé.

#### **Chapitre 4 - Le Monde en Général, & Notamment l'Ordre que Nous y Appercevons Preschent la Divinite, ce qut À estre Cogneu par les Philosophes**

Nous avons monstre que l'homme, qui est appelle le petit monde, démonstreassez clairement par sa composition, & considération de sès parties qu'il y a un Dieu. Maintenant il faut recueillir les tesmoignages de cela que les autres créatures nous exhibent. Alcinoüs propose ces moiens. Quelcun, dit il, se prenant garde de la beauté du corps vient de la à celle de l'ame, en apres a celle qui estés ocèffices, & Les loix. Finalement a la fontaine de bonté, la ou est le bien qu'il faut desirer & aimer duquel les tesmoignages, & les traces apparoissent si clairement en la nature des choisis? Il ne faut aucunement douter que ceux qui suivront ce chemin ne parviennent là. Car il se manifeste si evidemment, & en l'homme, & en ce bastiment tant exquis du ciel, & de la terre 5 Se journellement s'y monstre, & presènre en telle sorte que nous ne saurions ouvrir les yeux qu'ils ne bien r,^ contraints de l'appercevoir. Son essence est a la vérité, & invisible,&

incorhp'rehenmntñf ãible, mais de quelque couste du monde, & de qa'on jette les yeux, il n'y a si petite choie & par laquelle on n'apperçoive quelque estircclle de sa gloire. Que dirons nous donc de ceste grande machine du monde? Y a il chose plus claire, & evidente, âpres avoir contemplé le Ciel, les choses célestes, & terrestres, que de dire qu'il y a quelque souveraine sagesse par laquelle toutes ces choses sont régies, & contenues en cest ordre si excellent que nous y appercevons? Comme a dit Lucilius en Cicéron, vient en quelque maison, ou en quelque collège, ou en quelque palais, votant comment tout s'y comferte, la disciplines l'ordre qui y en juge que tout cela n.est sans cause, ainsi qu'il y a quelqu'un ayant intelligence lequel y préside, & auquel l'on obeits ; et plus forte raison il faudra voire nécessairement en tant de mounements, & vicissitudes, & changemens des choses, & les ordres desquels la vie **Ile (se, n'a apforté** aucun défaut,qu'on eifabliffe quelque suprême entendefituídment qui régisse gouverne tout cela. Chri'eflJe 6p?US adjoute ceste raison, S'il y a, dit il, gMment, quelque chose en la nature que l'entendement humain, la raison, ejr la puissance humaine ne peut faire, certes ce qui l'aurd faites plus que l'homme. Or es-~i ainsi que les choses celestes, tjr toutes celles desquelles í ordre ejl perpétuel ne seuvent estre faites par l'homme,par quoi ce qui les aura faites fera plus grand, & meilleur que l'homme. Qui pourra on dire estre celui si non Dieu? Si quelçun ne le peut croire d'autant que Dieu n'est point veu, qu'il est çoute ce que dit le même Philosophe, & en mesme ìicu. A savoir mon, àit i\,en votât vue moifon grade, dr excellate^ejrne [achat par qui elle aura ete faite si tu diras qu'elle a e fié faite des rats, & des fouriyt si tu fais cas d'un tel ornement du monde avec si grande variétés de la beauté des choses celestes-, de l'ample grandeurs puissance de la mer, et de la terre, tu dis, áit ìi3 cela efire ton domicile, et non celui de Dieu ne te montíreras pas hors de jugement, & de raison? Aristote, & les autres ont conclue pour ces raisons & autres qu'il y a un Dieu le quel gouverne le monde, & me£ rnement par la considération de la beauté du ciel, de k constance du mouvement des tours & changemens des temps, & des choses. Item par la considération de nostre vie, & de tout l'univers, toutes lesquelles choses ils ont cogneu ne pouvoir avoir esté faites, que par quelque principe tressages très-bon qui préside a toute ceste université. Or comme ci dessus nous avons examiné le petit môde par les parties d'autant que la puissance & sapience de Dieu y est mieux recogneue: aussi faut il qu'en cest endroit nous usiós de semblable méthode. Nous commencerons par les choses superieures, d'autant que comme disoit AIfames^ cinpusjò»w iv&w2k\*c°i\*ì3\* &c. Nous admiKnoien.; ons au secours des Astres, & du Ciel, l'ouvrier de la nuict, & du jour, des mois, & des ans, par lesquelles comme par une voie propre, & naturelle nous paruielidrons au créateur. Euripide conformément. ',

Splendeur du Ciel esielié qui tout couvre, D'un sage ouvrier admirable chef â'œuvre. Nous voyons premierement le soleil resplendiísant d'une très claire lumière le quel ne se destourne jamais de son cours ordonné, & ne passe auçuneméc les bornes qui lui sont prescripte si l'aprochement ou recullement duquel tépere les chaleurs, & froidures & selon qu'il approche, ou recule du septétrion & du midi sait l'hyuer; & l'esté, son movemét se fait de sorte qu'âpres avoir illuminé la terre de sa fplëdcuren âpres il l obrage d'une admirable façon.Car l'óbre de la terre estât opposeç au soleil lanmct se sait. En âpres la Lune fuit le cours annuel du íoleil,en l'espace d'un mois, laquelle d'au L\* cause tant plus qu'elle s'en approche ía lueur ít ^"fl"\*~ diminue, & au contraire, d'autantplus qu'el le s'en recule d'autant plus elle s'augmente, màn!' d'ou procèdent tant de mutations des humeurs. Le soleil aiát son cours l'imité tient comme le premier lieu ; & les autres corps célestes lui obéissent comme à leur Prince, & Roi. Et combien qu'il soit plus grand que toute la terre, il souffre neantmoins un nombre innumerable d'estoiles tournoier dessous lui. En outre l'on apperçoit diverses motions aux astres: les l'une de l'autre. D'ou viendra c'est accord discordant, & qui est ce qui le maintient, & conserve si long temps? Qui est ce qui aura alligné a un chacun son mouvement, & sa place ? Cestes ceste conversion admirable du soleil, & son mouvement si soudain, les ordres fermes, & arreztez des ailles, la

liaison, & entresuite des jours & des nuicts la diversité des faisons, & des temps qui se fait tant par le soleil, que par les autres corps célestes pour le bien, & conservation de toutes choses excluent ouvertement la fortune, demonstrent manifestement qu'il y a quelcun souverainement sage qui régit, iefef- & gouverne toutes ces choses. Car ce n'est 'soUiiâ' Point í"ans l'ordonnance de quelcun que les âmes soleil estant pres de nous, nous eschauffe plus que quand il en est es longné, que la Lune croissante augmente les humeurs, & des croissante qu'elle les diminue ; que les t4»se pléiades, & hyades ordinairement donnée a la Lune & les planètes secs sont dés grav aux signes chauds on sent des véhémentes kurs\*\*' cna^eurs, & au contraire. Ces choses actif sont elles ces vertuz d'elles mesmes? Pourquoi ne pleut il tousiours, ou fait beau temps? Pourquoi ne fait il tousiours chaud? Pourquoi ne contons nous trente íphatres píustost qu'avec Aristote & les autres huit seulement? La lune s'est elle mise d'elle même fhtm me en ^a première Mercure en la prochaiticux. nc, Venus en la troiziesine, le Soleil en la quatriesme Mars en la cinquiesse, Jupiter en la sixiesme, Saturne en la septiesme, & les estoiles fixes en la huitiesme? Ces choses manifestent assez ouvertement qu'elles sont ordonnées d'un Dieu. Car il n'y a rien qui puisse estre meu par raison & nombre sans conseil auquel il n'y a rien qui puisse çst reténéraire, ou fortuit. Nous dirons donc avec Trimcgiste, dire, il ya quelçun qui est facteur & seigneur de toutes ces choses . Car le lieu le nombre, & la mesure ne se peuvent consèrver sans le facteur.

Si de la nous descendons aux choses basics nous n'y trouverons gueres moins de tesmoignages de la divinité. Premièrement.

La terre qu'on contemple, la terre située, & nonobstant son poix subsister au milieu du mon -eJiueni' de, solide, roide, & vestue d'arbres, de plantes, de fleurs, de verdure, & de fruits hv"h' multitude infinie desquels est distingirée un ,f\* par apparence diversité, & avec ce de fontaines, de ruissèaux, de rivieres, de montagnes grandes, & petites, de coustaux, de colines, & d'amples campagnes. Item d'especes infinies d'animaux. Qu'elle est la grandeur, & beauté de la mer? Tous fleuves en sortent & y retournent, & toutesfois elle ne redonde point ; & combien qu'elle soit quelques fois en furie espouvantable, voire tellement qu'il semble que la terre doive estre submergée, tant y a qu'elle ne passe pas ses bornes, Mais surtout la conservation des espèces demonstre que le monde ne peut estre par fortune, ou par une concurrence des atomes. Car nous voions un chien engendrer un chien, un bœuf procréer un bœuf, & ainsì des autres. Mais sur tout la constitution, composition, & ordre de toutes choses qu'on apperçoie ci bas. La nuict suit le iour, l'esté le printemps, la pluie le beau temps, les semailles la moisson, & les autres qu'on ne sauroie déduire par le menu. Davantage les elemens, & les parties du monde ne sont pas de mesme nature, & qualitez, ains contraires. Comment est ce donc que le monde peut tant subsistes? Nous voions par expérience qu'un bien petit nombre d'hommes ne peut demeurer gueres longtemps d'accord sans un supérieur, je ne parle point d'un Roiaume, d'une Prouince, ni d'une 'sfnl . Cite, ains d'une petite famille en laquelle encan- tout ira en confusion sans quelque cner, ou 'fHsitrn quelqu'un qui íbit comme chef. Comment est ce donc que la machine du monde qui est composée de substances qui ont des qualitez tant contraires pourroit demeurer, & si long temps subsister, & ces qualitez contraires unies si en la diversité d'icel les qui Font le corps d'íce lui il n'y avoit une harmonie, & accord admirable qui fait aux susdites diverses qualitez prester mutuellement leurs natures, & mouvemens, si elles n'estoient par deí"us cela conojntes & consèrvées en ceste conjonction harmonie & accord par quelque vertu plus excellente? En outre si le gouvernement du monde estoit delaissè, & que les natures contraires fussent dis-jointes, & qu'une chacune d'icelles demeurait en son lieu par quelle raison ou moien semefferoient elles pour la composition du corps? Que si elles se pouvoient messer il est certain qu'elles ne pourroient faire ce que porte leur vertu, a ssaoir eschauffer, refroidir, humecter & sècher. Mais jiulement l'ordre des formes, car mesmes les choses artificielles d'ordre des formes, figures, &

revolutions ne procède de la matière, ainsi plustost de la pensée & volonté de Tourier. Et iaçoit que le ciel régisse en quelque façon les elemens, si est ce qu'il est facile de recueillir par la diversité des formes, & des mouvenemes qui soutien celui qu'il emprunte ceste vertu d'ailleurs, assaeioir de quelque vertu supérieure qui soit ferme, & stable qui ne depende d'aucune autre. Ceste considération a fait dire au Philosophe au livre du monument de que comme en une armée il y a tel ordre que combien qutlyait plusieurs regimens, & plusieurs bandes, toutes néant moins regardent a un chef & par lui sont ordonnées: Ainsi eji de Dieu & du monde. Et de fait aussi si cela n'estoit, & que Dieu comme chef n'y tint la main, tout iroit en horrible confusion. Il y a plusieurs causes au monde, comme plusieurs capitaines en une armée, mais qui se réfèrent, & qui dépendent de la première, autrement un poirier produiroit autres fruits que des poires, & ainsi de toutes autres natures: ou bien tout retourneroit en un Cahos. Finalement pourquoi est ce qu'un total seroit meilleur que ses parties s'il ne trouvoit une cause, & commune, & plus excellence que plusieurs causes par la vertu de laquelle plusieurs sont assemblez en un? Il y a donc une cause plus exellente que les choses ordonnées, & comme difoit A

L'entendement est celui qui dispose, & est cause de toutes choses. Ec Trismegiste, tu désires, dit il, de voir Dieu contemple l'ordre du monde, & le paremfc, & la beauté de l'ordre, considère la nécessité des choses apparentes, & la providence des choies qui sont faites, & qui sont a faire. Et cela non sans cause, Car comme nous avons desja dit, tout ordre présuppose raison, raison présuppose un sujet; & par ainsi il nous a mene a son autheur qui est Dieu. Les Philosophes, qui ont diligemment recherché, & examiné la nature, & propriété des choses, nous convient par leurs clerics de conclurre ainsi. Comme aussi d'un mutuel accord, & consentement il ont recogneu un Dieu souverain. Leur but principal a esté de ramener l'operation de nos entendemens des choses terrestres, & adveques aux célestes, & eternelles: de ce qui est mobile, a ce qui est immobile: des choses sensibles, aux insensibles, reduisans tout a une première cause, & voians que le monde ne peut subsister de soi mesme estant composé de tant de diverses, & contraires qualitez, ils nous rameinent à un gouverneur, & conservateur, perpetuel. Et notamment Platon, en son Timae, & Aristote au livre de sa Métaphysique. Au reste Epicure dr,t\*'<, 'ciesine proposant ce qui est pour tendre la vie bienheureuse, ne dit il pas temoin Laeftius, qu'il faut tenir qu'il y a un Dieu immortel, comme le dict la commune intelligence & ne lui attribuer rien de ce qui ne convient a l'immortalité & a la félicité. Il est donc certain que tous hommes d'un mutuel accord & commune conception ont attesté, & conclud qu'il y a un Dieu. Pourtant comme ainsi soit que nostre consciences, nostre corps, notre ame, tout le inonde tous les Philosophes temoignent qu'il y a uné Divinité suprême, de là nous pouvons aisément juger que ceux la sont indignes d'estre tenus au rang des hommes; qui le ni en tj ou revoquent en doute. Concluons donc avec Sophocles:

De vrai n'y a qu'un seul grand Dieu qui si Tout l'universe, ejr- ces bas lieux a/fit, Tout le grand dos de la grand terre ferme; L'air, & le Ciel, qui en son tour enferme? & couvre tout flots et bagues marines sont de ses mains les ouvrages tres dignes. Et si donna aux vents le faussement l'on void en eux si fort, & véhément; Et l'Océan embellit de mainte onde. Enfemme il fit tout ce qui est au mondés.

Et disons, ce a quoi naturellement Raccordent les hommes est véritable, Or est ainsi que tous tèsmoigne ne qu'il y a un Dieu,&pourtant suivant l'aduis de Platon croiós qu'il y a un Dieu & ne nous laissons troubler par les opinions de ceux qui voudront tenir du contraire.

## **Chapter 5 - Les Amples Considerations des Facultés, de l'Ame, et des Autres Créatures qui Preschent la Divinité**

Pource que Terreur, la folie, l'aveuglement, & l'ignorance ont introduit les noms de nature, & de fortune; & que ceux contre lesquels nous combatons sont estât de ces noms: afin qu'il soit notoire a un chacun que Cicéron a dit verité, outre ce, que nous avons proposé, nous adjoutons ce qui s'enfuit. L'onvoid qu'entre les choses qui sont en la nature, les unes estre simplement, les autres avec mouvement & vie, Aucunes avec mouvement, vie, & intelligence. Car il y en a qui sont endormies sânl tñu sentir leur mouvement, tousjours fermes en leur estat. Et d'autres se nourrir croistré sesn-'fi & decroistre. il y en a qui sont esmeuves par fimit . leur force & vertu, & d'autres qui ont sens interieurs, & extérieurs. Il y en a qui sent de raison. Ceste distinction tant admirable sera elle fortuite. Pourquoi est ce que les choses qui vivent de la vie qu'on dit vegetative, comme les Plantes ont besoin d'aliment tiré de la terre, & les poissons non? Nature aura elle orné l'homme outre le sentiment, & mouvement, de la faculté raisonnable, sans aucun conseil? En outré ceste diversité qui est entre les Plantes nori seulement de longueur, d'espesteur de forme, & de couleur: mais aussi de faculté á force, & de vertu ne presehe elle pas un autheur? Si quelque statue, ou effigie faite par Apelles, ou par Phidias est mise devant nos yeux, ne seront nous pas incontinent esmeús d'en louer l'Autheur? D'ou vient donc que lontemp sans ce grand, & tant excellent courage, du Ciel & de la terre nous ne sommes esmeus pour én louer, & exalter plus le Créateur? Quy mais dira l'aùtheur, & :d'une maison, & d'une effigie, mais ce n'est pas le mesme du monde, & de gifo Dieu. Je respns que nous pouvons aisément appercevoir l'architect de l'univers, des yeux de l'entendement si nous les ouvrons. Il est bien vrai que les essences naturelles des choses ne sont point veuës de nous, ainsi qu'elles demeurée cachées, si profondi des cachetés d'une chacune d'icelles. Car il est impossible à nos entèndeniens jestans chargez ; & appesantis de ceste masse dé corps, & enveloppez dé ténèbres qu'ils y puissent parvenir, & penetrer: & Jaçoit qu'il le receut erripeschement d'ailleurs, tant y a qu'il y en a assez en sa condition. Aucuriá ont jugé que comme l'Eternel voulant faire le monde, premièrement amis la màũ aux éléments & aux natures plus grossières: àinsi nostre esprit polit cognoistre les choses examine, & recherche en premier lieu, les accidenses actiôs des natures, les parties des choses, & les causes pair lesquelles: elles sont, & subsistent. Par quoi en la consideration des choses naturelles, c'est à dire les substances, il peut-estre notoire a chacun que le commencement se doit faite par les actions. Car une chacune chose a ses œuures, & ses actions selon la substance, & selon fâ nature. I I faut donc, comme àussi l'experiencè l'enseigne, commencer par lès sens, des sens venir a la fantasie, ôu de la a l'entendement, & raison. Or les accidens font les obiects des sêns. Mais la raison juge facilement que les natures n'ont pas d'elles mesmes leur action. Comme par exemple, s'il se présente quelque herbe, ou quelque racine devant nos yeux, premièrement on void l'exterieur, aũ àvoir la couleur, & la figure, & d'autant qu'on les met au rang des substances qui sont concrètes , l'on considère comment elle est en terre, ce que l'cau, le soleil, & la lumière Sí le reste y font : on la gouste austl, & de la iê recueillent, fes facilitez, qui font produitt'espar l'accord deselemens. Des choses extérieures se fait abstraction à l'entenderhent lequel raciocinant de ceci & de cela cet fin conclude estre plante, ou racine, estre de telle, ou telle vertu. Il use de mesme méthode en recherchant la nature & propriété des autres substances, observant qu'elles choses ont esté les premières & qu'elles les posterieures, quel est tords ej8i la fcktc des choies qu'il faut considérer & cest œuvre admirable. En outre d'autant que rien xf á ne peut éstre de foi simplement, & n'll point distingué des autres choses fortuitement, de la il recueille, & conclud qu'il a sa fâculté, & distinction de quelcu'un. Or Ceux la expérimentent combien grandes, & diuerfes conclusions se font en l'entcndement, en la contemplation des choiês, & use leurs actions; lesquels exercent la force: de leur esprit, & comment il ne peut estré contentm & acquiescer jusques a ce qu'il íbic parvenu a quelque parfâit. Car quand l'tfc prit médite, & examine l'òrigine des choses, & leurs parties, leurs causes, & offices distribuez en leur Ordre, & classe, il ne ccíié de chercher, & examiner jusques a ce qu'il soit parvenu á la consideratíon, & cognoissance d'un ouvrier parfait, & souverain. Par ceste méditation il observe la sagesse, puissance, & bonté de l'autheur, lèquel à ordonné toutes choses si sagement: & eh fírt il

infere, & conclud, de quel ordè, & pour Ruelle fin il faut user de ces choses. Et pòustance l'on vient nécessairement des choses sensibles, de la fantasie, de l'entende mèn, & raison á a parfait.' Cela se cogvoit aisément en reputarît qu'il y a des choies plus parfettes les unes que les autres, en montant la vertu croist, & en descendant elle se diminue, tellement qu'elle est contrainte s'estant peu a peu débilitée de demeurer finalement en quelque lieu, comme en la génération d'un arbres des autres choies desquelles la génération se fait successivement, comme au mouvement des animaux, au commencement il est plus lasche, & plus tort au milieu ; & les choses eschaufées & agitées d'esprit, en descendant il est plus de bile, d'autant que les esprits sont consumez. Et de la il a pert qu'il n'y a point infinité de causes & d'effets, & qu'il en faut establir une de vigueur infinie & ne empruntât d'ailleurs ce qui est notoire par ceste deduction. Tout corps est mèii de quelque autre que de soi-mesme, pour ce que de sa nature il ne se peut mouvoie n'ayant de soi aucune action, ce que manifestement s'apperçoit quand l'ame est séparée du corps par la présence donc de l'ame le corps a mouvement, & vie, ce qu'il n'auroit autrement niant de sa nature telle propriété. Or l'ame a puissance de se mouvoir & ce qui a puissance de se mouvoir le peut distribuer aux autres. Or quand nous disons que l'ame a mouvement nous entendons cela absolument, comme quand l'on dit que le feu est chaud de soi, une chacune partie du feu, est feu, & est chaude. Car ce n'est point une partie qui meut, mais toute de soi, c'est a dire de sa nature elle a mouvement d'un a l'autre je le discourt par raison. Je ne veux pas m'arrester ici a remarquer la diversité des opinions sur ceci. Il sçai bien que Platon disoit, comme Plutarque itmc que a recueilli, que l'ame est tousjours mouvante, & l'entendement immobile quant au mouvement d'un lieu a l'autre. & Áristote que l'ame est immobile encores que ce soit elle qui régisse, ou mesme tout mouvement, mais bien en est elle participante par accidents sêlon que les divers corps se meuvent. il met trois raisons en avant pour réfuter Ptaton, Mais ceste diversité, & contrieté d'avis n'empesche point le fil de nostre propos. Car l'ame avant commencement, ce mouvement qui est par elle aura aussi eu son commencement. Et partant sur, & devant le mpuuement qui est par l'ame, il faudra nécessairement establir quelque substance stable. C'est une maxime recue sans contradiction & tfue tout ce qui a commencement a nécessairement quelque cause de celuy. Comme donc ce qui est parfait precede ce qui est imparfait, il faudra aussi mettre devant l'âme, une cause certaine, & continuelle, tellemét qu'ainsi que le corps a mouvement par l'ame, l'ame semblablement aura son commencement d'entendre de Dieu. Or comme il y a plusieurs choses qui sont obiessées aux sés qui ne peuvent estre perceues par ceux qui en sont privez : aussi y a il plusieurs choses qui peuvent seulement être appréhendées par la seule opération de l'entendement. D'ou viendra ces nécessités, & distinction? Comme donc les sens sont pour raison des choses sensibles semblablement l'entendement pour celles qui sont intelligibles. Or il y a plusieurs natures participantes des hommes sens , & n'y en a aucune d'intelligence ou jfcnifié' tre l'homme. C'est pourquoi Iamblique dit que Pythagoras suivant cela avoit bien licence. Parle, quand il a dit que tout homme a esté fait de Dieu, pour çognoistre, & entendre. Et de fait si l'ame de soi avoit telle faculté, on en pourroit autant dire des bestes, lesquelles toutesfois n'ont intelligence ni raison. D'ou procede ceste différence? Certes non fêuënient elle enseigne l'excellence de l'homme & son immortalité, mais aussi, voire principalement qu'il y a quelque parfait qui la douë de si belles, & excellentes qualitez. Pour confirmation l'adioure, l'ame ne peut aucunement douter de soi, car elle se cognoist. Et c'est une ignorance par trop grossiere, voire plustost une brutalité, de ne distinguer voire séparer l'ame du corps, & dire que ce n'est qu'une mesme chose, les admirables opérations de l'ame, & mesmement le corps estant endormi, démontrée assez le contraire. L'ame donc cognoit & sçait qu'elle est d'autre substance que le corps, & qu'elle à d'autres facultez. Or L'ame d'autant qu'elle ne se peut ignorer elle de la ams née a recognoistre qu'elle a commencé d'estre, n'estant de soi-mesme, & n'ayant commencement du père comme il sera vérifié ci apres, il faudra qu'elle conclue que c'est par quelcun plus excellent, plus pur, plus parfait & qui soit sans commeniennement. Outre plus entre les ames il y a une grande différence non pas de substance, mais pour



ce qu'elles ont toutes une substance sukim-spirituelle, mais leurs qualitez sont grandement diversses. Qui causera ceste diversité? Cela ne s'apperçoit pas seulement ça l'ame, mais aussi on ne peut dire qu'entre tant de natures qui sont au monde, en ít grande quantité, & différence il n'y en ait quelques unes plus excellentes que les autres; Or la ou l'on trouve plus & moins on trouve aussi quelque supreme, & tres-grand. Comme aussi on ne trouve en ce monde aucune nature tellement excellerez & préeminente par dessus les autres qu'elle n'est point de supérieure. Nous voions le premier Ciel, lequel quelques uns appellent première intelligence, avoir neantmoins, d'autant qu'il est fini, & limité, quelque infini par dessus soi qui toutesfois est immobile, & ce d'autant qu'on ne peut aller en infinité de causes. Tout ainsi donc que toutes dimensions se rapportent au signe, tous nombres a l'unité, encores que le signe ne soit fait de dimensions, ni l'unité des nombres: semblablement toutes natures, & simples, & composées se rapportent à quelque principe qui ne peut estre composé, ainsest très-simple n'estant mesme avec aucuns accidens, voire sans qu'on y puisse etablir quantité ou qualité, mais plustost. convient reconnoistre que c'est unçfuMá\*. çe indivisible. Et c'est Dieu très-bon, & très-grand lequel a ceste occasion est appellé par Aristote principe immobile, & stable pour le distinguer des Cieux, & autres natures qui sont sujettes a mutation, & altération. La liaison qui est entre les créatures comme nous auons dit nous a mesme là. Et par tât il faut reconnoistre une cause souveraine du corps, de l'ame & de toutes autres choses.

## **Chapter 6 - La Consideration de la Nature il faut Nécessairement Venir a une Première Cause Immobile et Immatérielle sans qu'on Puisse Passer Outre**

Les Philosophes constituans par raison demonstrations, divers genres, diverses espèces, ou différences de formes ont déchiré une première, & principale cause qui maintient toutes les autres. Comme aussi la raison ameine l'entendement a conclurre que ce monde visible, dépend de quelque souverain, & très-excellent ouvrier. Et que comme l'ombre n'est sans le corps, de mesme le monde ne peut estre sans une cause efficiente, & souveraine. Car en ice l'n il y a plusieurs espèces la multitude desquelles se reduit à unité. Comme la multitude des hommes se reduit a ce qu'on dit nature humaine la multitude des brebis, & des bceiits de mesme, & ainsi des autres especes. Or toutes ces unitez qui sont finies, & ont nombre déterminé, ont necessairement une unité par dessus elles, assavoir Dieu qui est le premier, & Prince-des efpc? Tautn ccs\* Car çomme la multitude des eboses sîngulieres estant quasi infinie est réduit nMfit rc a ^es c^PeCcs fiuics, & se rapportent a une qui est infinie non en nombre, ainsi en vertu. Comme aussi toutes matières sont reduites a une, toutes les parties du monde a un corps: semblablement toutes les créatures du monde, & toutes ses vices se réduisent a une, tous les moteurs a un qui meuve tout l'univers, & neantmoins soie immobile. Or que ce premier doive estre immobile, & de vertu infinie, il appert pour-ce que s'il avoit quelcun par dessus soi, il dependroit d'un autre, & celui d'un autre, & ainsi faudroit aller en infinité, et qui ne se peut faire. Et partant ce premier est distingué de toutes autres choses par cepe: ceste différence qu'il est simplement de soi-mesme, c'est a dire subsiste de sa propre vertu, & donne estre a toutes autres choses, plemnt Ce que les Hebrieux expriment par ce moi de Jehova. En outre nous voions les corps qui sont ci bas est reluicts a mutation d'estre à non estre, & au contraire d'un ils sont changez en un autre. Les choses célestes encores qu'elles soient les plus excellentes, tant y a qu'elles sont Arrettes a cela de se changer d'un a l'autre. Tout donc sera esgalcn ce naturel. S'il n'y a rien par dessus ces corps, ou ils n'avoient d'ailleurs leür estre, ou s'ils l'avoient eu & il y a long temps qu'ils avroient defailli, pource qu'ils sont fluides, coulans, & instables, il faut donc jusqu'ils aient leur estre de quelque substance stable, & simple. Ils ne l'avoient de le receu d'autre, pourceque s'il y avoit esgalité ils ne se pourroient aucunement déterminer a l'être, & eussent defailli d'autant qu'estans fluides, coulans, & inconstans de leur nature, ils fussent pieça reduits à tien, sinon que quelque substance stable les fust maintenuz, Cela a donné occasion au Philosophe de dire qu'il faut

estimer que Dieu est en un degré supérieur, & que vertu est espadue par tout. Au 8.ode BfW l'audition naturelle il traite cest argument. Et me semble qu'il sera pour le meilleur de proposer ici sommairement ce qu'il en dit. Je sçai bien que plusieurs estiment qu'en ce passage il ne parvient que jusques au premier moteur, se mouvant soi-même ; & que c'est au lmre de la Métaphysique qu'il cherche i'immobile. Mais il est assez notoire que ceste ci est la proposition. En la nature des choses se trouve un moteur de vertu infinie, pource qu'il meut en temps infini: or pour premier cela, & pour parvenir à son prétendu il use d'une similitude fort propre, a savoir que le petit monde, c'est à dire l'homme nous enseigne comment le grand monde, & l'univers est gouverné. au petit monde il y a l'ame, & le corps qui font deux choses de diverse nature. L'ame est principe de mouvement au corps: Le mesme convient dire de Dieu, & du monde, seulement cela nous doit desplaire qu'il compare le moteur mouvant le monde au fnoUement vital de l'homme dequel il devoit plustost comparer au mouvement local. Car Dieu opere volontairement sens estre aucunement astraint ny lié aux causes lecodes. Certes l'opération est tres propre à Dieu par laquelle il ne deschet aucunement de son estât & ne diminue la vertu vérité, & simple nature & laquelle a ceste occasion est ditte opération de l'entendement pour la distinguer de l'operation naturelle, laquelle se commençant en l'agent se finit, & defaut en ce qui patit, comme la chaleur du feu au bois. Or l'pperation de l'entendement retient & l'un & l'autre, a raison de quoy Parmenides disoit Dieu estre immobile, encores qu'il face mouvoir les cieux. Mais il faudra traiter ceste matière ci âpres. Or Aristote pour prouver qu'il y a une premiere cause immobile, & immatérielle & le prouve en premier lieu qu'il y a mouvement en la nature, & par mouvement il entend que ceste agitation, substantielle, ou accidentelle qui est au sujet par laquelle agitation se sait, acquisition, ou perte de forme, qui peut estre receue, ou perdue. Car en toute fiatute il y a inclination ou vertu qui est née au corps qui est cause de mouvement, ou de reposition a aucuns corps qui ne tende; à mutation, c'est à dire a génération, ou corruption, augmenration, ou diminution, tnfti altération & mutation de lieu. Comme les ipuisse animaux, & les plantes tendent a gènereuse d\* ti°nJ & diuer les arrections, & les corps cemoim- lestes à mouvement de lieu. Il provue donc qu'il y a mouvement en la nature des choses, & attribue au Ciel, eternal mouvemen, & repos a la terre: que le reste quelques fois est meü, quelques fbis no. La dessus il divise les choses qui sont meü's, & qui agitent, en celles qui sont agitées & agitent, par elles mesmes, & en celles qui le sont par accident, par autre, ou par accident celles qui sont és autres qui agitent ou qui sont agitées, & qui en partie. Grparleil ainsi pour monstrier que ce qui est meü par accident est en plusieurs sortes. Comme au mouvement local, quand le total s'esmeut par soi la partie s'eiment par accident au mouvement du total. Pareillement ce qui contient est meü par accident au mouvement du conten. Comme le Nautonnier ou celui qui sera assis dans la nature: & l'amé au corps. Si le navire est meü du vent, J'homme sera meü par accident. il adioute l'ex position de l'autre membre. Par celles,qui agitent ou sont agité espion pour être en Celles qui agitent & qui sont agitées, ne aussi pource que aucune de leve partie agite, ou fbit agicée. Entre celles qui sont agitées d'elle mesmes, aucunes donc esmeuës d'elles mesmes, aucunes par autre mouvement, & sont les unes agitées par nature, les autres par violence contre nature. Car ce qui est agité de joi mesme est agité par nature, comme un chacun animal: veu que chacun animal est agité de mouvement par luimesme. Par nature, i<jmme le corps par l'âme, par violence, comme quand l'homme îaulte, quand une pierre est kttec en l'air. Là dessus il dit qu'il faut diligemment distinguer ce qui agite, & ce qui est agité, & esmeu, comme cela s'apperçoit clairement des choses agitées par violence & des choses animées. Car l'ame est á l'endroit du corps, comme le Navtonnier à l'e droit du navire. Il dit le mesme des choses qui sont sans ame. Car elles-ont toutes, û elles ne fbnt empeschées, une vertu intérieure qui les pousse par manière de dire, en leur lieu. Comme le feu n'estant empesché tend en haut au concave du Ciel de la Lune; & la terre au centre; les plantes a la production de leurs semblables ainsi des autres. Puis il dit qu'il y a deux sortes de i.strtti puissance. L'une prochaine, comme le feu dipuïs-peut eschauffer, & le pèsent tendre en bas. L'autre plus esloignée, comme le froid est en puissance estrange, & esloignée pour eschauffer ce qui ne se peut faire sâns mouvement par

accident. Córhe l'eau eschauffée, combien que de la nature elle soit froide, & humide toutes fois par accident elle peut eschauffer, àssavoir par l'operation du feu. Or ce qui est cause, que la puissance eslongnée, est en âpres puissance prochaines sans doute est áussi cause de mouvement; Par quoi quand nous dtsorts que le feu s'efleuve, & que la terre de ualc, il faut que cè ttipi. Par ^uc'eun. Finalement il monstre que ce qui est agité l'est nécessairement flrpt Par une autre, & ce en deux façons; que\*\* - ou par celui qui est agité d'autre, ou parifictnt CC^U1 n e^ P^nt d'aurre. Et combien qu'il soit esmeu par celui qui est ágiré d'autre, il est nécessaire qu'il y ait quelque premier mouvement qui ne soit agité ni esmeu par autre, òu bien il n'y auróit point de fin. Que s'il y a tel premier moteur il n'en faudra point requérir d'áuéré par dessus. Car il est impossible que ce qui est qui cil agité par autre procède en infinité, veu qu'il n'y a aucun premier, entre les infinis. Si donc tout ce qui cil agité l'est de quelque retouvement, il faut necessairement venir a un premier moteur immobile. Et de la il confirme l'opinion d'Anaxagore qui disoit que N£v c'est a dire Dieu estoit sans aucune commixtion, ou meflange, qui ne peut reccuoir extérieurement aucune choié,ains est principe,& fontaine de vie,& de mouuemét. Voila le sommaire de ce paísage, par lequel le Philolophe veut direeí ntj Tomme. Sion donnoit proerez, & continuation en inimité, es caules mouuantes ii upbys.

faudroit que tous les corps fussent infinis. Car puis que tout corps mouuant est agité, ce qui meut en mouuant feroit aussi meü par quòí ces corps finis se mouueroient en temps infini, ce qui est impossible, pourcè qu'il faut que ce qui est mouuant, & ce qui est meü soient énsiblement. Or est ainsi que les corps ne peuvent estre en semblér rien que par continuation, ou contiguátion, c. attouchement de l'un & l'autre, & par ainsi en temps fini il y adroit mouvement infini. Et de h Ton peut ainsi côclur têYlly ámoituemenc, il y a donc un Dieu.

Car tout cc qui est rheu est meü par autre agtt'tjt d'autant que rien ti'est meü qu'il né soit en î<í puiffanceàcequoíilcstmeü.Pourcequé mosMir mouuojr c>efl. mencr quelque chose de puisfánce à l'acte,ce qui rie íe peut que par quelque chose qui estdefair.Oronne donne point progresz en infinité. Il faut donc venir à Dieu première cause, & immobile. Et de sait és choies mouuantes qui sonc meues, & ordonnées, desquelles l'une est meüè par l'autre par ordre, il faut par nécessité en venir là, qu'en ostant le premier moteur, ou bien cessant de sa motion, il n'í en ait aucun qui soit mouuant, né qui soit meü, pource que le premier est cause du mouvement à tous les autres. Que si elles font mouuantes, & meüès par ordre en infini il n'í aura aucun premier mouuant, ains tous seront moiens, & au millieu, & ainsí nul ne pourroit mouvoir l'autre: & sien ne scroit meü au monde, ce qui est absurde. Simili esclarci par la similitude d'un t\*ie horloge. Il y a en premier lieu l'horlogeur & qui note, & marque les heures, le mouvement commence par vhC rouë laquelle en esmeut un cautre, & icélfé une autre ainsí sonc cause de mouvement l'une à Tauf rc. Or void on qu'il n'y a pas une roue qui ait mouvement de soi-mesme. Car la première roue I\*a du maistre, encores qu'il ne soit meü d'un autre, autrement il faudroit aller en infinité. Le mesme se void quand òn iette une pierre contre quelcun qui est mouvement vólent ; on dira que Iá main & le bras eri sont cause, puis on viendra a la cause de ce mouvement, & de la à la cause de ceste cause, & d'autant qu'en ce coupí fini en temps, il faudroit chercher une infinité de causes, ce qui ne se peut, de là l'on void qu'il faut par nécessité confesser une première cause de mouvement qui n'en ait point pâ dessus foi.

## **Chapitre 9 - l'Ordre Admirable est au monde 5 ejr les tuenemens contre tefi ordre Enseignent la Création du Monde**

PLaton en son Timee par ceste démonstration enfeigne, que le monde a eu cÓ- 5£ mencement & qu'il ne peut estre ecernel. wfc.i\* Tout ce qui est touché, & veu, a corps^a e- vtUmsté fait quelques fois, or est ainsi que

le monde est tel, car il est veu, & a corps: & partant quelque iour il prendra fin, comme il a eu cōmencemēt.or tout ce qui a cōmccemér. l'a de quelque chose. Et partat il faut establir vue cause du monde: laquelle soit inuisible, & încorporelle,dc soy, & qui ne soie engendrce, ny ne dépende d'aucune autre\* ccst argument est fort clair. Il a basti sa demonstration sur la nécessité de la cause procreante, comme Aristote l'a fait de l'ordre des mouvemens: par laquelle tous deux nous meinent a une première cause de toutes choses. Nous dirons donc, Toute substáappre- ce qui est appréhendée par les sens est concre & de forme, comme de fens'est ses parties. Or tout ce qui est compose, & astmpsé semblé des parties ne peut estre de soi mesme, car il seroit avant qu'estre sait il aura donc une cause efficiente. Car cela ne se vhit & compose, qui n'est principe d'actió, & d'union, pource que qui fait quelque chose le fait par quelque faculté qui est en soi, & unir appartient a une vertu totalement induisible: dont appert que les parties du monde, & du composé par un sien mouvement,ne se font point assemblées en la composition. Si doncques ce qui est corporel De peut subsister de soi mesme, ni se contenir, ni agir soi mesme:il faudra que ce soit d'ailleurs, il faudra donc donner une cause de lâ composition qui est de soi, se contiens & est entièrement indivisible, & qui ne íbit par autre, a ce qu'il n'y ait progresz en infinité. Mais examinons les parties du monde, car il n'y arien en celui í abject qui ne presche un auteur, il n'y a rien si difforme auquel Dieu n'ait départi quelque faculté. En outre nous expérimentons que toutes choses ne í font point de chacune semence, de la vigne on n'a point vfeu de pommes produittes. un Loup nc fait point un agneau. Item nous voions que les elemens í changent l'un en l'autre. Car nous voíos que par la vertu du soleil, de l'eau qui est froide, & humide l'air estre fait, quand la froidure s'est départie, & que l'humidité demeure, d'icelle se fait l'air.& quand de l'air le feu est fait, l'humidité se perd par la mesme opération &I\* siccité suruient.Ceste matière laquelle est, & exténuée seulement par raréfaction & eclaircíscment monté a la forme du feu. semblablement elle descend espessie, elle f enfle enaer, puis s'epessit en eau, & finalement s'appeíantit en terre, or ceste viciÊ ít ude,& tour se fait en temps : au temps il y a mesure, il y aura donc commencement de mefûre.& par quelqu'vn. Nous voions le meíme des parties de l'annee,car le pnn temps suitL'hyuer,& iceluy l'Esté, & puis l'Automne :qui est ce qui ne void ces rau» tarions se faire en temps,& par ordretergo dequelqu'vn.Lamerauflia son flux & reflux. L'aer a ses vens, maintenant cestui ci, otescestuilà: ily a donc commencement de flux, & une borne de vent, & par quel«ju'vn. Or est il facile decognoistre qu'es choies ou il y a neceífité,concatenation,& liaison il faut recourir a quelque commencement. Nous voions que les parties de Tannée dépendent du mouucment du solcilje flux & reflux de la mer de celui de la lune, & que la lune emprunte fa vertu du soleil: on apperçoit auífi que les mouuemens des corps célestes ne font pas semblables. Carilyamouuement par lequel l'estoile va d'une part a l'autre, qui fuit pat un cours droit, ily a áuflídesestoiles errantes, & qui retournent leurs cours, ce qu'on dit auoir esté premièrement obíeruc par Apollonius Pergaeus.

La lune faitfòn cours au Zodiaque tous les mois, Mars passe par le ciel des signes en 2 ans & 5 mois.Ciceró tiét que c'est en tietm. 24. moys moins six iours. Mercure le fait presque au mouuement du Soleil. Iupiter en 12 .ans. Venus (qui est ditte í)t?«©<Lucifer quand elle va deuant le soleil3& «w--' t& quand elle le fuit au coucher ) prelcq de mcíme;& Saturne en tréte ans. le soleil fait son cours naturel au zodiaqueentre les deux tropiques en ^j.iours six heures,& parfait l'annec. ces six heures assemblées font un iour lequel avec la nuict consiste en 2 4.heures;lequel il faut necclíairement intercaler de quatre en quatre ans. & c'est ce que nous appellós bilíexte. pource que ceste annee la Ion conte deux fois le 6. des calédes de Mars. Au reste les Astrologues ne sont pas bien d'accord touchât le mouuement du soleil. car aucuns veullent qu'il y ait outre les 3 6^ .iours six heures quelques minutes, pour raison desquelles l'Euefque de Rome a retranché il y a quelques annees dix iours.De ces choses nous pouons inférer en premier lieu qu'il fauc decerner .certain point du mouuement auquel tout a commencé a mouuoir. Comme aussi lesEgyptiens disent qu'au premier iour du monde Aries estoit au milieu du ciel, la Lune au Câcer, & le soleil au Lion. Dauantage comme difoit Algazel,

file inonde estoit éternel il faudroit donner un infini plus grand l'un, que l'autre: d'autant qu'il y a beaucoup plus de reuoirions de la Lune, que de Saturne. Et partant nous dirons avec Trismegiste qu'il y a quelqu'un qui est facteur, & Seigneur de toutes ces choses. Car le lieu, le nombre, & la mesure ne peuuent estre conseruez sans le facteur, ceste constance es estoiles, ceste grande conuenance des temps par tant de diuers cours en toute éternité ne peut estre entêdu sans entendement, raison, & conseil, Dauantage il n'y a rien qui puisse estre es' ineu, par raison, & nombre, îâns conseil. L'ordre qui est aux corps célestes reiette îa fortune, comme ennemie de constance, & fermeté. Parquoy Tordre fera de quelcun, & le conseil en quelcun. ce que Cicéron remarque & décrit au long. Nous voy\* ens dit il, premièrement la beauté lueur du Ciel) en âpres U légèreté à tournement telle que me/me nous ne la p ornions pas penser/en afres les viciffitudes^dr tours des nnifis, & des tours, les commutations » ejr changement des temps, partis en quatre pour amener les fruits a maturité, ejr pour tempérer les corps le modérateur de toutes ces choses ejr leur conduc\* tcur le soleils ejr lal/tnes laquelle par Accroissement & âecroiffemet de lumière, comme marquant & signifiant les iours des fa/les, & un mesme cieldijlribué en douze, que cinq efoiles sons séparées gardant me/mes cours trescon- ^ flamme n t par dissemblables mouuemens entre elles , ejf que la face du ciel de nuicl eft ornée de tous coufie7jí'efloiles, en âpres le globe de U terre éminent fur la mer au milieu de l'univers habitable & cultiuee ayant deux parties dtfiantes & ejlongnees l'une de l'autre. II adiout Cjun peu âpres. Jet ou nous habitons l'on voit la terre reluire de netteté) les arbres produire feuilles, les vignes qui refiouiffent, ietter les feuilles, & bourjons : les branches des petits arbres courbées, tant ils font chargez de fruits; les terresensemencées produire les bleds; en abondance: tout fleurir: les fontaines bâillonner, ejr les pre^veHus d'herbes : En âpres la multitude du beíail, en partie pour manger, en partie pour cultiuer la terre, en partie pour charrier, & porter, en partie pour ueffir le corps : or l'homme comme contemplateur du ciel\ & les champs & la mer obéi (fan s a ce qui ejl pour l'utilté dr profit de l'homme. Quand donc, dit il, nous votons ces choses, & une infinité d'autres, pouvons nous douter, qu'il n'y ait un créateur de ces choses qui les régisse & gouverne ; voila ou l'ordre admirable, qui est au monde Ta amené, & tous les hommes de jugement, a sa voir a recognoistre un créateur de l'univers qui est infini, & tout puissant. Maintenant voyons ou il faut rapporter les mutations & changemens de cest ordre, car ils scruent de beaucoup pour confirmer nostre proposition estans considerez comme il faut. Ceste maxime est assez familière entre tous, que tout ce qui est éternel n'eft point sujet a mutation, & changement. Car toute altération apelle la fin comme l'immortalité est l'argument d'éternité: aussi la mutation l'est des choses qui doivent prendre fin ; & ce qui n'a point de fin n'a point aussi de commencement. Parquoy puis q plusieurs choies de ce mode sont sujettes a mutation, & que les parties donnent démonstration de la nature du total, il s'enagtc'ejr fuiura quele monde ne peut estre éternel, que mu- ains plustost qu'il a eu commencement. Or est il facile de prouuer qu'il y a plusieurs choses, sous le concaue de la Lune fubiettes a mutation, or appelions nous mutaÍÍQst non pas l'alteration qiii aduient a la chose par la priuation de la forme, mais rincerruptiõ de Tordre de nature. Ârlstotc au l. de la gcne. dit ainsi. Puisque nous confcisons que nature appelle tousiours ce qui est plus excellent, & que l'estre est plus excellent) que le non estre, afin que cela aduienne a toutes choses, d'autant que plusieurs choses se font grandemet cllongnees du principe. Dieu au reste a repli l'univers, ayant ordonné une continuelle procréation & de la nous voyons que l'hómc engendre un homme: un cheual, un cheual: un bœuf . < un bœuf; & ainsi fe fait une continuelle conseruation des espèces, pource que en \* toutes les espèces, semblables choses sont procréées, ce qui est, comme nous auons dit, un euident tefmoignage que le monde n'est pas par cas fortuit, toutes-fois nous voyons que l'homme n'engendre pas tous iours un homme semblable a luy, ni va bœuf un bœuf. dont appert que ceste ordi- 1 nation n'est pas éternelle. Car plusieurs choses sont engendrées contre, & outre Tordre de nature, tât en l'air qu'en la terre, que parmi les animaux: voire fouuent fans aucunes causes naturelles, comme ce qui sonna la trompeté au Rubicon à Iules Czar, ne peut estre cfclairci par cause naturelle, non plus qu'ç qui s'apparut a Dion & a Brutus leur prédisant ejr jsojT. Peucr. & difficilement dece qui ëTÍ3uenu de

€<tritrí. nostre temps l'an rj4j\jînj^ejmer\_en la 'bafle Polongne en la cité de Cracouie qui a esté rédigé par  
 escrit par plusieurs. C'est qu'un monstre nasquit de pere, & mere de Ytsml\*. honorable famille ayant lesyeux  
 de coupresse- leur de feu,la bouche,& le nez semblables ped^îli iU muífle d'un boeufavec une corne approtr  
 A- chant de la trompe de l'Elephant: tout le %°ti~ derrière eft°ic vc'u comme un chien, & au lieu on les autres  
 ont accoustumé d'auoir les tetins situez, il auoit deux testes de singe : & au dessus du nombril, le caractere  
 de deux yeux de chat; aux iointurcs des genoux, & des bras, quatre testes de chien, avec leur mine furieuse:  
 lespalmes de iês pieds,& de fes mains, estoient comme celles d'un fínge:& si auoit avec tout cela une queue  
 retroussée en haut,de la hauteur d'une demie aune. Nous pourrions proposer vncinfinité de tels exempts.  
 Iefçaibien que Empedocles rapporte telles choses,ou á une ardente& obstinée imagination que peut auoir la  
 femme, pendant qu'elle conf oit,ou bien a la fuperabondáce, ou défaut de la semence, ou corruption d'iccUc:  
 oui bien a { 'indisposition de la matrice: ou bien ( comme font les Astrologues) aux Astres\* iugeâs que si la  
 lune est en certains degrez," & cõionctions lors que la femme conçoit, son fruit fera monstrueux. Mais a  
 toutes ces choies l'on peut répliquer en un mot, que celafe trouueroitplus fouuenj,, & en plus de fubiets.sila  
 dessus ion met en auant l'exception de Democrite, qui est, que les principales parties demeurent, & par cc  
 moyen,que Tordre est conferué?Le repondrai avec S. Augustin qu'ils ont d'Adam, ce qu'ils font hõmes, mais  
 ceste exception 7(rI#fi. n'est pas tousiours véritable. Carlors que fa. L. Scipion,&Norbanus estoient consuls a'  
 Rome, une femme, de la famille des Clusiens,au pays de Florence, fit un ferpet vif. Et lors que P. Plantius &  
 M. Faluius estoient consuls il y eut des atbrcs,qui portoient toutes fortes de fruits. Item en l'ar- • mec de  
 Xerxes voulant faire la guerre aux Grecs,une Iument fit un Iteure.-& une mule vnmulet,ayant les parties  
 génitales doubles, il appert aussi que le ciel n'a pas tousiours este de mefme façonj& que quelques fois les  
 choies ont esté autrement qu'elles B^uoicaccstç appeteues paf ladeterminination, qui est naturellement s  
 &ce paf t. ii. d\* tcs paroles de Varron, que S. Augustin alriw'r. lègue. ìlj \* eity dit il, au cielvice chose mer^ti  
 t t' ueilleufe ^Carenfefioile de Venus tresnoble^ laquelle Plaute appelle Vejfrerugine,dr Home" te iõm&v la  
 disant tresbelle il y a eu chose merueilleuse, te fi, comme escrit Cafior, qu'elle changea de  
 touleur^degrandeur y défigure^ ejr de coursée qut n'a efléfait^ny auparavant^ ni <i/>w.Adrastus Cyzicenus,  
 & Dion Nca« polítes, nobles Mathematiciens,difént que cela fut du temps du Roy Ogyges. Cer-; V tes  
 Varron, dit Sainct Augustin, ) ?^»^ au~ - ~ theur , n'euB point appelle cela merueiL leux , s'il ne sembloit efire  
 contre nature» Car nous disons Us choses merueilleuses efire contre nature,qui ne lefont pas  
 toutesfots,commentfera une chose contre nature laquelle se fait par la volonté de Dicu>veu que la volonté té  
 d'un flgrand créateur efi la nature de toute chose créée ? Ce qui efi merueilleux donc nese fait contre nature-^  
 mais contre la cognoissance qu'on a de nature,,11 esclaircit ces propos,par l ce qu'il adioute un peu âpres.  
 Comme j dit HSil ne luy a pas efiè impossible, Cordonneries natures qu'il a voulu: ausfi ne lui efi il pas  
 impossible de changer les natures qu'il a, or don\*

C'est doc chose certaine que plusieurs choses mósttueuses íuruiennent parinterualles de temps les causes  
 estant cachées, mais Ordonnées par la prouidence diuine. Nous ignorons & les causes par lesquelles & de  
 méíme la fin pourquoy elles se font. Comme de ce que Valeie & Tite Liue tcfmoignent estre aduenaL.  
 Martius chef de l'armee des Romains, que nous auons propose cy dessus au chap.de la prouidence:& de  
 méíme a Alexandre le grand, tefmoinPlutarque. Cardan raconte qu'une fois plusieurs estincelles de feu  
 sortirent du capuchon du manteau d'un sien ami qui s'espandoient çà & là , & confesse qu'il nc íçaurait  
 rapporter cela a aucune cause naturelle. Le mesme faut il dire des effets de la foudre, comme de ce qui aduint  
 a Martia.

Sur Martiajiable Dame Romaine^ ç Tomba un trait,de U foudre soudaine. Sans que son corps fut blejfé ejr  
 atteint Son enfantfut,dedans/on v entre ^ esteint Item.

De mainte efpee a mainte fois la foudre, Fourreau entier, le fer reduit en poudre. Soiiuenc aussi, ce qui est dans les vais seaux est espuisé, & perdu, sans qu'on efi hUsdu cognoisleaucun indice en la couuerturc: feu qui l'atgent en la bource, de mesme, reduit en. dHci. cl. cendrej& le pied dans le soulier, fans qu'il en apparoisse< aucune marque enlabource,& au soulier. Cela est encores plus merueilleux, que dans l'eau les retsferont reduits en cendre, & ceux qui seront hors l'eau n'auront point de mal; & par fa légèreté il va d'vnemuraille a l'autre, d'une chambre a l'autre,voire d'une baste,a celle qui fera haute: & ainsi en plusieurs façons, le n'ignore pas ce qu'on dit la dcísus, aífauoir, que si l'exhalation est vénéneuse, la'quelle est pouífée violemment delanuee, qu'elle penetre,& fend par fa force,& consume par fa subtilité : & qu'estant plus efpeffe,& crasle elle bru fle les corps, qui résistées: plus efpeífie3ellediífie.qu'ils dienc ce qu'ils voudrôtjcela Ce faisant auee choís, .. &iugment monstre bien', qu'il y a quelque chose outre nature. Etmesmejl'on peut bien conoistre qu'il y a quelqu'un qui a puiffance la defíus,qui y tient la main,puis que cela est tousiours fuiuy de quelque effet comme Virgile l'a remarqué.

Ha Tityrus Ji i'eusse cfté bien sage Ilme jouaient que fouuent par présage Che fines fr appelé la foudre des cieus Me preáisoient ce malpernitteux.

Item Tordre ordinaire est tel, que le Soleil apparoissant nous perdons la veuëdfi\* estoiles.Cc neâtmoins Hérodien escrit ea la vie des Empereurs,quc du téps de Commode,par l'espace d'un iour,on vid vnc infinité d'estoiles au ciel, aussi apparentes comme en claire nuict. de rapporter cela 2 Tordre ordinaires n'y a fondement : de Ic rapporter, a fortune, c'est une ingratitude íntollerable, veu qu'on void les choses célestes estre régies, par un ordre perpétue!, de la s'enfuiuit Une grande defeonfiture des Parthes,parlaruse,&cautele de Commodus, plustost que par íâ vaillance. Il y 2 aussi plusieurs autres telles choífes,comme lors que les eaux se débordèrent de leurs canaux, & que les ventrailles du ciel íbuurirent,& creurent dételle façon que non feulement elles couurirent la terre: mais surpassèrent de plusieurs coudées lcí plus hautes montagnesrcomme quand Tair a csté tellement infecté & corrompu, en certaraes prouincesjq'íl a sufroqué& estcínr, comme par un soudain embrasement la pluspart du genre humain ; comme quand la rare s'est ouuerte pour engloutir tant s de Delles,& superbes villes, auec leurs habitans. ne pouuons nous pas bien conclurre en telle façon. Toqt ainsi qu'il y a quel'qu'un qui change Tordre: semblablemét il y aquelqu'un qui la autresfois établi meí mement attendu que la mutation ne peut auoir lieu qu'en choies, qui ont eu commencement, nous pouuons donc arguer ainsi, Ce qui a estre contingent nepeuc estre éternel : le monde a estre contingent. Il nepent donc estre éternel. Or est il notoire, parles exemples, que nous auons proposez j & par une infinité d'autres tels; que le monde a estre contingent. Au surplus il faut ramener la contingence a un commencement; afin de procederjComme t»XI il saut.quc si Ion vouloit attribuer ces chodenttu- ses a fortune, nous refpondrons,comme au Zmp» \*'urc Pécèdent, que ainsi elles neprésageas roient rien. Or est il que iamais Tordre qui fsfpn ^ établi au monde n'est interrompu, que »W- quelque chose auísi extraordinaire n'adVaa'í Mienne entre les humains. Quoy qu'il ca fòit,ce qui est fortuit est postérieur a ce qui est déterminé par certain ordre: comme Tordre aun autheur, auífice mesme autheur ne permettra iamais, estant trefpuisíânt,qu'il se rompe sans fa volonté,non pas que tout ne soit bien ordonné pour son regard, & deuantlui, quelque désordre que \TMçTMt' nous y voyons.Nous adiouterons encores: a ce que dessus la considération du besoin, que non sculcmét la forme a de la matière; , mais aussi de plusieurs autres choses plus eflongnées.Comme les yeux fans la clairté font comme inutiles, le feu duquel nous vsons, fans matière .• & plusieurs telles autres choses ,qui nous peuuét faire conclur re qu'elles font ordonnées, & nécessitées m: fi\*! par un autheur. Nous conclurrans donc t£^js tbut ce, qui a esté traité iuíqucs ici par cest e/i t\*»f\* argument.Cequi est de perfection simplement doit estre attribué a Dieu seul, & non a autre. Or estre autheur & commenceméc de toutes choses,

& auoir puiffance de les changer a fa volonté, est simplement de perfection. Parquoi Dieu seul doit estre estimé autheur,& commencement de toutes choses, & auoir puiffance de les changer a fa volonté.

## **Livre Seconde – De la Creation Du Monde - Solution des Arguments qui Semblent Inférer l'Eternité du Monde**

### **Chapitre 10 - forter U considération^ & cognoijjance de la création du monde.**

Eux qui acquiesceront à la vérité des argumens,& raisons, que nom auons - proposées, & déduites : non seulement rccognoistront, que ce monde a Dieu pour auteur, & créateur: mais aussi pourront aisément faire euanouir tous les brouillards» que les Epicuriens pourroict ietter dessus, pour rembrouiller,& obscurcir:& les conuaincre de mensonge, & de fausseté, mais il ne faut pas demeurer là. Car nous ne deiffit uons aucunement douter, que Dieu ne dtU nous veuille occuper en ceste sainte medi'(iùmôn- cation,assauoir qu'en ses creatures,comme en des miroirs , nous contemplions les richesses infinies de fa bonté,fageise,& puissance; non pas seulement pour en prendre quelque mémoire, mais a cc que nous les raeditions,&ruminiós a bon esçient, pouc en auoir perpétuelle íbuenance: & pas meíne moien,que nous entrions çn la con\* fiderationdenous mefmes, reputantque le tout a esté fait pour nous. Ce théâtre donc tant beau a ceste occafion a esté basti avec tant d'artifice, & orné de beauté, & distribué avec tel ordre: a ce qu'il noús fut un illustre tefmoignage de Dieu,qui en est le facteur.Et l'homme qui est mes^y-©a esté mis en ce domicile, ayant un sentiment de diuinité emprainten son ame:afirt que íê regardant & ouurant les yeux pour cõtémpler Tordre qui est en icelui,& considérant le conseil de telle construction, il cognoifl Dieu créateur de toutes choses, souuerainementpuissant,iustc & bon. C5me de fait il n'y a rien en vain en la nature, & les créatures estant diuerses,il y a diuerscs fins d'icelles. quelque diuersité qu'il y ait d'autant, qu'elles ont esté faites par la sapience de Dieu: nous deuons conclurre; non seulement que les fins font diuerses, mais aussi qu'elles font bonnes,& que c'est a nous de les fauoir, afin;que ce qui est faic pour nostre profit ne nous tourne a ruine, & perdition. Vrai est que l'imbecilité de nos entendemens ne peut paruenir a telíe perfection, a cause des ténèbres qui y font íúruenucs,par le pçchéj& ne péut bien entendre les causes des choses,ny les rapporter a leur droite fimitáty a que leur regard, 6 la considération de Tordre, qui est parmi elle nous peut grandement aider a la cognoissancc de Dieu, & de la vertu, c'est à dire pour aimer, & conseruer ordre, & moyen en toutes actions. Par ce que nous team- auonstraitc tantau premier liure.qu en cc de de foi fécond la sentence de S.Augustin est veriprescbit fice qUi est au i>{je ja cjté de Dieu. 11. c.S.

on excepte, dit il, les paroles Prophétiques^ Le monde par fa mutabilité, mobilité ejr viabilité trefparee'.&defa forme treÇoelle, voire se taisant,pi'esche, ejr crie qu'il a esté fait, & que ce ne peut eíre que de Dieu souuerainement grand, & beau. Voici donc le premier enseignement de la foy, fuiuant Tordre de nature, íaçoitque ce ne soit leprincipal, aífauoir que de quelque costé- que nous íettions les yeux,il nous faut souuenir,que tout ce qui se présente est ceuvre de Dieu: Secondement il faut avec une religieuse péTee mediter,la fin pourquoy toutes choses font faites de Dieu. Les Stoiquesonc recogneu que les hommes, ont esté crééz pour Dieu,& le monde pour Thomme.suitiant cela Platon nous admoneste de mectre peine,que nous nous cognoiflions nous mesmes, & que nous nous íouuenions que touc ce qui est sous le cócauc de la Lune nous est assubiecti,par l'ordónáce de Dieu: a ce que quclquesfois,concre nostredevoir & dignité,nous ne nous assubiectisliós aux choses qui nous sont inférieures. Ces Philosophes , dont nous auons parlé, en sont venus là par ceste ràtiocination. Ce qui est fait, l'est pour quelque occasion necessairement. Car qui est celui tant inepte, & tellement oiseux qui s'essaie de faire quel- r°u" que chose pour néant dequoy il n'eíperc ^£ rapporterny vtilité,ny plaisir, ou commo ditéfcela se void par l'excmple de ceux qui. battissent des



maisons, des villes, des nauires, ils commencent tousiours par la fin; & rapportent leur ourage a quelque fin. Si cela se void es hommes íages, qui a il au monde plus (âge que Dieu ? n'est ce pas la sapience mesme? Parquoy comme ainsi soit qu'il n'y ait rien en la nature des choses en vain, & que rien ne soit fait fans cause, il faut que ceci soit ferme, que l'Architecte de cest vniuers n'a entrepris témérairement, c'est à dire sans aucune cause destinée, de , parfaire cest ourage tant grand, & adrairable. Les tours, & conuersions, des cieus, le tour inuariable, & certain des choies, estas toutes séparées en genres, & espèces, admonestét, & enseignent qu'une chacune d'icellesa fa caufê. La sapience diuine donc a ordonné une fin ferme, & certaine. Que si les sens nous enseignent les fins des chofí m\*- fcs ^es P^us petites, & les vsages admirables de fait combien au pris d'icelles deuous nous estimer ^a ^n ^c l'nornrslC excellente? Nous voions par expérience que le ciel, & la terre íêruent a la commodité, & vie des animaux: de la donc il est notoire que Dieu 2 fait lcCiel & la tere pour l'homme? Nous receuillons aussi que les animaux ont este faits pour l'homme, par cela qu'ils seruent aux hommes > tant pour les garder, & desendre, que pour leurs vsage, & nécessitez. Dont est aduenue, non íans cause, il a esté dit le Prince, & le chef de tous monobstant que pour raison du peché, íà códition lóit misérable, entánt qu'il est en son natufeuteit- rel. Si doneques l'homme est le Prince, & tenouchcf des creaturesj & si pour lui tout a esté créési íà condition est plus excellente, que celle des choses, qui ont corps, il est vrai semblable que non feulement fa. fin est plus , excellente , mais aussi qu'il a plu? grandes, & meilleures facilitez pour paruenir a. la íîn pour laquelle il a esté créé. icy nous au\* rions deux points a traiter, l'un quelle est la íîn de l'homme 5 & de quels instrumens il doit vscr pour paruenir a ceste fin : mais nous en traiterons amplement au liure fuiuant, maintenant ce peu que nous auons touché suffira. Au reste il appert aslez clairement pour raison de l'vsage de ceste vie, & l'excellence de la nature de l'homme, qu'il n'a pas esté fait simplemêt pour ceste vie, car fa códition regarde bien plus haut que ceste nature. Cela s'apperçoit véritable en ce que rien ne doit estre prins pour l'vsage, & fin d'un autre qui soit meilleur, & plus excellent que ce pourquoi il est prins, comme si quelcun depend de Target pour paruenir aux honneurs, & dignitez. L'appetit de l'homme naturellement est porté a cela qu'il iuge lui estre profitable , & bon : a cela donc qu'il estime meilleur, & lui estre plus commode, il enclines & est porté avec plus de véhémence^ Parquoy il iugera lui estre meilleur ce pourquoy il fait quelque chofe. Or Dieu estant souucreinement sage a mis en foucraire degré, ce qui est plus excellent, & meilleurs 6 le reste pour cela. Dauátage ce en quoy acquiesce l'appetit d'une chacune choiê, agile efl digne, qu'a iceluy se rapportent toutes fl!\*ci\* les autres choiês. ce donc en quoy acquieffítíe ce l'éíprit de l'hóme a ce que bien lui soit, ceja cera ja gn principale d'icelui. Comme ainsi soit qu'il n'y ait rien en quoy, l'entendement & la cognoísance de l'homme puisse acquiesçer, que Dieu corne son bien: -il s'ensuit que la fin de l'homme est la cognoísance de Dieu. Nous disons dóc, que l'homme est orné d'une condition plus excellenteja ce quel'inclination de ía fin soit mise dans ía volonté, & soit instruite par l'entendemet de ceste fin laquelle cognoísance raugmente , & se monstre par vsage, expericnce, & doctrine, & parla considération de ce monde, & de ce qui est dedans, & dehors l'homme. Et de la vient que nous pouóds dire avec les Stoiques que l'homme a esté créé pour Dieu, assauoir a ce qu'il y eust qui entédíst, & cogneust ses ceu ures qui peust admirer, & par paroles exprimer ceste admirable prouidence, & raison de faire, & vertu de consommer toutes chosesfle sommaire dequoy est qu'il honore Dieu avec reuerence, & lc loue. Ec de saie l'homme contemplant les choses créées est amené par icelles a cela, qu'il est contraint de confesser qu'il y a quelqu'vn, qui les a faites, par la vertu duquel elles sont administrées : & de la il est nécessaire qu'il íbit eleué a la considération de la puissance, & diuinité éternelle. Car il faut que celui qui a tout créé íbit plus ancien que les créatures, & par ainsi éternel, & d'une incroyable vertu qui puisse suffire pour régie une si grande machine, & c'est ce que nous appelions Dieu. Premieremêt donc l'homme tant aítúTefprit dur, & pesant, par le seul regard des créatures & en l'ourage du monde, comme en un théâtre peut lire les marques de la gloire de la diuinité, voire les aueugles en cartonnant le peuuent attoucher, & trouuer, pource que par lui nous viuons, & auons rnouement, & sonv mes. Dieu est voiremen\* inuisible, &

incorporel: mais les choses invisibles d'icelui asavoir îa puissance eternelle, & îa diuinité se voient par la création du monde, que nous nous îouuenions donc, toutes fois & quantes que nous considérons les natures des choses, qu'il y a un Dieu auteur d'iceiles : lequel non feulement se monstre puis fane en creant de rien un si grand & si admirable bastimé"t3mais qui se présente journellement pour estre considéré de nous, car nous voyons par fa conduite maintenant que le ciel est esbranlé par la violence des tÓnerres,& la terre aulî,ores plusieurs choses estre bruflees, & consumées par les foudres, & feus qui tombent du ciel, tantost l'air estre tout enflamhé par l'efclair que fait le tonnerre, ou bien troublé de diuerses sortes de tempestes, & icelui quand il plait a Dieu en un momét sera in & beau. Item la mer laquelle semble menacer la terre d'un continuel degast par fa hauteur, comme suspendue en l'air estre réprimée: maintenant d'une façon espouventable par un mouuement impétueux & bruiant estre csineuë, & troublée, tantost estre rendue calme les ondes estant appaisees. Il seroit par trop long de reciter ceste infinité de choses tant au ciel qu'en la terre, qui tefmoignent fa fapienccCar celui qui obseruera les mouuemens des Astres, leurs sièges^ proprieté, trouuera aisément l'excellncedela science diuine. Semblablement en U structure 3 connexion, proportion, & beauté du corps humain, & viage d'icelui on n'en trouuera moins de eémoignages.Secondcmcntlaconfideration des choies, qui aduiennent contre le cours ordinaire de nature, ne nous suggèrent pas des argumens plus obscurs de fa vertu.Car nous voyons, qu'en l'administration de la société humaine il tempère tellement fx prouidence, que comme il est en vnc infinité de façons bénin enuers tous: tant y a qu'il demonstre fa clémence par indices manifestes a l'endroit des gens de bien, & a l'endroit des mesehans ía feuerité. Car les vengeances qu'il prend iouuellement des forfaits énormes ne font point obfcures,comme aussi fa fauegardej& deliurance a l'endroit des debonnaires.quand il fait prospérer leur voie par fa benediction,leur assiste en leur necessité,adoucist leurs douleurs , & les soustient en leurs afflictions, bref a foin de leur salut. & combien que tous les mesehans ne soient punis en ce monde, & que tous les gens de bien ne soient assistez d'enhaut, selon nostre iugement: tant y a que nous deons faire iugement, en la punition de quelques vns, qu'il gçn hupçle péché & ini<iuicé.Ôc a l'oppo; site du reste, & deons conclurreque puis qu'il est foucraïnemét iuste, qu'il reserue le loier& la punition a une autre vie aîàuoir au iour qu'il fera generale rétribution & rémunération. Au rcstesi l'on demande la cause qui a esmeu Dieu de creer le monde jce qui nous doit d'autat plus elmou uoir a l'aimer. Or ceste bonté se monstre manisestemér, en ce que estant tresbon& bienheureux, il a voulu neántmoins communiquer a ses créatures ceste béatitude: car la .nature du bon est telle,qu'elle s'expand, & se communique a plusieurs.Dieu dôcques présente a toutes ses créatures la participation de ía bonté, & béatitude autant que le capacité d'une chacune le peut porter, ceste communication se fait diuersment. Car celle qui se fait aux choses qui n'ont point de vie estfort petite: voire celle qui est faite aux animaux. Mais celle qui est faite aux hommes est plus notoire, & manifeste, or ceste communication ne se fait par aucune diuision, ou partage, d'autant que Dieu est împlc,& indiuisible: il communique donc quand il s'adiointJ& appli que tellement qu'il les engloutit, s'il íaut ainsi parler, en foi qui est infini, pour les rendre un avec soi. Car lors estans faits semblables a la nature,& condition diuine, & comme déifiez, ils font vraiment faits participans de ccste félicité inestimable, or a il créé les hommes propres pour ceste conionction jastauoirafonimage,c'estàdi- ^ . reil a donné aux hommes raison, intelli- \Maiîn gence,iugemenr, conseil, & les autres ver- , «\*\*« tus par lesquelles il peut entendre quel est D^>i! son vrai bien, pour l'appetter,& désirer, & t\*eUule désirant le chercher désirant d'estre conjoint avec lui.ccste vnion, & conionction ne se fait pas feló la chair,ou selon le corps: pource que Dieu n'est pas corporel, & l'homme aussi n'est pas dit homme selon le corps ains selon l'entendement qui habite au corps, & est participant de raison, & se fait par un íeul moyen; aflsauoir par amour,comme aussi la séparation se fait par la haine. L'amour donc l'a efmeu de nous créer,il nousrapelle par ramour,& rameiue a lui. Au demeurant il n« faut pas penser que Dieu ait créé le monde par quelque nécessité. Car Dieu estant trefparfait pouuoic demeurer en fa perfection íans icclur, mais il Parfait poussé de fa bóté,& clémence, ceste amour de la création se manifeste en la conseruation. Ces choses ont

este veues,& cogneues: mais obscurement,par les Philosophes comme par Mercure, Orphée , Hésiode, Parmenides & les autres: juoint tenul'amour estre trefomeien de oy, & mis au sein du chaos auparauát que le monde futereé. Or que nous puissions paruenir a ceste vnion, & connexion, ta qualité & condition de nostreamen en est argument, & le monstre laquelle est faite & formée, de forte que naturellement elle désire le bon & le beau lequcl mouuement est appelle amour, que si l'intelligence est donnée a l'homme il cognoit ces choses obscurément a cause du péché,mais neantmoins il cognoit quelques choses, & qu'il ne peut penser rien plus excellent, plus grand, ny meilleur, & incontinent que ce iugement est fait l'amour s'enflambe a l'endroit de celui qui est tel.Mais il est nécessaire d'observer ceci,iaçoit que le regard des créatures nous inuite a cognoistre Dieu, & qu'en l'ouuragedu monde il y ait tant de lampes allumées qui nous eclairenc de toutes pars,pour manifester fa gloire,que toutesfois de foy elles ne peuuent pas nous amener a la droite voie, nous voions bien par expérience qu'elles produisent en nous quelques estincelles, mais qui sont suffoquées auparauant qu'elles espendent leur pleine splendeur. Car qui est celui d'entre nous lequel efleuant les yeux au ciel, ou bien regardant les régions de la terre, ou la cõposition ingénieuse du corps humain rapporte fa mémoire au créateur, & qui plustost laissant arriére le créateur ne s'arresteauxcreatures?qui est celui qui ne rapporte plustost a fortune, qu'a la prouidence de Dieu les choses qui aduiennent outre le cours ordinaire de nature? que si par la conduite de ces choses nous sommes menez a la considération de la Maiesté Diurne, toutesfois incontinent<[ue nous auons quelque sentiment de la diuinité, incontinent nous tombons, és resueries de nostre chair, & corrompons par nostre vanité la pure vérité de Dieu. Ce n'est point donc îans cause que 1\* Apostre escriuant aux Hebrieux & aiant dit, que les siècles ont esté ordonnez pour estre faits demonstres des choses (nuisibles, adoute, que nous l'encendons par foy .signifiant par cela que voirement la Diuinité est représentée par tels spectacles, mais que nous n'auons pas des yeux pour l'appercevoir s'ils ne font illuminez par vue intérieure reuelation par foy. ceux donc qui font douez du dó de foy que ceste voye par les créatures leur soit droite pour chercher Dieu, non pas qu'avec une audace & curiosité ils essayent de pénétrer iufques a son essence, laquelle il faut plustost adorer., que curieusement «"/M rechercher: mais comme enseigne S.Au•44<sup>e</sup> gustin, d'autant que nous ne le pouuons appréhender defaillans sous fa grandeur, il nous faut auoir recours a ses oeuvres,asin que nous soyons rassasiez de fa bonté, & que nous le contemplions tellement en ses ceuvres, par lesquelles il ferend prochain, & familier,qu'avec un sentiment d'efficace il donne iufques a nostre esprit ravi en admiration. Sachons donc que lors nous appréhendons par vraye foy que Dieu est créateur du ciel & de la terre, si nous fui, uonscestc première règle vniuerfelle,quád apperceuans les notables marques que Dieu nous monstre en ses créatures nous ne les laissons, par un ingrat oubli, & mefcognoiffàncc. En aptes que nous apprenons de les nous appliquer tellement que nous en soions viuement touchez en noi cœurs. Saint Paul,escriuát aux Ephesiens, ¶6<sup>e</sup> spécifie ceste fin entre autres, quand il die 15 ainsi , Dieu nous a éleuz deuant la fondation du monde afin que nous soyons saints, & irrépréhensibles deuant lui en charité', le quel nous a predeñine\ pur mus adopter a soiparlesus chrifselon le bon plaisir de sa volonté a la, louange de la gloire de sa grâce, voila quand a nous, les autres choses comme elles sont diuersesraussi ont elles diuerses fins.Tant y a que c'est pour nous.Car Dieu acréé choses diuerses a ce, comme il a esté dit,que fa sapièce nous fust plus familière, & que par ce moyen nous eussions plus d'occasion de nous humilier pour le glorifier quand nous voions que cela est pour nostre profit, & vtilité. Outre plus afin que voians ceste diuersité de créatures fuiure neâtmoins cc pourquoy elles font,nous fussions d'autant plus aiguillonnez a fuiure ce pourquoy nous sommes faits, asiauoir la gloire de nostre créateur. Et comme nous voyons qu'il y a des créatures qui font bien , & les autres mal;de la nous deuous recueillir l'enormité du péché, & l'auoir en horreur comme estant cause de ce malheur. Au teste combien qu'il y en ait de petites, voire qui semblent estre de petite, ou nulle importance, si est-ce qu'il faut estre resoluz que rien n'est sans cause. Souuentcequi est petit, & en apparence contemptible, aura neantmoins grande vertu, & efficace. Ceux qui cognoiffent la nature,& propriété des herbes,des pierres,& autres créatures en peuuent rendre

tefmoignage. Quand a celles qui font venimeuses,ou autrement nuisibles aux hommes/achons en premier lieu que le péché en est cause, & que ces animaux font produits de la terre íriant esté maudite» Dauantage iaçoit qu'elles soient nuisibles en une façon,clles font toutes-fois profitables en une autre. L'experience qu'en font journellement les Médecins en fait foi. Mais fur tout nous dcuons profiter en la fin desia touchée, &: reputer pour nostre consolation que Dieu a créé le monde, & en iceluy les hommes afin que d'iceux il recueillist une Eglise enuers laquelle il demonstrest fa bonté, justice, & miséricorde: par laquelle il fut serui, honoré, & inuoqué iuíqucs a la cósoœmation des siecles.tafchons donc de nousrengcr a ce troupeau,& si nous auons tefmoignage, & assurance d'en estre gardons que par nostre ingratitude nous n'en soions chassez.Car hors icelui il n'y a point de salut. Au reste vsions librement, & fans scrupule,& avec action de grâces des créatures , pource que tout ce qui est au ciel & en la terre a esté fait pour nous, ainsi qu'il appert par Tordre de la création, & par la déclaration qu'en a fait le créateur en fa . parole.Gar ce n'est point fans cause qu'il a distribué en six ioursla fabrique de cest vniuers, attendu qu'il ne lui eustpas esté plus difficile de le creer tout en un momét,. & le mettre en \i perfection qu'il est, que de l'amcner par degrez,& peu a peu en l'estat qu'il est: mai s il nous a voulu recommander fa prouidenec, & soin paternel en, ce que deuant que former l'homme, il lui a préparé tout ce, qu'il a preucu lui estre salutaire. Finalement toutes fois,& quante\* que nous nommós Dieu créateur du Ciel, éc de la terre, qu'il nous vienne en memoire.que la difpefation de tout ce qu'il a créé est en fa main, & que nous sommes iês cnfansdefquels il a receus en fa protection,& îauuegarde,& pour lesnourrir,& entretenir: afin que nous attendions de lui la somme de tout bien, & espérons avec assurance qu'il ne nous lairra iamais auoir sau^ te des choies qui feront nécessaires pour noslrc salut, que nostre attente ne tende point ailleurs.Surtout que nostre cœur ne soit pas attaché ci bas, mais recognòiffans que nous y sommes comme pèlerins, & estrangers nostre principal but soit la vie bien heureuse & eternelle avec Iesus Christ nostre chef auquel aveclePere & le S.Esprit íoithonneur,lóuange, & gloire es siécles des siécles, amen.

**1580; 1882 (Spanish); 1888 (English)**

**St. Theresa of Avila (1515 - 1582), Catholic Mystic**

**The Effects Of The Divine Graces In The Soul; The Inestimable Greatness Of One Degree Of Glory**

**Life of St. Theresa of Jesus**

First Spanish Publication 1882 (First English Translation in 1888)

### **Chapter 37**

#### **The Effects of the Divine Graces in the Soul. The Inestimable Greatness of One Degree of Glory**

It is painful to me to recount more of the graces which our Lord gave me than these already spoken of; and they are so many, that nobody can believe they were ever given to one so wicked: but in obedience to our Lord, who has commanded me to do it, and you, my fathers, I will speak of some of them to His glory. May it please His Majesty it may be to the profit of some soul! For if our Lord has been thus gracious to so—miserable a thing as myself, what will He be to those who shall serve Him truly? Let all people resolve to please His Majesty, seeing that He gives such pledges as these even in this life.

In the first place, it must be understood that, in those graces which God bestows on the soul, there are diverse degrees of joy: for in some visions the joy and sweetness and comfort of them so far exceed those of others, that I am amazed at the different degrees of fruition even in this life; for it happens that the joy and consolation which God gives in a vision or a trance are so different, that it seems impossible for the soul to be able to desire anything more in this world: and, so, in fact, the soul does not desire, nor would it ask for, a greater joy. Still, since our Lord has made me understand how great a difference there is in heaven itself

between the fruition of one and that of another, I see clearly enough that here also, when our Lord wills, He gives not by measure; and so I wish that I myself observed no measure in serving His Majesty, and in using my whole life and strength and health therein; and I would not have any fault of mine rob me of the slightest degree of fruition.

And so I say that if I were asked which I preferred, to endure all the trials of the world until the end of it, and then receive one slight degree of glory additional, or without any suffering of any kind to enter into glory of a slightly lower degree, I would accept—oh, how willingly!—all those trials for one slight degree of fruition in the contemplation of the greatness of God; for I know that he who understands Him best, loves Him and praises Him best. I do not mean that I should not be satisfied, and consider myself most blessed, to be in heaven, even if I should be in the lowest place; for as I am one who had that place in hell, it would be a great mercy of our Lord to admit me at all; and may it please His Majesty to bring me thither, and take away His eyes from beholding my grievous sins. What I mean is this,—if it were in my power, even if it cost me everything, and our Lord gave me the grace to endure much affliction, I would not through any fault of mine lose one degree of glory. Ah, wretched that I am, who by so many faults had forfeited all!

**1600 (Latin); English Translation in 1909**

**St John of the Cross (San Juan de la Cruz) (1542 - 1591), Catholic Monastic Leader and Mystic**

**Each of Blessed In His Own Degree Of Glory, Continually Singing Before God; As Every One Of Saints Had Gifts Of God In Different Way, So Every One Of Blessed Sings His Praises In Different Way, & Yet All Harmonize In One Concert Of Love**  
**Spiritual Canticle of the Soul and the Bridegroom Christ (Excerpts)**

(First English Publication 1864)

6. This is almost the same as the silent music. For though the music is inaudible to the senses and the natural powers, it is a solitude most full of sound to the spiritual powers. These powers being in solitude, emptied of all forms and natural apprehensions, may well receive in spirit, like a resounding voice, the spiritual impression of the majesty of God in Himself and in His creatures; as it happened to St. John, who heard in spirit as it were “the voice of harpers harping on their harps.”(Rev. 14):2 St. John heard this in spirit: it was not material harps that he heard, but a certain knowledge that he had of the praises of the blessed, which every one of them, each in his own degree of glory, is continually singing before God. It is as it were music. For as every one of the saints had the gifts of God in a different way, so every one of them sings His praises in a different way, and yet all harmonize in one concert of love, as in music.

7. In the same way, in this tranquil contemplation, the soul beholds all creatures, not only the highest, but the lowest also, each one according to the gift of God to it, sending forth the voice of its witness to what God is. It beholds each one magnifying Him in its own way, and possessing Him according to its particular capacity; and thus all these voices together unite in one strain in praise of God’s greatness, wisdom, and marvelous knowledge.

10. I now resume the explanation of the stanza, and inquire what day is meant by the “other day,” and what is it that God then gave the soul, and what that is which it prays to receive afterwards in glory? By “other day” is meant the day of the eternity of God, which is other than the day of time. In that day of eternity God predestined the soul to glory, and determined the degree of glory which He would give it and freely gave from the beginning before He created it. This now, in a manner, so truly belongs to the soul that no event or accident, high or low, can ever take it away, for the soul will enjoy for ever that for which God had predestined it from all eternity.

11. This is that which He gave it “the other day”; that which the soul longs now to possess visibly in glory. And what is that which He gave it? That what “eye has not seen nor ear has heard, neither has it ascended into the heart of man.” (1 Cor. 2:9) “The eye has not seen,” says Isaiah, “O God, beside You, what things You have prepared for them that expect You.” (Isa. 64:4) The soul has no word to describe it, so it says “what.” It is in truth the vision of God, and as there is no expression by which we can explain what it is to see God, the soul says only “that which You gave me.”

12. But that I may not leave the subject without saying something further concerning it, I will repeat what Christ has said of it in the Revelation of St. John, in many terms, phrases, and comparisons, because a single word once uttered cannot describe it, for there is much still unsaid, notwithstanding all that Christ has spoken at seven different times. “To him that overcomes,” says He, “I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of My God.” (Rev. 2:7) But as this does not perfectly describe it, He says again: “Be faithful to death; and I will give you the crown of life.” (Rev. 2:10)

**1616 (Latin); 1638 (First English Translation); 1850 (This Translation in London)  
The Ven. Cardinal Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), Jesuit Cardinal, Catholic Reformer,  
Doctor of the Church  
Their Habitation Not Only Called a City, But a House; There are Many Mansions in Heaven,  
Some High, Some Low; Also Diversity of Crowns, Some Great, Some Inferior, According to  
Degree of Merit: Yet All Citizens are Blessed & Happy, All Clean of Heart, Full of Charity  
The Joys of the Blessed; Being a Practical Discourse Concerning the Eternal Happiness of the  
Saints in Heaven**

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### **Preface**

LAST year, for my own spiritual benefit especially, I composed a “Gradual to ascend unto God from the Contemplation of created objects.” Now, since it hath pleased God to prolong my old age a little longer, I wish to meditate on that heavenly country to which all the sons of Adam ardently aspire, who dwell, lamenting and weeping, in this valley of death; and these meditations I desire to write, lest they perish. Wherefore in the Holy Scriptures, which may be compared to “Consoling Letters” sent unto us in this our exile from heaven by our Father, I find four names mentioned, from which we may in a manner learn what are the good things of that land. The names are: Paradise, Mansion, City, and Kingdom. Of Paradise St. Paul speaks: “I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago such an one rapt even to the third heaven that he was caught up into paradise,” &c. Of the “Mansion” the Son of God himself speaks: In my Father’s house there are many mansions.” Of the “City” St. Paul speaks in his Epistle to the Hebrews: “But you are come to Mount Sion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.” Of the “Kingdom” there is mention made in St. Matthew: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” This name is

continually occurring in the Holy Scripture. The abode of the saints in heaven is called a "Paradise," because it is a most beautiful place, abounding in delights. But because men might suppose that paradise was a garden placed near a house, which could contain but few people, the Holy Spirit has added the name, "House," because it is a royal mansion, a great palace, wherein, besides a garden, there are halls, couches, and many other excellent things. But because a house, however large, cannot contain many people, and lest we should think that very few will possess eternal life, the Scripture adds the word "City," which contains many gardens and many palaces. But since St. John, speaking of the number of the blessed, saith: "After this I saw a great multitude which no man could number." And as, moreover, no city can contain an innumerable multitude, the word "Kingdom" is used, to which is added, "the kingdom of heaven," than which no place in the whole universe is more boundless and extensive. But, again, since in a most extensive kingdom there are many who never see each other, nor know their names, nor whether they ever existed; and since it is certain that all the blessed behold each other, and know each other, and converse familiarly with one another as friends and relations: therefore the Scriptures, not content with the name of "Kingdom," added that of a "City," that we might know its inhabitants are truly citizens of the saints, and as familiar, and as closely united together, as the inhabitants of the very smallest city. But, in order that we might likewise remember, that these happy men are not only citizens of the saints, but also friends of God, therefore the Holy Spirit calls that a "House," which it also named a "City." In fine, because all the blessed in heaven abound in delights, it is likewise called "Paradise." Hence these four words: Kingdom, House, City, Paradise mean one and the same thing; and the Paradise is so extensive, that it can truly be called a House, City, and Kingdom. Wherefore, concerning this most blessed place I will first, under the word "Kingdom; then under that of a "City;" afterwards under that of a "House;" and, lastly, under the word "Paradise" meditate in the chamber of my heart; and, with God's assistance, commit to writing what He shall please to suggest unto me.

Bellarmino

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**Book I (the Kingdom of Heaven)****Chapter I**

**The Extent Of The Kingdom Of God** WE may learn How important is a knowledge of the kingdom of heaven from this circumstance, that Christ, our heavenly Master, began His preaching with these words: "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He also delivered nearly all His parables concerning the kingdom of heaven, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is likened" &c. And after His resurrection, during the forty days before His ascension, appearing to His disciples, He spoke to them of the kingdom of God, as St. Luke mentions in the Acts of the Apostles. This kingdom therefore formed the beginning, continuation, and end of the discourses of Christ. But I do not intend to enter upon all the points connected with heaven, but only to explain those that relate to the "place and state" of the Blessed. In the first place, I will endeavour to show why the "habitation" of the blessed is called the "kingdom of heaven" in the Holy Scriptures. The



habitation of the saints is called a kingdom for many reasons. First, because it is a land the boundless extent of which cannot be conceived by human imagination. This earth, though but a point, as it were, in comparison with heaven, contains many and great kingdoms that can scarcely be numbered: how great, therefore, must that “one kingdom” be, which extends throughout the length and breadth of the heaven of heavens! But the kingdom of heaven does not only include the heavenly region, but also the whole extent of it. This heavenly country, which is properly called the kingdom of heaven, is the first “province,” as it were, of the kingdom of God, in which the highest princes reside, who are all the sons of God. The second province may be called aetherial, in which the stars dwell; all of which, though not animate, yet are so obedient to the voice of their Creator, that they may be said to be living creatures, according to Ecclesiasticus, “Come, let us adore the King, for whom all things live.” The third province is aerial, in which winds and clouds pass, and storms, rain, snow, hail, thunder, and lightning are produced, and where birds of various kinds sport and fly. The fourth province is watery, and contains seas, fountains, and lakes, in which fishes multiply, “that pass through the paths of the sea.” The fifth is earthly, which, emulous as it were of heaven, contains the most noble inhabitants, but not the most blessed; I mean men, endowed with reason, but mortal; these have dominion over the beasts of the earth and the fishes of the sea. The last province is subterraneous, which, like the desert of Arabia, produces no good fruit whatever, but only thorns and briars; there wicked spirits dwell on account of their pride; they wished to be the first, but they became last; they strove to exalt their throne above the stars of heaven, but they were cast down to the lowest hell. And here, also, those will be confined, who, having imitated the wickedness of those bad spirits, die without true repentance. Now, all these provinces God rules by His power, of whom the Psalmist speaks, “All things serve Thee.” This vast and mighty kingdom God will share with those that love Him. Wherefore, Christian soul, rejoice, and be not confined within the narrow limits of things present. Why dost thou labour and toil so much, merely to gain a small part of this world, whilst, if thou wish, thou canst possess the whole? Truly, if men would seriously aspire after this kingdom, if they would attentively meditate upon it, they would blush to wage war for such narrow portions of the earth. Man! God offers thee the possession of His immense and eternal kingdom,, whilst thou fightest for one small city, wherein many crimes are committed, and other innumerable sins, by which the King of Kings is justly provoked to anger. Where is thy prudence? Where thy judgment? But I do not speak in this manner as if I supposed, that it was unlawful for Christians to enter into war for the defence of their cities. I know that just wars are allowed, not only by the holy Fathers, (especially St. Austin and St. Thomas, the prince of scholastic writers,) but also by the precursor of our Lord “greater than whom hath not arisen amongst those born of woman.” He said to the soldiers not that they should desert their service as being unlawful, but that, being content with their pay, they should “do violence to no man.” In my “Controversies” I have also defended just wars. I do not therefore speak against war simply in itself; but I exhort you to follow that which is more perfect, and often more useful, according to what St. Paul says to the Corinthians: “Already indeed there is plainly a fault among you, that you have lawsuits one with another. Why do you not rather hate wrong? Why do you not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?” (1 Epist. to Corinthians v. 7.) And St. James adds in his Epistle: “From whence are wars and contentions among you? Are they not hence from your concupiscence? You covet, and have not: you kill, and envy, and cannot obtain. You contend and war, and have not, because you ask not.” (chap, iv.) Whoever earnestly aspires after the kingdom of heaven, would not easily be moved to war by the loss of one city; but he would seek after those who could settle the dispute without expense and danger. But let us proceed to other points.

## **Chapter II**

### **The Inhabitants Of The Kingdom Of God**

THE kingdom of heaven is called a “Habitation” because it contains such a multitude of different inhabitants; no palace or city, but only large kingdoms contain such numbers. There, as St. Paul tells us in his Epistle to the Hebrews, are many thousands of angels; there also are “the spirits of the Just made perfect,” to whom belong all who have departed in the Lord from Abel, even to the last good man that will die at the end of the world. But not only will the souls of the Just be there, but also their glorious bodies, each of which shall shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father, as our Lord assures us in St. Matthew. With regard to the angels, we who live on this earth scarcely know anything of them but their names. We learn from the vision of the prophet Isaias, (chap, vi.) that some are called Seraphim, and others Cherubim: some Thrones,

others Dominations: some Principalities, others Powers, as St. Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Colossians: (chap. i. ver. 16.) in his Epistle to the Ephesians he also speaks of "Virtues," and in another place, Archangels are spoken of: Angels are finally ranked amongst them, of whom there is so frequent mention throughout the Holy Scriptures. From these nine names, it is the unanimous opinion of learned doctors, that there are nine "orders" of angels, each of which contains many thousands, according to the prophet Daniel: "Thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him." (chap. vii. 10.) And Job asks: "Is there any numbering of his soldiers?" But although all the angels are doubtless most happy, and wonderfully resplendent (according to Alban Butler, Sept. 29th, on St. Michael, These are two pure Hebrew words; the first means "to burn, or burn up;" the second, "to be like the Most High) with the glory of every divine gift, yet those are called "Seraphim" who burn with the flames of love: the others "Cherubim" who shine with the splendour of knowledge: those are named "Thrones" who enjoy an inexpressible tranquillity in the divine contemplation: those "Dominations" who rule this lower world, as the ministers of a mighty commander: others "Powers," because they do signs and wonders by the command of their Almighty Lord: others "Principalities," because they have power over the kings and princes of the world: some again are named "Archangels," because they assist the prelates of the Church: and many, in fine, are called "Angels," since they are the guardians and protectors of all that live upon the earth. But these are not the only significations of the names of the angels:" they are also images or representations of the greatness of God: thus the seraphim, by their burning love, represent as it were in a glass, the infinite love of God which alone induced Him to create the angels, man, and all other creatures, whom He still preserves. The cherubim in like manner represent the infinite wisdom of God, which hath regulated all things by number, weight, and measure. The thrones also, by a perfect image as it were, show us that profound "rest" which God enjoys on His throne; who, whilst all things are in motion, remains unalterable, tranquilly ruling and directing events. The dominations too tell us, that it is God who alone truly rules all things, because He alone can either preserve them, or annihilate them. The virtues convince us, that it is God "who alone doth wonderful things" and who hath reserved to himself alone to renew signs, and to multiply wonders. The powers signify by their name, that God alone is absolutely and truly powerful, to whom nothing is impossible, because in Him alone true power resides. The principalities signify, that God is the Prince over the kings of the earth, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. The archangels signify, that God is the true High Priest of all the churches. The angels, that God is the true Father of orphans; and that although He hath given His angels to be our guardians, He himself is present with each one, to guard and protect him. The prophet who has said, "He hath given his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways," introduces the Almighty thus speaking: "I am with him in tribulation, I will deliver him, and I will glorify him." (Psalm xc.) And our Lord, who had said, "their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven" has also added: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing; and not one of them shall fall upon the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore; better are you than many sparrows." (St. Matthew, chap. x. 29, &c.) Such are the few points that we know about the angels, concerning whom you may read St. Bernard on "Consideration" from whom I have taken these details. With these nine orders of the angels, correspond on the other hand that multitude of holy men, which no one can number, as we learn from the Apocalypse. This multitude contains also nine "orders;" for some are patriarchs, some prophets, some apostles, some martyrs and confessors; whilst others are pastors, doctors, priests, Levites, monks, and hermits, holy women, virgins, widows, or married people. Wherefore, my soul, I beseech thee to consider what great happiness it will be, to be united with such great saints! St. Jerome mentions, that he visited many provinces, and many people, and crossed many seas, that he might see and hear those celebrated men, whom he had known by their works. Queen of Saba came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and to St. Antony, the hermit, men hastened from all parts, being moved by the fame of his sanctity: even Emperors themselves courted his friendship. But what will it be to behold hereafter so many angels, so many just men, to be united with them in the closest friendship, and to be made partakers of their happiness? Were we to behold, in this our exile, one angel arrayed in all his beauty, who would not eagerly wish to meet him? What therefore must it be, to behold all the angels in one place? And if only one of the prophets, apostles, or doctors of the Church were to descend from heaven, with what curiosity and attention would he be heard! Now in the kingdom of God, we shall be allowed to behold not one only, but all the prophets, apostles, and doctors, with whom we shall continually hold sweet

converse. How greatly does the sun rejoice the whole earth: but what will be the glory from innumerable Suns in the kingdom of God, all animate, intelligent, and exulting in their joy! This union with the angels and men, all of whom are most wise and excellent, appears to me so delightful, that I consider it alone will be a great happiness, and on this account, would willingly be deprived of all the pleasures of this life.

### **Chapter III**

#### **The Monarchical Form Of The Kingdom Of God**

THE third reason why it is called a "Kingdom" is, because there alone is to be found a perfect form of government. There is this difference between a kingdom and a republic: in the former the supreme power is possessed by one person: in the latter it is divided amongst many. But in the kingdoms of this world, supreme power in the true and proper sense of the word, cannot exist. For although a king, without the advice or consent of others, can command something to be done; yet it cannot be accomplished without the approbation of his subjects. It even often happens that he cannot give a command, or at least will not dare to do so, should all his subjects be against him. How many great kings and emperors have there been, who were either deserted by their army, or put to death! History is full of such examples. Supreme power therefore is useless to the kings of this world, because they can never execute anything, unless their subjects approve of it. But the power of God, who is truly and essentially King of kings, dependeth upon no one, but His own will: and since He is omnipotent, He can do all things; neither doth He stand in need of soldiers, arms, or any external aid. And when He makes use of the ministration of angels, men, or even inanimate things, He does so because He wills, not because he requires them. For He who without any assistance made heaven and earth, and all things therein, by His only word, and who preserves them by His will, can also govern them by His power alone. But God reigns in the truest sense of the word, not only because He possesses supreme power; but also because He alone knows how to govern: He stands not in need of any council, or ministers of state. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" says St. Paul: and before him the prophet Isaias: "Who hath forwarded the Spirit of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor, and hath taught him? With whom hath he consulted, and who hath instructed him, and taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?" (chap. xl. 13, 14;) Wherefore a monarchy, which is the best form of government, is to be found in God alone in its true and perfect nature. He is not only "terrible over all the kings of the earth," as it is said in the Psalms; but He is also "King above all gods," as it is expressed in another place. Others are false gods or rather devils, according the prophet: "All the gods of the Gentiles are devils." (Psalm xcv.) Some are gods by participation, as the kings of the earth and the angels of heaven, thus "I have said: You are gods and all of you the sons of the Most High." (Psalm lxxxii.) But all these gods are under the power of that God, who reigneth in heaven: He alone then is truly a great king. This Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, acknowledged in these words, after he had suffered a most severe punishment for his pride: "Now at the end of the days of Nabuchodonosor lifted up my eyes to heaven, and my sense was restored to me: and I blessed the most High, and I praised and glorified Him that liveth for ever: for his kingdom is an everlasting power, and his kingdom is to all generations. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing before him: for He doth according to his will, as well with the powers of heaven, as among the inhabitants of the earth: and there is none that can resist His hand, and say to him: Why hast thou done it?" (Daniel, chap. iv. 31, &c.) Thus he spoke, giving us all an example to humble ourselves under the powerful hand of God, as St. Peter admonishes us: and to be more delighted with serving the King of kings, that we may experience His goodness, than proudly to resist His will, lest we be forced to feel the weight of His avenging hand.

### **Chapter IV**

#### **All The Blessed Are Kings**

THE fourth reason (and a very powerful one) why heaven is called a kingdom is because all the Blessed in heaven are kings, and all the conditions of being such most aptly apply to them. For although the saints in heaven serve God, as it is mentioned in the Apocalypse, yet at the same time they reign also; for in the same book, and in the same chapter, where it is said, "His servants shall serve Him a little lower we are told that "They shall reign forever and ever." (chap. xxii.) But all the Blessed will not only serve and reign at the same time; they will also be called servants and sons. Thus God speaks in the Apocalypse: "He that shall overcome

shall possess these things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.” (chap. xxi. 7.) Wherefore, as they can be both servants and sons, so also they can be both servants and kings; they are servants because they were created by God, to whom they owe obedience, and from whom they receive their being, and all things else; and David makes no exception when he says: “All creatures serve him.” They are also the sons of God, since they were born of God by water and the Holy Spirit; they are kings, too, because they have received the dignity from the King of kings, who is called by this name in the Apocalypse, “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” (chap. xix. 16.) But it may perhaps be said, that it is not difficult for one to be both a king of the earth, and a servant of God, for thus the Psalmist speaks: And now, ye kings, understand, receive instruction, you that judge the earth. Serve ye the Lord with fear: and rejoice unto him with trembling.” (Ps. ii.) But to be a king in the kingdom of heaven, and a servant of the King of heaven who can understand or comprehend this? And yet such is the truth, which faith believes and understands. The just, therefore, will also be kings in the kingdom of heaven, because they will be made partakers of the royal dignity, and power, and riches, &c., of that kingdom. This is what the Holy Spirit clearly teaches us, especially in three passages from the Scripture; the first of which occurs in St. Matthew: ”Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (chap. v.) In another part: ”Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (St. Matthew, chap, xxv.) The third passage is from the Apocalypse: “To him that shall overcome I will give to sit with me on my throne: as I also have overcome, and have sat down with my Father in His throne.” (chap, iii.) What can be clearer than these words? The kingdom of heaven is promised the possession of it will be given to us at the last day we shall have a seat on the royal throne of the Son of God, and of His Father, our eternal King: what is this but a participation of the same kingdom, which God possesses from eternity? St. Paul also adds his testimony: “If we suffer, we shall reign with Him;” and St. John likewise, in the beginning of the Apocalypse: “I, John, your brother, and your partner in tribulation, and in the kingdom.” &c. And St. James, in his Epistle: ”Hath not God chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him?” (chap. ii. 5.) But the kingdom of heaven is not lessened, because it is divided amongst innumerable angels and men. This kingdom is not like the kingdoms of the world, which cannot well be divided; but should they be distributed into parts, the division weakens them, and at length they are destroyed. But not so with the kingdom above, which is perfectly possessed by all, and wholly by each one, just as the sun is seen by all and each of the inhabitants of earth, whom it equally enlightens and vivifies. But this point will be more easily understood when we explain the good things that are to be found in the kingdom of heaven. We must now dwell on the conditions or qualities which are required in kings, so that we may be convinced the saints and blessed spirits can justly be called the Kings of the kingdom of heaven. There are two qualities especially necessary for kings: Wisdom and Justice. But with wisdom the Scripture joins prudence and counsel, and all other things that relate to intelligence; with justice are united mercy, clemency, and other virtues that adorn and perfect the will. Wisdom, therefore, is required that the king may have knowledge; justice, that he may govern his subjects with equity. On this account, Solomon, in the beginning of his reign, being admonished by God to ask for what he wished, asked for wisdom, which is the chief of all the virtues required in kings. His petition was acceptable before God, as we read in the third Book of Kings, and therefore he obtained what he prayed for. Would that he had asked for justice also: perhaps he would not then have fallen into so many crimes. But more justly does David speak in that psalm, where he prays for blessings on Solomon his son: ”Give to the king thy judgment, God; and to the king’s son thy justice.” (Psalm Ixxi.) From these words it appears that he fore saw Solomon would ask for wisdom, and therefore David prayed that “justice and judgment” might be given to him, which without wisdom cannot exist, although wisdom, though but imperfectly, may exist without justice. The Book of Wisdom, which was written for the instruction of kings, thus speaks: ”Love justice, you that are judges of the earth.” (chap, i.) It commences from “justice,” because it is not only in itself necessary for kings, but also because it disposes us to receive wisdom. Thus, a little lower, it adds: ”For wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sin.” In fine, Jeremias, foretelling the virtues of Christ, the eternal King says: ”Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, and I will raise up to David a just branch: and a king shall reign and be wise, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” (chap, xxiii. 5.) Truly, therefore, are “wisdom and justice required in kings.” Now every one must acknowledge, that all the blessed in heaven, though they may have been whilst on earth simple and ignorant, are now possessed of the deepest wisdom, and so eminently endowed with the virtue of justice, that they

might justly become kings of any kingdom. For all the blessed behold the very essence of God Himself, which is the "first cause" of all things; and thereby, from this fountain of uncreated wisdom, they drink in such wisdom as neither Solomon nor any other mortal possessed, except our Lord Jesus Christ, who, even during the time of His mortal life, saw God, for in Him "were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." But, besides the wisdom which the blessed possess, there is also given to them a full measure of justice, so that they can never sin, nor even wish to sin; thus St. Augustin speaks: "The first liberty of the Will was, to be able not to commit sin, but the last will be much greater, not to be able to sin." But he who cannot commit sin, cannot be unjust; and since perfect charity is the same as perfect justice, as St. Augustine asserts, "he who loves not God with the greatest and most perfect love, cannot possess the perfect justice. Now, they who behold God that infinite and pure Being cannot certainly turn away from Him, but they must ever love Him with the most ardent love; whence it follows, that all the saints in heaven are perfectly wise, perfectly just, and therefore most proper to reign. Arise then, my soul, and as far as possible consider, what happiness it will be to reign with God! And thus -to omit other considerations penetrate heaven itself on the wings of contemplation, and behold that glorious throne of which our Saviour speaks: "To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with me on my throne, as I also have overcome, and have sat down with my Father in His throne" (Apoc. chap. iii, 21.) How great will the glory be for that just soul to be placed with such an infinite multitude of angels, on the very throne of Christ and of God! And by His just judgment to be proclaimed a conqueror over the world, and the rulers thereof, and all invisible powers! And how will this soul exult with gladness, when, delivered from every toil and danger, she shall behold herself gloriously triumphant over all her enemies! What more will she desire, when she shall be made a partaker of all the gifts of her Lord, even of a participation of His throne and Kingdom? Oh, how zealously do they fight on earth, and with what patience do they bear all things for the love of Christ, who, with a lively faith and a sure hope, contemplate such divine honours in heaven!

## **Chapter V**

### **The Happiness Enjoyed In The Kingdom Of God**

THE fifth reason, it appears to me, why heaven is called a kingdom is, because the good things enjoyed by the blessed seem something like those possessed by the kings of the earth; but they are so much greater and more excellent as heaven is superior to earth. Wherefore, the kingdom that is prepared for the blessed is not simply called a "kingdom," but the "kingdom of heaven," that so we may understand the difference between the pleasures of each: the one being limited, base, mean, and temporal; whilst the others are boundless, noble, spiritual, and above all, eternal. The goods of an earthly kingdom are considered to be, power, honour, riches, and pleasures. An earthly monarch can command his subjects; and if they obey him not, he can imprison them, banish them, fine them, scourge them, or put them to death. Hence kings are feared by the people, for they appear, as it were, to be gods. Again, kings wish to be honoured with almost a supernatural veneration, by the knee being bent before them, as if in adoration; and often they will not deign to listen to us, unless we bow down to the earth; and whenever they appear in public, they wish every one to make way for them. In addition to this, they require a large "exchequer," full of gold and silver; neither do they count their money by hundreds or thousands of pounds, but by ten hundred thousands; and with reason, since they are obliged to support, not ten or twenty servants, but to lead whole armies forth against their enemies. Lastly, they do not condescend to indulge in ordinary amusements, but only in those which they suppose become their royal majesty such as banquets, hunting, and the theatre on which they squander immense sums of money. Now these are the chief pleasures which earthly princes possess; and all of them are short and fading, since they begin with life, and end in death; unless it should sometime happen, that their life was of longer continuance than their kingdom. But, moreover, these pleasures are not pure, because power is joined with infirmity, honour with ignominy, riches with poverty, and joy with sorrow and affliction. The power of a prince is such, that the people should depend on the will of their prince; but power is infirm, because the prince depends on the strength and resources of his people. What can a king do in capturing or defending a city, if the people are either unwilling or unable to assist him? But a prince depends not only on the resources of his subjects, but also on walls, fortifications, arms, engines of war, and "money," which is called the nerves of war. Wherefore the people depend on the pleasure of their prince, and serve him alone; the prince, on the contrary, depends on many men and many things, all of which he is obliged to employ. In fine, a king

can imprison, banish, or put to death his subjects; but a king also (I speak *de facto*, not *de jure*) can be imprisoned, banished, &c. Julius Caesar, Caius, Nero, Galba, Yitellius, Domitian, Commodus, Heliogabalus, &c., afford examples of this truth. And not only these who were so wicked, but also those of much milder dispositions, such as Alexander Mammssas, Gordianus the younger, Pertinax, Tacitus, Numerianus, Probus, Gratian, Valentinian the second, not to mention St. Edward the Confessor, St. Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia, St. Sigismund, king of Burgundy, St. Canute, king of Denmark, &c. Let us now speak of their honours. Whilst kings are present before others, they are certainly honoured and respected; but when absent, they are often ridiculed and spoken against: even when present, many praise them with their lips, whilst they despise them with their heart, so that, if the number of those that praise them and those that revile them could be counted, the latter would be found more numerous than the former. Truly, therefore, the ignominy of kings is often greater than their glory, since few are those who honour their dignity when present, but many accuse them when absent of avarice, and others of cruelty, others of luxury, &c. But perhaps the riches of kings are pure, without any admixture of poverty. No, for none are so poor as kings; they have immense incomes and great treasures, but their debts and expenses are much greater. He that possesseth little is not so poor as one who desireth many things, because he stands in need of them. And is it not a great proof of poverty when kings beg a mite, as it were, from the poor themselves, by exacting as taxes what is necessary for their support? I do not speak thus as if I wished to blame the exaction of tributes, for I know it is just they should be paid to kings, according to what St. Paul says in his Epistle to the Romans: "Wherefore be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience's sake. For therefore, also, you pay tribute. For they are the ministers of God, serving unto this purpose. Render therefore to all men their dues. Tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom is due" (chap. xiii.) But I merely wished to show the miserable condition of kings, who, although they abound in riches, are yet compelled to collect a part of them from the poor and destitute. But what shall we say of their pleasures? Kings have certainly gardens, orchards, sumptuous banquets, hunting, &c., and whatever else can amuse them; but they also have the gout, head-aches, complaints in the liver; and what is more distressing, the most painful cares of the mind, which deprive them whole nights of sleep, together with suspicions, fears, and anguish. If the doors of their chambers creak at night, they suspect treachery; if an armed multitude have been seen, a desertion is apprehended. Thus, joy is mixed with sorrow, and rest interrupted by care; this is the reason why many have resigned their crown, that they might lead a private life. But let us hear how St. John Chrysostom, in one of his Homilies to the people of Antioch, speaks of the kings of his time: "Look not at the diadem, but at the multitude of cares; look not at the purple, but at the soul, blacker than the purple itself. The crown does not so much circle the head, as cares do the soul. Neither consider the troops of attendants, but the multitude of troubles. For no private house can be found so full of cares as a palace: every day deaths are expected, but in the night one cannot tell how often the soul is terrified, and thinks it is about to depart. And all this in time of peace. But when a war breaks out, what can be more miserable than life? How many dangers befall friends and subjects!" The royal pavement is always sprinkled with the blood of relations. If you wish me to relate some facts, you will perhaps acknowledge them. I will tell you some that happened in our own time. One king having suspected his wife of adultery already the mother of many kings, bound her naked, and delivered her to the beasts of the mountain. What a life do you suppose he must have led? He would not surely have taken such a terrible revenge, unless he had been consumed by some disease. This same person murdered his own son also, but being seized, he destroyed himself. After this, another was taken away by poison; and his son, although he had done no injury, was deprived of his sight for fear of the future consequences. Another (but I cannot mention his name) ended his life very miserably; he was burned to death with his chariots and horses, &c. No one can express the sorrows he was obliged to endure, when he came to the throne. And the present king who now rules, when he was crowned with the diadem, did he not begin to be surrounded with toil, danger, sorrow, and treachery? But such is not the state of the kingdom of heaven.

The state of the kingdom of heaven, we shall now see. The kings of the kingdom of heaven, who all live in happiness with God, possess power without infirmity, honour without ignominy, riches without poverty, pleasure without pain; for of them the Psalmist speaks: "There shall no evil come to thee: nor shall the scourge come near thy dwelling" (Psalm xc.) And in the Apocalypse: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the

former things are passed away.” (ch. xxi. 4.) Wherefore exceeding great is the power of these heavenly kings, without the least admixture of infirmity. One angel, without an army, without swords and spears, instantly slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians; neither was he afraid of being wounded by any of the soldiers. St. Gregory relates in his Dialogues that a certain holy man, when the executioner with uplifted arm was about to behead him, exclaimed, “St. John, save me!” and immediately the executioner could neither move nor stir his hand in any way. St. John therefore heard the prayer of his client; and with such quickness was the executioner struck, that the stroke, though just falling, was prevented. Such then is the power of the kings of heaven, that neither the distance of place, nor the situation in which this just but defenceless man was placed, nor the multitude of armed enemies, could prevent St. John from delivering him from instant death. Numerous examples of the like nature could be mentioned. The honour these heavenly kings possess is so great, that not only good men, but the wicked also, and even devils, are forced to respect them. Many there are who despised and spurned these holy men whilst they were upon earth; but afterwards they honoured and venerated them when translated to heaven, especially if the Church by a public decree numbered them among the saints: and even the demons themselves, who were wont to harass the saints with temptations when living in the flesh; and even, by the permission of God, to beat them with many stripes, now fear their relics and images since they reign with God. What shall I say of the riches these kings enjoy? “Their great treasure is, to want nothing, because God is all in all.” He is not rich who possesseth many things; but he who desireth nothing, because he standeth in need of nothing: the soul ought to be rich, but not the coffers; heaven and earth and all things therein, contribute to the riches of the saints, for what do not they possess who are “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ?” and whom the Father hath appointed “heirs of all things?” There now remain but the pleasures which the blessed enjoy in heaven: these are pure and sweet, without any ingredient of sorrow or affliction: we have already heard from the Apocalypse, that God will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and that sorrow and mourning will be no more. But on this point we shall dwell more at length, when we speak of Paradise. We have now seen, that the good things which the blessed and all the saints will enjoy in heaven together, are such, that they can in no way be compared with the pleasures of earth; especially since the latter are temporary, the former eternal.

## **Chapter VI**

### **What Importance Men Attach To Earthly Kingdoms, And What Importance Ought To Be Attached To The Kingdom Of Heaven**

LET us now consider with what eagerness men seek after earthly kingdoms; though insignificant, frail, and full of care and trouble, that hereby we may be convinced with what ardour our heavenly Kingdom ought to be desired and sought after. The passion for dominion, without doubt far exceeds all other passions; for a kingdom is not one individual “good,” but a collection of all those pleasures which are so much prized by men. These are, power, honour, riches, and delights, as we have already seen; there is the liberty of living just as we please, which is naturally pleasing not only to man, but also to beasts; there is excellence, and a kind of divinity as it were, on account of which kings have no equals in their government, but are superior to all, above all, and are revered by all. Hence it is, that when kings wish to make a promise, they can find nothing greater than half of their kingdom. Thus Assuerus addressed Esther: “What wilt thou, Esther? What is thy request? If thou should even ask one half of the kingdom, it shall be given thee.” (Esther v. 3.) And Herod said to Herodias: “Whatsoever thou shalt ask I will give it thee, though it be the half of my kingdom.” Hence it is, that to possess or extend kingdoms, men consider it lawful to throw aside every right; nor is there anything so sacred which they will not violate for the sake of reigning. The very first individual who unjustly waged war against his friends and neighbours, was Ninus: he broke through every law, just and unjust, that he might enlarge his kingdom, as St. Augustine testifies. Julius Caesar was the first to oppress his country, which he did for the sake of being emperor. Maximinus the Thracian slew Alexander by his soldiers, that he might succeed to the empire, although he had received from him many and great benefits. Philip the Arabian did the same also to Gordian the emperor. But the lust of reigning arms man, not only against neighbours and benefactors, but also against brothers, nephews, and even fathers. Thus Romulus killed his brother Remus, and Caracalla his brother Geta. Athalia slew all the children of Ochozias her son, who was king, that so she might obtain the crown. Thus the desires of sovereignty impels not only men, but also females to commit the most shocking crimes. Sinochus, a Persian, contrived to murder his father and brother, in order that he alone

might reign. But why do I mention these instances? the mother of Nero, when the astrologer told her that her son would be emperor, but that she would be destroyed by him, is reported to have exclaimed, "Let him destroy me, provided he may reign!" Wherefore, this ambitious woman considered the kingdom to be of such importance to her son, that she preferred it to her own life. But this thirst for ruling not only makes injustice, to be justice, and arms man against a brother, nephew, and parent, but it also violates the sacred obligation of an oath, (which has always been considered most obligatory by every nation, even by the most cruel enemies,) when a throne is in view. If we are to give credit to Cicero, we are told that Julius Caesar was always accustomed to repeat these words of Euripides: "If an oath is to be violated, it may be violated for the sake of reigning: in other matters, cultivate piety." I omit innumerable other examples which demonstrate to all ages, that nothing what ever is prized more by men than a kingdom; and yet, not only do kings reign but for a short period, but also every kingdom will quickly be utterly destroyed; whilst the kingdom of the blessed shall alone remain for ever. Hear the prophet Daniel: "But in the days of those kingdoms, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, and his kingdom shall not be delivered up to another people; and it shall break in pieces, and shall consume all these kingdoms, and itself shall stand for ever." (ch. ii. 44.) This prophecy will be fulfilled at the end of the world; for then not only all great monarchies, but also small states, cities, and all the temporal power of princes will vanish away; but the kingdom of Christ and his saints will be eternal, according to the words of St. Luke: "And of His kingdom there is no end" Now if an earthly kingdom, which passeth quickly away, and which is obtained but by few, and full of many sorrows, be so ardently loved, sought after, preferred before every thing else, and acquired only by great dangers and bloodshed: why do so few love their heavenly kingdom, and so negligently seek after it? And yet, if the Holy Scriptures are to be believed, we are certain that this kingdom is open to all men, can be possessed without the effusion of blood, and is without any comparison superior to all earthly kingdoms. If I should say, Despise this kingdom that you may obtain a small farm or a vineyard, you would justly be astonished and laugh at me: but when I say, or rather when God says, Despise this vile and contemptible kingdom, and seek that which is noble and great, (which you may obtain, if you wish, by the grace of God which is never wanting,) why do you not desire it, and hasten to obtain it? I do not know what answer to make, except that the glory of this earthly kingdom is always before our eyes, and is touched, as it were, with our hands; whilst our heavenly kingdom can neither be seen, nor touched, nor even conceived by faith. This, indeed, is true; but if we attentively consider what force the authenticity, truth, and inspiration of Scripture carry with them, and how forcibly and clearly this same Scripture speaks on this point, which is confirmed by the powerful testimony of many ages, not only by miracles but also by blood, we shall certainly exclaim: "Thy testimonies, Lord, are become exceedingly credible." (Ps. xcii.) The obscurity of our faith, therefore, is not the reason why we are not inflamed with a desire for this heavenly kingdom. But being occupied by exterior things, and weighed down by the force of custom, we have no time to think and consider what is expedient for us. We do not follow the advice of our Lord, by entering into our chamber and shutting the door of our heart; we do not earnestly beseech God to direct us in so important an affair. But if, throwing aside for a time all minor cares, we were seriously to think on the kingdom of heaven; how easily and securely it can be acquired. And what an immense difference there is between things temporal and things eternal; between that which is most insignificant and that which is most excellent; between what is of very little importance and what is of the utmost importance; in fine, between an earthly kingdom and a heavenly kingdom. Did we, I repeat, consider these truths, doubtless we should have such a contempt for all earthly thrones, crowns, and sceptres; and, on the other hand, such an ardour for the heavenly things would rise in us, that, so far from being difficult, it would be a most easy task for us to employ all our strength in seeking and acquiring the kingdom of God, for which, as our true and last end, we were made by our wise Creator.

## **Chapter VII**

### **The First Means Of Attaining To The Kingdom Of God**

LET us now consider what is necessary to be done, in order that we may possess this most blessed and happy kingdom. But we need not say much on this point, since the King of heaven himself came upon earth to teach us; and thus, as our Master and Leader, he has pointed out to us four most excellent and secure means.



The first is: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." Our end is the kingdom of God, which kingdom will be given to us if we arrive there by the way pointed out to us by our Leader. Now, the "justice" of this kingdom is the mark at which we ought to aim, if we wish to gain the reward. For Cassian, in his first "Colloquy," teaches the end is one thing and the mark another; the mark is the sign to which the arrows are directed, the end is the reward which those receive who reach that mark. Now, the mark proposed by God for our actions is "justice," and the reward the kingdom of heaven. But the justice of God is not goods and evils of this life with those of the next, the world would become a desert, because there would be no one that would attend to the affairs of this life. (See the "Spirit" of St. Liguori.) the justice of the Scribes and the Pharisees, which consisted merely in the external observance of the law; nor is it the justice of the philosophers, which, corrupted by sin, did not extend beyond the light of reason. But it is the justice of the Gospel which teaches us, "to love God with our whole heart, with our whole soul, with our whole strength, and our neighbour (though our enemy) as ourselves." Of this end St. Paul speaks: "You have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end, life everlasting." (Romans, chap. vi. 22.) This is the lesson, therefore, which our Master teaches us, "First of all to seek the kingdom of God and His justice:" that is, our chief concern and only desire should be directed, not towards temporal goods, but to obtain the kingdom of heaven, by a perfect and most diligent observance of this first and greatest commandment. But because few do this, therefore "many are called, but few are chosen;" for many live in such a manner that the kingdom of heaven is but a secondary consideration with them, and the justice of God an indifferent object, as if our Lord had said, "Seek first the kingdom of this world and its pleasures, and the kingdom of God shall be added unto you." But not so insignificant is the kingdom of God, that it should be forced or those who prefer everything else to its possession. But if we wish to learn an easy way to obtain the justice of God, which most truly and certainly leads to this kingdom, let us hear Christ, our Teacher: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill." Is it then, O Lord, so easy to find justice with thee, that it is sufficient only to "hunger and thirst" after it? Truly blessed would all the poor be, if, merely by being hungry and thirsty after money, they could be so filled with it as to desire nothing more. But one is quite different from the other. For they who hunger and thirst after justice; that is, they who seek justice as anxiously and as eagerly as those who suffer from thirst and desire water, or from hunger and desire food these always think of justice, they aspire after it and what is far better, they ask it of God with many and unceasing tears. Such petitions God always listens to with joy; and He so fills them with the riches of His justice, that, being satiated thereby, they produce the words and the works of justice. But money is not such a good that he who desires it, or asks it of God, is immediately heard; for many abuse their riches, but justice no one can abuse. In fine, justice is like wisdom, of which St. James speaks: "If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him." Unspeakable clemency of our Lord, who more easily and willingly grants what is necessary for us, than we ask or desire it from Him! If, therefore, we stand in need of the wisdom of the saints, or of the gifts of justice, both of which are necessary for us to obtain the kingdom of heaven, let us ask them of God from our heart, seriously, with sighs and tears, and we shall surely obtain them. God giveth to all that ask in this manner; nor doth He repel any one, or give covetously or moderately, but bountifully: neither doth He rebuke us, as if He were angry that we besought Him so often. What can we say, then? Who can bring excuse for his ignorance or infirmity in the day of judgment? Seek only after justice, and ask it of God, and thou shalt be so filled that no more wilt thou desire the delights of the flesh, nor the allurements of honours, or of any other earthly good; but thou wilt live in this world so justly, soberly, and piously, as to arrive in the next at an eternal kingdom.

## **Chapter VII**

### **The Second Means Of Attaining The Kingdom Of God**

ANOTHER road, which our Leader has pointed out to us is this: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Here we are not commanded to keep our coffers entirely empty, but our heart and affections free from the desire of external things. Our Lord offers to us immense treasures, but He will not give them, unless we offer Him our heart completely disengaged from creatures. "The desire of money is the root of all evils" (1 Tim. vi. 10.) In Greek it is called the love of money. But the root of all good is charity, and these two can never remain together. Wherefore, unless we truly and perfectly become "poor in spirit," so that we are neither affected by riches nor by poverty, and unless we readily give something to the poor,

and do not convert it to our own use, except through necessity, we cannot obtain the justice of the kingdom of God, and, consequently, we cannot enter heaven. This is the true way that leadeth to life eternal; upon this road our Saviour Himself was the first to enter, "Who being rich, became poor for your sakes, that through His poverty you might be rich." (2 Epist. to Cor. chap. viii. 9.) And although He kept a purse, yet He entrusted it to Judas, who He knew to be a thief, that so we might comprehend how free His soul was from the love of money. Upon this path the Apostles also entered, though it would not have been difficult for them to have enriched themselves, since they were renowned for signs and wonders, and spoke the languages of many nations, and were admired by the whole world for their wisdom. But they who had once spoke the words, "Behold we have left all things, and have followed thee;" who had tasted how sweet it was to be free from the love of money, having food and wherewith to be covered, they considered virtue and the justice of God to be their great gain. On this road also walked, not only monks and hermits, but even kings and pontiffs who have thus arrived at the kingdom of heaven. St. Lewis, King of France, was certainly rich; but because he was at the same time poor in spirit, he used common garments, fasted frequently, was liberal to the poor, and severe to himself alone: he did not spend his money in banquets and pageants. St. Gregory also, who was a Pope, possessed many and large estates belonging to the Church; but because he likewise was "poor in spirit" he was so liberal with his alms, though parsimonious in his own regard, that he seemed to exceed the bounds of liberality towards others, and of neglect towards himself and his friends. But this is the way that leadeth to life. St. Paula, was a Roman lady, whose life is written by St. Jerome. See his epistle to Eustochium, the daughter of Pailla. It is perhaps one of the most interesting and instructive amongst his letters. His account of her leaving Toxotius and Ruffina her children, and how they endeavoured to stay her departure, is most affecting, as is the description of her death and burial in Jerusalem. She was a woman as poor in spirit, as she was rich in wealth. Though of most noble descent, she spent her money in erecting monasteries, and supporting the poor with such liberality, that it seemed to be her desire to be reduced to such poverty, as to compel others of their charity, to defray her funeral expenses. And how much she mortified her own body, we may be convinced by the fact, that she abstained from flesh, eggs, and wine; for a linen garment, she wore sackcloth; she slept on the bare ground, and with frequent prayers and tears, endeavoured to wash away even her trifling faults. St. Hedwiges also, Queen of Poland, though rich in worldly goods, was richer by her poverty of spirit, being content with only one mean garment, which she wore even in the depth of winter; she fasted daily, Sundays and great festivals being excepted; and with stripes, watchings, and all kinds of mortifications, she thus subdued her body. From these circumstances we may learn to what purposes she applied her riches, and what little affection, if any at all, she had towards them. It is not then truly edifying and wonderful, that this woman arrived so quickly at the kingdom of heaven, being so poor in spirit, and so free from all other cares.

## **Chapter IX**

### **The Third Means Of Attaining The Kingdom Of God**

THE third way pointed out by our Leader is this: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (St. Matthew, ch. v. 10.) Truly admirable is the doctrine of Christ our teacher, which however is hidden from the "wise" of this world. For who would have believed, unless God had said it, that it is a blessed thing to be poor, but rich in afflictions? And yet truly hath He spoken. Nothing is more calculated to acquire the true riches which merit the kingdom of heaven, than a mind free from all affection to money, and at the same time full of a desire to suffer for Christ. Hear our Lord in St. Luke: "Woe to you that are filled; woe to you that are rich, for you have your consolation; woe to you that laugh." (chap. vi.) And again in the same place: "Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh. Blessed shall ye be when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Be glad in that day and rejoice; for behold, your reward is great in heaven." (verses 21, 22, &c.) Hear what St. James says of riches and tribulations: "My brethren, count it all joy when you shall fall into divers temptations; knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience; and patience hath a perfect work." (chap. i.) Here he does not say: Bear, endure, be patient; but, Rejoice, yea, "count it all your joy:" that is, receive your tribulation, not as an affliction, but as matter for great joy. On the other hand, he thus speaks of riches: "Go to, now, ye rich men, weep and howl in your miseries which shall come upon you:" and in the preceding chapter he adds:

“Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into sorrow.” (ch. iy. 9.) But whence is it, that persecution makes a man happy, which ought rather (one would suppose) make him miserable? Much could be said on this point: but I will make only one remark, that persecution is like a furnace of burning fire. And as fire prepares our food, clears silver of its dross, and proves gold; so also does persecution, if patiently endured, prepare sinners for receiving grace; it purges the imperfect, and proves the just, and thus all are wonderfully benefited. A sinner is “raw flesh” as it were, which, unless it be properly cooked, is cast away as not fit to be eaten by man. For a sinner is full of bad humours of the concupiscence of the flesh, which is Luxury: of the concupiscence of the eyes, which is Avarice: and of pride, which is Ambition. But if he pass through the furnace of persecution, he is “cooked” in such a manner, as to be fit to be presented at the table of the Lord. When persecution or tribulation comes, then we forget our passions, our avarice, ambition, &c.; and we begin to be entirely different men. But a just man, though imperfect, and not subject to enormous crimes, may yet be indulgent to his flesh, a lover of pleasure, a lover of gain, and of the vanities of the world. He is therefore like to silver full of much dross. But if the furnace of persecution should overtake him, and he bear it with patience, then the dross will gradually be separated from the silver; he will begin to be recollected, to meditate on heavenly things, to abstain from carnal desires; in fine, to live justly, soberly, and piously in this world, and to expect that blessed hope, and the coming of the glory of the great God. Lastly, a man perfect in charity is gold; but he has to be proved by the fire of persecution, lest others (and he himself) should suspect, that he was debased gold, not pure gold; for when it is seen that he patiently endures the fire of persecution, not only is he acknowledged by others to be what he appears to be, but he himself also acquires a greater hope, and a more secure expectation of the kingdom of heaven. “Tribulation,” saith the Apostle, “worketh patience; and patience trial; and trial hope; and hope confoundeth not.” (Epistle to the Romans, chap. v. 3, &c.) Thus God daily more and more exalts his friend that is proved by tribulation, till at length He brings him to a share of his kingdom and happiness. Behold what is the fruit of patience in affliction! But it is strange to see how few make use of these advantages, although they are open to all. Affliction is everywhere to be found, everywhere to be met with at home, on a journey, in the forum, in the temple, for in all places the wicked oppress the good. Wherefore, most true are the words of the Apostle: “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.” But we, delicate soldiers, either fly from this proving furnace, or when we have received an injury we throw it back on our adversary: so that we not only refuse to suffer persecution, but we even cause it. And those are to be found a man’s enemies of his own household that applaud him who retaliates an injury, (as it is called,) and yet such people who despise the precepts of Christ, wish to be called Christians!

## **Chapter X**

### **The Fourth Means Of Attaining The Kingdom Of God**

BUT because this doctrine is very difficult, and very few understand it, and much less wish to experience it, therefore our Leader hath pointed out the fourth “way,” and this very narrow. He says: “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent alone bear it away.” (St. Matthew, chap. xi. 12.) As if He had said: I am aware that it will appear a paradox to men, that those should be happy who are poor, and those miserable who are rich; on the contrary, that we should rejoice in afflictions, and weep in prosperity; neither was I ignorant, that few are they who would wish to lose present goods, in order to acquire future ones; and to choose present evils, that so they might avoid those to come. But I who am Truth, must speak the truth; therefore I now add, that the kingdom of heaven can be taken only by the violent; therefore have I said in another place: “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven. For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.” And again: “How narrow is the gate, and straight is the way that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it!” And in another place I have said, that the kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field; and to a precious pearl which cannot be purchased unless we sell everything; hence it is necessary for us to be deprived of everything on earth, if we wish to possess in heaven this heavenly treasure and precious pearl. In St. Luke I have likewise plainly assured you: “Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple” (chap. xiv. ver. 33.) And although this “renunciation” is to be understood as relating to the affection of the mind; yet since a real disposition to part with all temporal goods, should the honour of God or our own salvation require it, is no easy matter, and which few accomplish, I have therefore added

other similitudes concerning him who wished to build a tower, and had not wherewith to finish it; and of a king who was about to wage war against another king, and had not sufficient forces to engage with him, with any hope of victory. Now if the erection of a tower, without a great sum of money, and a war against a powerful king, without a great army, be difficult and almost impossible things, how much more difficult will it be to accomplish both of these at the same time? But we must accomplish both, if we wish to gain heaven; for a tower is to be built which must reach to heaven; that is, good works are to be performed which will merit eternal life: and at the same time, we have to fight against numerous and powerful enemies, viz. impure spirits, who with all their might endeavour to hinder the building of the tower. We have a figure of this conflict in the children of Israel, who, when they wished to rebuild Jerusalem that had been destroyed by the Chaldeans, were obliged with incredible toil and anxiety, to build with one hand and to fight with the other, on account of the neighbouring nations that attacked them: "Of them that built on the wall and that carried burdens, and that laded; with one of his hands he did the work, and with the other he held a sword." (2 Esdras, chap. iv. 17) From these considerations it is manifest, that the kingdom of heaven can not be obtained without great toil and labour, by those who are wedded to earthly objects, who do not tame the concupiscence of the flesh, nor have learned to fight with their invisible enemies. But he who wishes seriously to apply, by the grace of God, to Christian perfection; to consider, not carelessly, but most attentively, the words of Christ; and to follow His example and that of the saints, gradually the way will be opened before him; his strength will increase; his enemies diminish; and by the charity of God in Christ Jesus, his yoke will begin to appear sweet and his burden light; and then will be accomplished the words of Isaias: "They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." (chap. xl. ver. 31.) And they will exclaim with the royal Prophet: "I have run the way of thy commandments, when thou didst enlarge my heart." It was not truly a difficult thing for St. Antony to spend so many sleepless nights; nay, even the night appeared too short through the sweetness he enjoyed from the divine contemplation, for he complained of the sun, saying: "Why dost thou hinder me by rising at this time, and withdrawing me from the brightness of my true Light?" Neither was it difficult for him (as well as many others like him) to prolong their fasting through a whole week, since they were refreshed with the heavenly bread of divine contemplation. Neither was it painful for St. Austin, to be deprived of those carnal pleasures to which he had been addicted from his youth, when once he began to taste the sweetness of divine love, and the delight of inward contemplation. Wherefore no one, whoever he may be, ought to despond; but rather to hope in the power of the Most High, who, as He hath made us for Himself, will also draw us to Himself and place us in His kingdom, by merits of His Son, by whose precious blood we have been redeemed. Wherefore, Christian soul, thou shouldst not despond on account of the difficulty of the way, but hope in the Lord, who would not have invited thee to seek His kingdom in the first place, unless He had been prepared to aid thee by His most powerful assistance. Courageously therefore commence the journey. There is no occasion here for deliberation. If the labour be great, great also is the reward; and if the numerous forces of the enemy hinder thee, greater is the power of God who assists thee. And if many of every age and sex have been enabled to arrive at the kingdom by this way, why mayest not thou also obtain the same? They were not made of stone or iron, but of flesh; they were mortal and frail, and therefore they could do nothing of themselves, but only by the Lord their God. Canst not thou therefore, though weak and infirm, do the same by the Lord thy God? "Cast thyself upon Him," says St. Austin, "fear not; He will not withdraw Himself, that thou shouldst fall: securely cast thyself upon Him; He will receive thee, and will help thee." God is faithful, He cannot deceive. Two things only are required of thee; one, that thou most firmly resolve to prefer the glory of God and thy eternal salvation before all things else; the other, that thou confide not in thy own strength, or in thy own wisdom, but in the power of God and His infinite love. If thou wilt comply with these two conditions, "the crooked shall become straight, and the rough ways plain" to thee; and thou wilt serve the Lord with joy and exultation, and "wilt sing in the ways of the Lord; for great is the glory of the Lord."

**Book II (The City of God)**  
**Chapter I**  
**On The Beauty Of The City Of God**

“GLORIOUS things are said of thee, O city of God:” wherefore I have desired to behold thy glory, meditating upon it through a glass in an obscure manner. But our first consideration is, why the happiness of the saints, which in the Holy Scripture is called the kingdom of heaven, is also called the “City of God.” This appears to me to be the reason; because as it is called a kingdom on account of its extent, so also it ought to be called a “City,” on account of its beauty. One might suppose, when he heard of a vast and extensive kingdom, that there are in it many deserts, many wild uncultivated places, and mountains fit only for the habitation of beasts, besides inaccessible rocks, forests, and precipices, &c. But since all these are far removed from the happiness of the saints, the Holy Spirit therefore teaches us, that the kingdom of heaven is like to a most “beautiful city;” and although it is of a boundless extent, yet the whole is so glorious as to appear a most populous and opulent city. In large cities especially are to be seen beautiful temples, splendid palaces, most delightful gardens, noble forums, fountains, columns, pyramids, obelisks, theatres, towers, and other buildings for the use of the public. How beautiful would Italy be, if the barren Apennines were removed, and all the country shone like Rome did (not as it appears now) under Augustus Caesar! From being of brick, he made it of marble. And how beautiful would Syria have been formerly, if all parts had been like Jerusalem such as it was before its destruction by the Romans! Josephus gives such a description of it, that its magnificence must have been the admiration of the whole world; and of it the Prophet justly sings, “Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God;” and yet it had not then arrived at that eminence to which Herod the Great carried it, after the reigns of David and Solomon. How beautiful also would Chaldea, and all Assyria and Mesopotamia, and the whole East have been, had these been enclosed within the walls of Babylon! Pliny and Strabo give such descriptions of its magnitude and beauty, that they seem incredible: hence Babylon was considered one of the seven wonders of the world. Now, what must that city above be, the heavenly Jerusalem, which embraceth the whole kingdom of heaven? This kingdom so far excels all other kingdoms in glory, majesty, and extent, that the whole appears but one city, most beautiful, most noble. Truly, then, this heavenly city is such, that no one can seriously think of it without frequently aspiring after it; and no one can desire it without immediately leaving all things to possess it, and never resting till he find it. Hear how Tobias, exulting in spirit, speaks of this city: “Thou shalt shine with a glorious light, and all the ends of the earth shall worship thee. The gates of Jerusalem shall be built of sapphire and of emerald, and all the walls thereof round about of precious stones. And all its streets shall be paved with white and clean stones; and Alleluia shall be sung in its streets.” (chap, xiii. 21, 22.) And St. John also, in his Apocalypse, agrees with Tobias: “The building of the wall thereof was of jaspar-stone; but the city itself pure gold, like to clear glass. And the foundations of the walls of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones and every several gate was of one single pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.” (chap, xxi.) But we must not suppose the heavenly Jerusalem to be in reality adorned with gold and precious stones; but by this mode of expression we are to understand, that the heavenly city is as much superior to earth as gold is to dirt, as pearls to common stone, the stars to candles, the sun to a torch, and mortal architects to God, the immortal Creator of all things. But as we intend to speak of the beauty of all the parts of the city of God, we shall dwell no longer on this point.

## **Chapter II**

### **On The Concord And Peace Of The City Of God**

ANOTHER reason why the kingdom of heaven is called the “city of God,” appears to be this, because a kingdom usually contains an almost infinite number of people, differing one from another in their language, manners, and laws; where many have never seen each other, and much less formed any acquaintance. But a city includes those only who are of the same language, the same customs, and who are governed by the same laws. Wherefore, heaven is called both “a kingdom” and “a city” because, although the inhabitants of this heavenly kingdom are almost innumerable, and as St. John tells us, are collected from “all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues,” and also divided into angels, archangels, principalities, powers, dominations, thrones, cherubim, and seraphim, who are much more numerous than men, and are distinguished, not by nations, and peoples, and tongues, but by a specific diversity of nature; yet all these are true citizens, living in concord and unanimity, and governed by one only law of charity. Wherefore, all have but one heart and one soul. And because charity is contrary to hatred, envy, contention, discord, strife, and other vices, therefore anger, contention, envy, &c., are far removed from this holy city of Jerusalem: charity

alone reigneth, and with it justice, peace, and “joy in the Holy Ghost.” In the beginning of creation there was a great battle in heaven between Michael, the archangel, and the dragon; but Michael, and the angels who remained firm with him in faith and obedience to their Lord, gained the victory over the dragon and his angels, who by their pride had fallen away from God. “And that great dragon was cast out, that old serpent who is called the devil and Satan, who seduceth the whole world; and he was cast unto the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.” (Apoc. chap. xii. 9.) From that time the holy city of Jerusalem “hath placed peace in its borders;” nor has the sound of the war-trumpet been heard therein, neither will it be heard there for ever. What then can be sweeter, what more blessed than this city? They who know the evils of war, its depredations, slaughter, rapine, sacrileges, &c., can easily imagine the sweetness of peace. But, leaving aside war, who has not experienced in his own city, and even in his own house, how disagreeable it is to have anything to do with passionate men, who take the worst view of all our actions? “Depart from the unjust, and evil shall depart from thee,” saith Ecclesiasticus. But where shall we go, and not find the unjust? and if they are everywhere to be found, evils will certainly be found also, as long as we remain in this land of exile. Hear how the same Ecclesiasticus speaks of a wicked woman: “It will be more agreeable to abide with a lion and a dragon than to dwell with a wicked woman.” (chap. xxv.) Now, if the partner of one’s life becomes a lion and a dragon on account of her wickedness, to how many afflictions are men exposed! “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,” says the apostle. (2 Timothy, chap. iii. 12.) How unhappy, therefore, is the city of this world, wherein we are obliged to bear with so many enemies, and to fight our way. If we wish to be devout, we shall be persecuted by men; and if, to avoid their persecution, we become wicked, we shall then incur the indignation of our supreme and almighty King, who will punish us, and, both alive and dead, will take vengeance, for His anger no one can resist. Oh, unfortunate and miserable country, where no one can escape from war or persecution, where no one can find true peace! Let us therefore, with our whole heart, love and praise that heavenly city, from which alone every affliction is banished, and where no war, no hatred, no strife, can ever gain admittance.

## **Chapter II**

### **On The Liberty Of The City Of God**

A THIRD reason why the kingdom of God is called a “city,” is because a kingdom is in the form of a monarchy, and this seems opposed to liberty. But all the citizens of heaven are free, and Jerusalem, our mother above, is also “free,” according to St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians. This blessed Apostle knew what he was speaking of, since he had been rapt up into the third heaven, into paradise, and became acquainted with the nature of the city. Wherefore, as a kingdom implies “servitude,” and a city “liberty,” that kingdom alone may be called a city where they who obey the king are free. But the blessed in heaven possess not one simple liberty, but one that is manifold. In the first place, all the inhabitants are free from the servitude of sin, because the first liberty, possessed in the earthly paradise, was “to be able not to sin;” but the second, enjoyed in heaven, is far more excellent: “not to be able to sin,” as St. Austin teaches. Another liberty (like the former) is being free from the servitude of death. Adam in the earthly paradise was free, so that he could have escaped death: the Sons of Adam in the heavenly paradise are free, so that they cannot die. You must not be surprised at our making liberty to consist in not being able to do anything; because “not being able to sin” and “not being able to die” indicate the height of liberty from the servitude of sin, and the servitude of mortality. For he who cannot sin, is not only free from sin, but is also so far removed from its servitude that he feels a sure security sin will never prevail within him; and he who cannot die is not only free from death, but he is so far removed from it that he feels confident death will never approach him. This liberty God alone naturally enjoys, for the Apostle says: “Who alone hath immortality.” And although the angels and souls endowed with reason are said to be naturally immortal, because they have within them no principle of corruption; yet God, who made them, can also destroy them. But, as we have already remarked, the angels and blessed spirits are certain that they will never sin and never die, and therefore they are completely free from the servitude of sin and of death; this is a most honourable participation in the Divine liberty. The third liberty consists in being free from “necessity” in general. Now man is obliged to eat, drink, sleep, and labour, at one time to stand or walk, and at another to lie down. But the saints in heaven are not subject to any such necessity, but are free from every necessity, which is the liberty of the glory of the Sons of God, as St. Paul expresses it in his Epistle to the Romans. How great this liberty is, first poor people, then

spiritual men, and thirdly the rich of this world bear witness. What labour the poor endure that they may provide food and clothing for themselves and children! and how greatly would they thank those who would free them from such a state of servitude! Many even rob and plunder others, and suffer themselves to be led into bad habits, to be enabled to support themselves; for they say with the unjust steward in the Gospel, "To dig I am unable, to beg I am ashamed; I know what I will do: I will defraud my Master;" that is, by theft and injustice I will free myself from His servitude. But by this mode of acting we fall into a far more grievous servitude, viz., the servitude of sin and the devil, the most bitter enemy of the human race. Holy men, who give themselves up to heavenly contemplation, consider the servitude of attending to the body to be a grievous burden, because it standeth in need of many things, and steals a great part of their time from other more important concerns. Eusebius, in his "Ecclesiastical History," relates from Philo that the first Christians of Alexandria, living under St. Mark the Evangelist, were so taken up with their heavenly meditations as never to taste any food until after sunset, that thus they might give the whole day and a great part of the night to such spiritual employment: scarcely did they allow any portion for the refreshment of the body. The same historian tells us, that some forgot their food for three days together, and others continued their fast for six days. Cassian in his Colloquies, and Theodoret in his History, testify that many holy hermits were accustomed to the same thing. Wherefore, to all these the servitude of the body was most grievous, and with the Apostle they exclaimed: "Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But to the inhabitants of this world, and especially to those who are rich, this servitude does not appear grievous, but were they wise they would think differently. They are addicted to excessive eating and drinking, and love to sleep on soft couches, and when they exceed the bounds of moderation, they fill their bodies with diseases, and to get free from them they are obliged to take bitter medicine, and to endure many sharp pains. Wherefore they are necessitated, whether willing or unwilling, either to remain enemies to God and to bear His terrible wrath, or to fight against the concupiscence of the flesh by temperance and sobriety. This is doubtless a most laborious and dangerous war; but thus both poor and rich, the good and the wicked, would be free from a most painful "necessity" and miserable servitude. The fourth liberty consists in being free from obedience to the law and the divine precepts, for "the law is not made for the just man, but for the unjust," as St. Paul mentions in His Epistle to Timothy. None are more just than the blessed, who are confirmed in justice, and cannot therefore become unjust. It is true, indeed, that to the just living in this world, the law is not a threatening one, because of their own accord they willingly obey it; nevertheless, it cannot be denied but that it is a law which directs and binds them to do that which is commanded, and to avoid that which is forbidden. But the just, who enjoy the liberty of the Sons of God, stand in need of no law, because they behold all justice in the divine "Word," and, being confirmed in perfect charity, they cannot but accomplish the will of God. Great, then, is this liberty which frees them from every solicitude, and which is so opposed to captivity and the servitude of those unhappy beings, who, with their hands and feet bound, are "cast into the exterior darkness" and into the "furnace of fire," which they can neither endure nor avoid. And yet either one or the other of these abodes will be the lot of every son of Adam. But, alas! many are so blinded by the smoke of present honours, or by the dust of earthly goods, that they see not these things, neither do they consider them, "until sudden destruction" come upon them: then their torments open their eyes, which before their sins had shut.

## **Chapter IV**

### **On The Situation And Form Of The City Of God**

BUT let us now turn toward the Celestial city, and attentively consider its situation, form, foundation, gates, walls, and streets. It is situated on the holy mountains: thus we read in the Psalmist, "The foundations thereof are in the holy mountains;" with this St. John agrees in the Apocalypse, where he says: "And he took me up in spirit to a great and high mountain: and he showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God." (chap. xxi. 10.) The situation of a city on a mountain is very convenient and useful, both for the purity of the air, and as a fortification. But what mountains are higher than heaven? and what mountain is exalted above all mountains, except the heaven of heavens, of which David speaks, "The heaven of heavens is the Lord's." This is that mountain for which the same Prophet sighed when he said, "Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place?" And from this he implored and expected assistance, saying, "I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from whence help shall come to

me.” Wherefore, the situation of the city of God is so high as to shut out everything that could in any way disturb its peace and harmony. It is higher than dust, thorns, and briars, or the poisonous bite of animals can reach: it is so high that neither vapours nor clouds, neither hail, nor thunder, fire, nor lightning can terrify it: in fine, it is so high that those impure birds, which St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, calls “The spirits of wickedness in the high places,” can never reach it. The form of the City of God is square, for thus St. John tells us: “And the city lieth in a foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth.” This expression signifies nothing more, than that admirable and perfect justice which is to be found in the city, where nothing unjust, nothing contradictory, nothing deformed can gain admittance. Thus St. Austin explains the Psalm, “Mirabile in eequitate,” that is, injustice. And truly wonderful will it be, to behold the innumerable inhabitants of this city, all endowed with perfect free-will; and yet throughout all eternity nothing wrong or imperfect will be found in any one of them, either in thought, word, or deed. Justly, therefore, does this city lie in a square, so that the breadth should not, in the least point, exceed the length, nor the length the breadth. This figure of a square may also signify, that the breadth of its heavenly treasures is equal to their length; because as the abundance of goods will be infinite, so also will their duration. In the Scripture, breadth is applied to multiplicity, length to the duration of a thing. Thus, in the third Book of Kings, the great wisdom of Solomon is said to be “largeness of heart as the sand that is on the seashore:” and in the 90th Psalm, duration of time is called “length of days.” There will, therefore, be in the city of our God, as much breadth as length, because there will be an immensity of good things, together with an eternal duration of them. St. John also adds, that the height of the city is as great as its breadth, (so that it is square in every part) because the goods of the heavenly Jerusalem will not only be great and eternal, but also most noble and sublime. It is of little consequence, that Vitruvius and Yegetius do not approve of a square for the situation of a city: they speak of a city that feareth an enemy. But the Scripture speaketh of that holy city, which hath placed peace in its borders, and to which no evil can come on account of its height.

## **Chapter V**

### **On The Foundations And Gates Of The City Of God**

THE foundation is of such a nature, that the city alone may justly be called the foundation. Thus speaks St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews, “For he looked for a city that hath foundations; whose builder and maker is God” (chap. xi. 10.) The Apostle gives the reason, why Abraham did not build a city in the land of promise, but dwelt therein as a stranger: the reason was, because he knew that the land of promise was but a figure of a better land of promise; and, therefore, he was unwilling to build a house or city that would perish, because he looked for a city that had a strong foundation, “whose builder and maker is God.” Wherefore, this heavenly city alone truly and properly hath a foundation, since it was built by God to endure for ever. The cities which Cain, Nimrod, Ninus, Nabuchodonosor, Romulus, &c., founded, have often fallen, and at the last day will entirely be destroyed: this proves that they had no solid foundation. Hence, we may understand how much wiser were the Patriarchs than we are, who, although they lived more than double the number of our years, and were obliged to wait so many thousands of years before they could enter the heavenly city; yet they built neither cities nor houses, but dwelt in tabernacles, as strangers and pilgrims, believing with an assured hope that they were destined to inhabit an Eternal city in heaven, and that all things on earth would quickly perish. But we, who live to such a short period, and who can, if we wish, immediately after death, enter into that most blessed city, so labour in erecting and adorning buildings on earth, as if we were either never to die, or else had no expectations of entering Heaven. In this point, we certainly imitate not the faithful Patriarchs, but unbelieving Infidels: and yet we are Christians, and we know that Christ and his Apostles built neither a city, nor a tower, nor had even a house; neither did they wish for one. But still, I do not blame the princes of this world, although Christians, for building new cities: nor private individuals for erecting houses for their own convenience. For we know that David, a pious king, enlarged the city of Jerusalem, and built in it a royal palace, as we read in the Second Book of Kings. We also know that St. Lewis, king of France, erected in Palestine, at his own expense, several cities for the Christians: neither are we ignorant, that it is but just Princes should possess more magnificent habitations than private men, and patricians more than the common people. But we only require moderation, and condemn extravagance, especially when individuals wish for the palaces of princes; and princes, not content with their palaces, erect immense buildings that look like towns: in fine, we blame a too great affection for temporal goods, as if our



chief happiness consisted in them: but we praise a contempt for the world, joined with the humility of Christ. The gates of this city are said by St. John to be made of precious stones, and the walls of the jasper-stone; but the whole city itself of pure gold. All this signifies that every part is precious, pure, and transparent; for we know that pearls are both precious and white: the jasper-stone is sometimes found white, and other times green. But St. John says: "And the light thereof was like to a precious stone, as to the jasper-stone, even as crystal:" he adds, "as crystal," to show that he is speaking, not of a green jasper, or any other colour, but of a white and clear one. Thus also when he says, that the streets are of pure gold, he adds, "like to clear glass;" that is, transparent and white like crystal. Wherefore, whether we consider the whole city, or the gates, the walls, or the streets, all is precious: nothing is mean, unbecoming, fading; but every thing is beautiful, every thing visible, because there nothing can be found to be hidden or concealed: all behold all things: there no suspicions nor stratagems are admitted. This perhaps is the reason why St. John says in the same place, "And the gates thereof shall not be shut," because no darkness, no robbers, no enemies are there, on account of which the gates should be closed at night. This verse is not opposed to the words of the Psalmist, where he praises the heavenly Jerusalem: "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem, because he hath strengthened the bolts of thy gates." (Psalm cxlvii.) Both the Psalmist and the Evangelist mean this only that in the heavenly Jerusalem, no danger is to be apprehended from enemies or robbers. By the gates being always shut, the one signified, that the divine protection would never permit any enemy to enter the beloved city of God: the other meant, by the gates being always open, that the city was so secure from every evil attack, there was no need of keeping the gates shut, nor of employing any guards. But what do the gates, the walls, and streets signify? The gates always open signify, that by the passion of Christ admittance has been given to all men, of entering the city of God, and of His angels; "Christ having overcome the sting of death, hath opened to believers the kingdom of heaven." And not one only, but twelve gates are there, by which Christians can enter the city: thus St. John tells us: "On the east, three gates; and on the north, three gates; and on the south, three gates; and on the west, three gates." Therein enter, not the Jews alone, as they imagine; but all nations from every quarter of the earth: nay, so few Jews enter, as to bear no comparison with the others. Thus our Lord predicted when He spoke of the centurion: "Amen I say unto you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. And I say to you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness." And in the parable of the vineyard, "Therefore I say to you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof." But this is most clearly expressed in St. Luke: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. And there shall come from the east and the west, and the north and the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." Three gates are said to be from every part of the world, making in all twelve, because an entrance will be open, not only from the east and the west, the north and the south, but from the beginning of the east, from the middle, and from the end of the east, and so of the other parts. Another explanation may perhaps please us more, that the three gates are fixed to each part of the heavenly city, to express the mystery of the Trinity and the three most necessary virtues: for all those enter from the four quarters of the globe, who being baptized in the name of the three divine Persons, have persevered to the end in Faith, Hope, and Charity.

## **Chapter VI**

### **On The Walls And Streets Of The City Of God**

THE walls of the city signify nothing more, than the divine protection, which alone is sufficient to guard the city, without the aid of soldiers, arms, or towers. "And I will be, saith the Lord, a wall of fire round about: and I will be in glory in the midst thereof." (Zacharias ii.) Truly admirable promise! "I will be a wall of fire round about" to restrain the enemy: "and I will be in glory in the midst thereof" to honour the citizens. As if He had said: Fire burns and shines: I will there to burn mine enemies, and enlighten my friends: thus will I be a "fire round about," and a "light of glory in the midst thereof." This St. John explains where he says: "And the city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it. For the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof." The brightness of God, as a sun, illumines their souls; and Christ, the Lamb of God, illumines the body. But Christ is said to be a "lamp," not because it is necessary in the night, but with reference to his divinity: for if the just shall shine like the sun in the kingdom of God, as our Lord tells us in

St. Matthew; how much more glorious will Christ appear not as a lamp, but as the chief Sun enlightening the city of God! And, therefore, St. John adds, "For there shall be no night." The streets of the city comprehend the whole space which is within the circumference of the walls. This is the habitation of the heavenly citizens - all of which is pure gold; that is, an ardent and pure charity which embraceth all, and by which all live in each through mutual love: and not only all in all, but all dwell in God, and God in all: "for he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him." (1 St. John iv. 16.) And that this might be accomplished, Christ our Lord asked of His Father in that prayer which he made before His passion, in presence of all His apostles, saying: "And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me: That they may all be one, as thou Father in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us." (St. John xvii. 20, 21.) O blessed city which, placed on the highest mountain, enjoyest the purest air! Thou art founded on a rock, that thou mayest have eternal strength: thy gates shine as pearls, and are always open to those that enter: God is thy wall, that continually surrounds thee by His protection, and adorns thee as a precious jasper-stone: thy street is charity, purer than any gold, clearer than any crystal, which maketh all that dwell within thee, to be of one heart and one soul; which filleth them with ineffable joy, and crowneth them with eternal peace: "My soul longeth and fainteth for thy courts." "What can be sweeter to one labouring and groaning amidst a corrupt nation -amongst false brethren in a world "seated in iniquity," than to flee away to a kingdom wherein the sweetest peace is found, wherein charity alone reigneth? "When shall I come and appear before the face of my God?" (Psalm xli.) What more desirable for a soul that loves God, than to behold her Beloved to be seen by her Beloved and by an intimate and most joyful union, to dwell within Him, and He in her! It may indeed appear an intolerable boldness, that dust and ashes should sigh after thy courts, O holy city, and a still greater audacity, that a vile creature should aspire to the embraces of his Creator. But He will excuse this boldness, since He hath given it unto us, when he asked the Father, that "all might be one;" and that as the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, so also we might be one in both.

## **Chapter VII**

### **On The Temple Of The City Of God**

BUT there is something else wanting in the city, viz: a temple to praise God, and to take our meat and drink: of garments we shall stand in no need. For if in the earthly paradise Adam and Eve required none, much less will the Saints want them in their heavenly paradise, where all are clothed with light as with a garment. And not only Adam and Eve required food, but also the angels themselves, as Raphael saith: "But I use an invisible meat and drink, which cannot be seen by men." (Tobias xii. 19.) And so also in relation to this temple, St. John thus speaks in his Apocalypse: "And I saw no temple therein. For the Lord God Almighty is the temple thereof, and the Lamb." (chap, xxi.) That St. John saw no temple in the holy city, must not appear strange to us: in the church militant temples are erected, for four reasons: That the word of God might be preached to the people; that the sacraments and sacrifices might be celebrated; that public prayer might be offered to God, and Psalms sung to the Lord with joy and gladness. Now the preaching of God's word will cease in heaven, where the uncreated Word itself will clearly speak unto all, according to the prediction of Jeremiah the prophet: "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying: "Know the Lord: for all shall know me from the least of them even to the greatest, saith the Lord." (chap. xxi. 34.) Sacraments and sacrifice likewise will not be necessary there, where neither sin is to expiated, nor signs are required, because the thing signified will then be made manifest. Prayer and praise are here on earth given to God in sacred temples dedicated unto Him, because He hath promised to have His eyes and ears open to the prayers of those who should gather together in His name; thus He spoke to Solomon in the 2nd Book of Paralipomenon: "My eyes also shall be open, and my ears attentive to the prayer of him who shall pray in this place." (chap. vii. 15.) But since in the heavenly city, God will be seen and heard by all, there is no necessity for a temple in that place. Thus we can easily understand what St. John saith: "And I saw no temple therein:" but why has he added, "For the Lord God Almighty is the temple thereof, and the Lamb." If no temple be required, why is God himself said to be the Temple of that city, and not only God, but the "Lamb" also? Or who shall explain for us, how God and the Lamb are called "Temples" in heaven? And what use hath this temple in heaven? In the holy Scripture it is usual for one sentence to serve as an explanation of another, or an obscure passage to be made intelligible by another that

is clearer. In the 90th Psalm it is said: "He who dwelleth in the aid of the Most High, shall abide under the protection of the God of heaven." The meaning of these words is: he who is united to God by a sure confidence, abides as it were in God, in whom he dwells securely, and is protected from all evil. The same may be said of prayer and praise; for he that by an intimate reverence is joined to God, makes, as it were, a house for himself in God, that so whilst living in it, he may praise God and pray unto Him as he ought. Thus, therefore, the Lord God Almighty is the "Temple" in heaven of the holy city, since these blessed citizens, most attentively considering the omnipotence of God, and thus united to Him by an intimate reverence, dwell in Him, and offer Him worthy praise. So also when they consider the merits of Christ, who as an innocent Lamb delivered himself an oblation, and a victim to God as an odour of sweetness, they are intimately united with Him by love: and reposing in Him as in a temple, they pray for us, and doubtless find the eyes and ears of God open, so that whatsoever they ask they obtain for us. But if, to praise God and to intercede for us, these blessed citizens dwell in Him and in Christ, as in a temple, what must we do who neither see God nor Christ? I would that by the grace of God, we could so praise Him and pray unto Him, that being first united to Him by true humility, and a deep reverence from the consideration of His Supreme Majesty, we could dwell in Him as in a most sacred temple! Then not carelessly or with distraction, but most attentively and devoutly should we sing our grateful praises to God, and offer up to the Lord prayers that would benefit ourselves and our brethren; then would these words be fulfilled: "The sacrifice of praise shall glorify me: and there is the way by which will show him the salvation of God." (Psalm xlix.) The divine praises, offered up on the altar of the heart by the fire of charity, ascend as an odour of wonderful sweetness; and they obtain for us, that our path may be opened and our heart enlightened, to behold the salvation which God hath prepared for those that love Him. But all these benefits those miserable men lose, who pray and sing the divine praises with distraction, and a voluntary dryness of heart; they participate with others in the labour of singing and praying, but they enjoy not the divine consolation, nor a foretaste of heavenly happiness.

## **Chapter VIII**

### **On The Meat And Drink In The City Of God**

CONCERNING the meat and drink of the city of God, we find these words in the Apocalypse: "And he showed me a river of the water of life clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. And in the midst of the street thereof, and on both sides of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruits every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." (chap. xxii.) I am afraid, that some, judging from these words, may wonder at the scantiness of food in heaven, and think that more substantial meat is to be found in this land of our exile; since in the Apocalypse we read of nothing, but the fruit of one tree for food, and the water of a river for drink. But those who suppose such a thing should remember, that in the terrestrial paradise, where doubtless there was better food than we have now, Adam was only allowed to eat fruit and herbs, and drink water; but this fruit and water were far superior to all the food and wine of this life, though not so in any degree, to the "tree of life" and the living water of the heavenly paradise. In this vale of misery, all men are sickly and have their sense of taste corrupted by a kind of bitterness, and therefore to remove this nausea, they have invented various kinds of food; but this variety so lessens the nausea, as to increase the disease. In the terrestrial paradise however, men were healthy, for the sweetness and wholesomeness of the food and of the water were such, as to be able perfectly to nourish them, and to their great delight, to keep them in continual health; we may add also, that their food was abundantly supplied, without the labour and toil of procuring it. But the living water and "the tree of life" in the city of God, are not like the meat and drink of man in common with animals, such as we have in this world; but so excellent, so great, so divine are they, that the Prophet sings, "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure." (Psalm xxxv.) Neither is this meat or drink any thing corporal, but it is spiritual and divine, of which we read in Ecclesiasticus: "She will give him the water of wholesome wisdom to drink;" and the tree of life is that bread, of which it is written in the same place, "with the bread of life and understanding she shall feed him." (chap. 15.) And as St. Augustine teacheth, "in corporal things food is one thing, and drink another," but in spiritual matters, food and drink are the same; that is, wisdom, or understanding, or intelligence, which signify the same thing, is food that nourishes and drink that extinguishes thirst. But by the "living water," wisdom also may be signified, and by the "tree of life," charity; thus St. John in his first Epistle, "We know

that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not, abideth in death.” (chap, iii.) To love as well as to understand, are both spiritual actions; wherefore, the drink of the saints in the city of ^God, is to drink of the living river that springs from the fountain of life, which is God; this means, to enjoy a participation of that wisdom by which God is wise, and which is most profound, high, and unspeakable. The food of the same saints is to eat of the “tree of life;” that is, to enjoy a share of that ineffable love, whereby goodness itself being clearly seen can be loved, and by which God loves Himself, who is infinitely good, and the fountain of all goodness. What these signify, we cannot, nor shall we be able to understand, until we arrive at this blessed city. But when St. John says, “that on both sides of the river is the tree of life, yielding its fruit every month,” we must understand the passage metaphorically, that by a comparison taken from corporal things we may understand the spiritual. The blessed Evangelist intended to point out to us the tree of infinite goodness; and that he might do this, he described the tree which grew at the bank of the river, and which from its excellence, being continually watered, produced fruit every month, not every year as others do. Neither does he wish to intimate, that there is only one tree, but many of the same kind, which are so planted on both sides of the river flowing through the middle of the city, that there is little space between the one and the other; and in this manner, the view of the whole city can be enjoyed, and the flow of the water as well as the fruit of the tree. The goodness of the tree is signified by the words “tree of life;” its fruitfulness by the production of new fruit every month. Hence it is, that the inhabitants of the city always have fresh and ripe fruit fresh, from having it every month ripe, from having had it the month immediately preceding: it is never rotten, never dry, never insipid. All this signifies, that the food of the blessed, (that is, the wisdom by which they perfectly see God, and the charity whereby they perfectly love Him,) is the best, .and never faileth. That which the holy Evangelist adds concerning the leaves of the tree, “for the healing of the nations” seems to mean, that in this our exile, the fruit of the tree of life itself will never be given unto us, but only its leaves; these, however, although they confer not eternal life, are yet useful in “healing” our disorders, the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, the pride of life, &c., by which all men are enfeebled more or less. These leaves are the divine revelations of the prophets and apostles, sent to us from heaven! how sweet an odour would these leaves scatter, if we had the spirit of the Lord. Read the Prophets, the Psalmist, the Gospels, the Epistles of SS. Peter, Paul, John, James, Jude, all these breathe humility, charity, and continency, of which the philosophers make no mention. Wherefore, Christian soul, diligently peruse these leaves, make unto thee from them a daily medicine; and imagine what must be the fruit thereof. And, then despising the husks of swine, ardently sigh for the fruit of Eternal life which is above; think of it, and as long as it is deferred, let the memory of it never depart from thee.

## **Chapter IX**

### **On The Mystical Foundation Of The City Of God**

WE have already considered one part of the heavenly Jerusalem, let us now consider another part of the structure. A city not only includes foundations, gates, walls, streets, but also a body of citizens, who according to the variety of their functions, are called the foundations, gates or walls. Hence perhaps a city may more properly be named a collection of citizens under the same laws, rather than a collection of houses within the same walls. Thus Cicero speaks in the Dream of Scipio: “An assembly of men united by laws are called citizens.” Now concerning the heavenly city, which consists of citizens, not only St. John mentions it, but also St. Peter in his first Epistle, and St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians. We have read in the Apocalypse, that in the twelve gates were twelve angels, and thereon were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, and in the twelve foundations the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. In the first Epistle of St. Peter we read, “Unto whom coming as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen and made honourable by God; be you also as living stones built up.” (chap, ii.) And in St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians, “Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow-citizens with the saints, and domestics of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.” (chap. ii. ver. 19.) In the first place, therefore, the city of God has for its foundations the apostles and prophets, because their doctrine supports the whole fabric. Faith is the beginning of salvation, but faith has been revealed by the prophets and apostles, either by writing or preaching the mysteries of the blessed Trinity, the incarnation, the resurrection of the dead, everlasting glory, eternal torments; others also, which are above human reason, we have learned from the apostles and

prophets, to whom God had revealed them. But although faith has no place amongst the blessed, since what they believed they see, and what is seen is not believed, but known and understood; yet the apostles and prophets are called the “Foundations” of the heavenly city, because faith being the beginning of salvation, is consequently the beginning of beatitude. But since St. Peter saith, that we as living stones are built upon Christ, and St. Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, “For other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus;” therefore there is but one foundation, because in the twelve foundations of the apostles Christ existed, as St. Austin teacheth in his explanation of the 86th Psalm. He himself or His Spirit spoke by them and taught them: hear the apostle Paul, “Do you seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me:” hear Christ himself, “He that heareth you, heareth me;” and again, “It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.” It is certain that the Spirit of the Father and the Son is one and the same; hence we may conclude, that not only the twelve Apostles are to be included in “the twelve foundations,” but all those likewise who first preached the same faith; otherwise St. Paul himself and St. Barnabas, and the seventy disciples who were not in the number of the Apostles, could not be called foundations, nor even the Prophets themselves; and we should make the apostle a liar, (which God forbid,) who hath said, “that we are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.” But here occurs a rather difficult question; how can Christ be truly the foundation of the building, when he is called by the apostle “the chief corner-stone;” and David says of Him, that He is exalted to be the “head of the corner?” How can the same stone be in the foundation and at the top? But if we remember that these expressions are metaphorical, we shall easily understand, that to one person contrary names may be applied, on account of the diversity of his functions. Now not only Christ, who is both God and man, but every prelate is the foundation and the head of his Church, because as “the foundation,” he ought to bear the weight of the building, the infirmities of all, and therefore he ought to be below all; and yet as “head” of the building, he is appointed to rule all, command all, and be supported by all. Much more justly, therefore, can Christ our Lord be called the foundation of the Church, because He supports us all, and rules us by His power and authority; at the same time, He is placed as the “Head,” to connect the two points, and of the Jews and Gentiles to form one people, to rule and govern all.

## **Chapter X**

### **On The Mystical Gate Of The City Of God**

LET us now in order consider the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. According to the general exposition of interpreters, the twelve Apostles are to be understood by the gates: in this explanation they follow St. Augustine in his exposition of the 86th Psalm. But when St. John in the Apocalypse speaks of the “gate,” he mentions twelve angels and the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, whose names are written on the twelve gates of the city of God: but in that verse he makes no mention of the apostles. But the opinion of St. Augustine and of those who follow him is not therefore erroneous, for St. John speaks mystically, not literally as a prophet, not as an historian. The whole description is full of mystical significations. The land of promise, according to all interpreters, was a figure of the heavenly Jerusalem. Abraham was the first to whom the promise was made: “All the land which thou seest, I will give to thee, and to thy seed for ever.” (Genesis xiii. 15.) And St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians: “To Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed;” and a little lower he adds: “But God gave it to Abraham by promise.” Isaac alone was the heir of Abraham, Ismael being excluded, who was the son of the free woman. Thus the Scripture, “For the bond-woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.” Jacob alone was the heir of Isaac, Esau, his brother, being excluded, who sold his birthright. Hence the prophet Malachias says, “I have loved Jacob, but have hated Esau;” and these words the apostle repeats in his Epistle to the Romans. The heirs of Jacob were all his sons, twelve in number, not one of whom was excluded; and thus the land of promise was divided amongst the twelve tribes of Israel, as we learn from the Book of Josue. This is, therefore, the reason why St. John said in the Apocalypse, that on the twelve gates were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel; because the entrance into the promised land was a right of inheritance, which belonged to all the children of Israel alone. But, as we mentioned above, St. John speaks figuratively, so that by the twelve tribes of Israel are meant the true Israelites, not according to the flesh, but according to faith and the spirit; and therefore the twelve Apostles are included, as well as their spiritual children. For, as St. Paul clearly teaches us in his Epistle to the Romans: “All are not Israelites that are of Israel, neither are all they that are of the

seed of Abraham, children.” (chap. ix. 6.) The same Apostle compares Israel to a tree, whose many branches are broken on account of unbelief, and others ingrafted by reason of faith. Thus, when the Gentiles were converted, they began to be children of Israel, and many of the Jews ceased to be true Israelites. St. Augustine thus proves this point at length: “Is not this a wonderful and deep mystery, that many, not born of Israel, should belong to Israel, and many not children, though they were of the seed of Abraham? How are they not? How are they sons? It is, that they are not sons of promise, belonging to the grace of Christ, but sons of the flesh, bearing an empty name; and thus, neither are they of Israel as we are, nor are we of Israel like they are: for we are according to a spiritual regeneration, they according to a carnal one. In the grandchildren of Abraham, the sons of Isaac viz., Jacob and Esau this great and profound mystery appears, of which the Apostle speaks when he had mentioned the sons promised to Abraham as belonging to the grace of Christ. This the apostolic and catholic doctrine clearly teaches, that the Jews belong to Sara, according to the flesh, but the Israelites to Agar; and, according to the spirit, Christians belong to Sara, Jews to Agar; to Esau likewise, according to the flesh, who is also called Edom, the nation of the Idumeans; to Jacob, who is also called Israel, the nation of the Jews; but, according to the mystery of the Spirit, the Jews to Esau belong, to Israel the Christians.” Thus St. Augustine clearly proves, that Christians are true Israelites, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit; and that thereby they are heirs of the land of promise, which is in heaven. Wherefore, the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem have inscribed on them the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, because the gate by which we enter the land of promise is the inheritance of the Sons of God, who alone are true and sincere Christians, the children of the blessed Apostles. These are signified by the true Israelites, that is, the sons of the patriarch Jacob; and when St. John adds, that on the gates were twelve angels, he means that angels are the guardians of those gates, whose office is to prevent any one entering, that has not the right of inheritance. For this reason, perhaps, St. Michael, the archangel, is represented with scales in his hands, because by the angels under him he examines the merits of those who aspire to this heavenly city.

## **Chapter XL**

### **On The Mystical Stones Of The City Of God**

THE rest of the building consists of stones; and these are all the faithful, who are “built up,” according to the expression of St. Peter and St. Paul in their Epistles; and since this part of the building regards every one, it will be very desirable for us to remember the conditions or qualities which those must possess who desire to be built on the foundation of Christ and the apostles, under the chief corner-stone, Christ Jesus; that so they may not only be in the heavenly city, but may also themselves become the highest and most happy city of God. Three conditions are requisite to be built on so noble a foundation: 1st. That we be stones; 2nd. That we be living ones; 3rd. That we be well polished, and be cut square. We must therefore be stones, not wood, or hay, or stubble, that we may make the wall solid that is, we should be sober and firm, persevering in faith, in charity, in humility, and obedience to the Commandments, and not allow ourselves to be carried about “by every wind of doctrine,” as heretics do; neither should we be carried away by various inordinate desires, as bad Catholics are very often. These are not used as stones by the builders of the eternal city, for they serve only for cottages which are easily destroyed. In the second place, we should be “living stones,” as St. Peter admonishes us, that is, full of charity and spiritual life, such as Christ is, “the corner stone,” who, although He died once according to the flesh, yet He always lived according to the Spirit, and after death rose again to die no more. Dead stones build dead edifices, that is, corporal; but a spiritual house, or rather the city of our great King, which is spiritual and celestial, requires spiritual stones, and therefore “living” ones. Thirdly, we must be square and polished stones, not unpolished or shapeless, because thus it becometh the building of a city that is superior to all others. So Arphaxat the king built the city of Ecbatana of square and polished stones, as we read in the book of Judith; and if King Solomon erected a temple to the Lord so beautifully adorned, what ought to be the building of that Eternal city, which so far exceeds all other cities? But this beautifying of our building must be done on earth, not in heaven; and of this the temple of Solomon was a figure. Thus we read in the third book of Kings: “And the house when it was in building was built of stones hewed and made ready, so that there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house when it was building.” (chap. vii. 7.) The reason was, because the stones were cut and prepared at a distance from the house of the Lord; and thus they were so perfectly polished, that, when they were brought to the

temple, they were laid in their proper places with out the sound of the hammer being heard. In the heavenly Jerusalem, also, the sound of the hammer will not be heard, because there no persecution will be, no tribulation no penitential labour, no sighing, no sorrow, no sadness. Wherefore, those stones that are chosen for the glory of the heavenly mansions, ought in this vale of tears to be well cut and polished: thus the Church sings: “Tusionibus, pressuris, Expoliti Lapides, Suis coaptantur locis, Per manus Artificis, Disponuntur permansuri, Sacris sedificiis.” Here penitential labour is necessary for us, because “we all offend in many things,” as St. James affirmeth: here our carnal concupiscence must be tamed, our self-will conquered, our body chastised and brought into subjection: here with indefatigable diligence must we oppose the “shield of faith” against the fiery darts of impure spirits. Therefore, if we cannot bear the stroke of the hammer, how can we, being unpolished, be admitted by the heavenly Architect to form part of the building? If men could but comprehend how much good they deprive themselves of by flying from this hammer, and being unwilling to endure anything that is difficult, bitter, and contrary to their inclination, assuredly they would then alter their mind, and fast often instead of having their banquets; throwing aside their soft garments, they would put on sackcloth, and give themselves up to watching and prayer, instead of indulging in vain talk; and if they received any injury from false brethren, or from open enemies, they would not think of revenge, but would give thanks to God, and earnestly pray to Him for their calumniators and persecutors: this they would do, because “The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us;” and again, “That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.” And truly, if we consider the “living stones” that have preceded us in the heavenly building, we shall see that all were polished by many strokes of the hammer. Christ Himself, “the corner-stone,” and most precious, who stood in need of no polishing, yet suffered for us that He might leave us an example: “Who, when He was reviled, did not revile; when He suffered, He threatened not.” All the Apostles could say with St. Paul: “Even unto this hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode: and we labour, working with our hands: we are reviled, and we bless; we are persecuted, and we suffer it. We are blasphemed, and we entreat; we are made as the refuse of this world, the off-scouring of all even until now.” (1 Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. iv.) What shall I say of the martyrs? Did not all ascend unto the city of the heavenly Jerusalem, after they had been “cut and polished” by many tribulations and most cruel deaths? I omit mentioning the holy confessors, anchorets, virgins, widows, and all others who served God. Unless these had crucified their flesh, with its vices and concupiscences, and had waged war against themselves, they would not have been admitted to the heavenly building. But this polishing of “living stones” was necessary, not only after the coming of our Saviour, but before also, and from the beginning of the world itself. The first living stone was Abel, cruelly slain by his brother Gain; afterwards came the holy patriarch Joseph, sold by his brothers. The angel Raphael said to Tobias also: Because thou wast pleasing to God, it was necessary that temptation should try thee.” He did not say, because thou wast a sinner, and hateful to God, it was necessary that you should be punished with blindness and poverty; but he said, because thou wast pleasing unto God, being just and holy, therefore, as a living stone destined for the heavenly building, it was necessary that you should bear the stroke of the hammer. Who amongst the prophets did not suffer persecution from the impious? What torments did not the holy Machabees endure? Let us hear the apostle Paul speaking of the saints in the old Law, in his Epistle to the Hebrews: And others had trials of mockeries and stripes, moreover, also, of bonds and prisons. They were stoned, they were cut asunder, they were tempted, they were put to death by the sword, they wandered about in sheep-skins, in goat skins, in mountains, and in the dens and caves of the earth.” (chap. xi. 37, 38.) What wilt thou say, Christian soul, to these words? If the hammer of the builder did not spare those of whom the world was not worthy, on account of their great sanctity, that so they might be fitly polished for the celestial building, what will become of thee, and of those like thee, who indulge in sin, and consider penitential labours too heavy? One of these two things is necessary: either that thou suffer in this life or in purgatory, or be deprived of a place in that Edifice above, and made to bear for ever the hammer of hell. Why, therefore, dost thou not choose (if thou be wise) rather to endure the short and momentary tribulations of this life, than to be condemned to future ones, eternal and intolerable? Despise not the purgatorial punishments of the world to come; although they are not eternal, yet are they more grievous, and often of longer duration, than any torment of this life. Hear St. Augustine’s Expiation of the 37th Psalm: “It is said, thou shalt be saved, yet so as by fire; and be cause it is said, grievous than any torment a man can

endure in this life.” He also adds, “that the torments will be more severe than the punishments of robbers and the torments of the martyrs:” wherefore, those are mad who despise the fire of purgatory, and dread the tribulations of this present life.” And because in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall stand, hear St. Gregory on the third penitential Psalm: “I consider this transitory fire to be more intolerable than all present tribulations;” hear St. Bernard in his Sermon on the death of Humbert, a monk: “But this know, that, after this life, in purgatory will be required a hundred-fold what hath here been neglected, even unto the last farthing.” Hear, in fine, St. Anselm, in his Explanation of the third chapter of St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians: “We must know that this fire is more grievous than anything a man can endure in this life; all the torments of the world are mild in comparison with it, and yet men to avoid them will do whatever they are commanded by others. How much better would it be to do what God commands, that so we might not suffer more grievous torments!” St. Teresa mentions in her “Life,” having seen in Purgatory the souls of many persons of remarkable virtue; some in a secular, others in a religious state, of her ovvr, nunnery and of several other orders; though she says, their penitential and holy lives, their patience, their great regularity in their convent, their tears and humility at their death, had persuaded her they would be admitted straight to glory. “But,” (she continues,) “amongst all the souls I have seen, I have not known any one to have escaped purgatory except three, F. Peter of Alcantara, F. Peter Ivagnez, a religious man of the order of St. Dominic, and a Carmelite Friar.” (See her own life, chap. 38, translated by the pious Mr. Woodhead. 1669.)

## **Chapter XII**

### **On Flying From The City Of This World**

HAVING spoken of the city of God, it only remains that we now explain in a few words what is especially required, as the condition of our being enrolled citizens of this most blessed kingdom. This can be mentioned in one word; that we renounce the world, and live in it as strangers and pilgrims. We cannot be citizens of the world and of heaven at the same time; and there is no one who flies from the world, who is not immediately received into the midst of the city of God. But let us consider the whole subject more at length. Two cities are mentioned in the Holy Scripture; the city of this world which commenced in Cain, for he was the first who founded one, as we read in the book of Genesis; and the city of heaven which began in Abel, the founder of which was not Abel, but God, as St. Paul mentions. Babylon was a figure of the first, which signifies “confusion; but of the latter, Jerusalem was typical, the City of our great king, which means the “vision of peace.” Those are inhabitants of the earthly city who dwell therein, not only in body, but also in heart, who love the earth, pant after its pleasures, struggle for them, contend for them. Of this city the devil is prince, who having been cast down from heaven, possessed the government of the earth. For although our Lord said when his Passion drew nigh, “now is the judgment of the world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out;” and although He truly cast him out by His cross, and triumphed over him, according to St. Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians, “And despoiling the principalties and powers, he hath exposed them confidently in open show, triumphing over them in himself;” yet we must not suppose that the devil was entirely “cast out” of the world, or that he has completely lost the dominion of the world, but only that he was cast out of all those, and has lost dominion over them who united themselves with Christ and his heavenly city, and fled from this earthly one. But that the devil hath yet power over the city of this world, the Apostle teaches us in his Epistle to the Ephesians: “For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places.” (chap. vi. 12.) Wherefore Satan, together with his satellites, yet has power in the world, and is the “ruler” thereof; that is, of earthly-minded men, inhabitants of this earthly city, of which St. John says, “It is seated in wickedness.” As if he had said, the world is united with its chief, who is wicked, or the world is under the power and dominion of a “wicked” demon. But the inhabitants of the heavenly city, are those who reign happily in its kingdom, and those also, who although they dwell on earth in their mortal body, are far from it in their heart, for their conversation is in heaven, and “they desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.” But because whilst on earth they are mixed up with its citizens, therefore the Holy Scripture saith, that they are in the world, but not of the world, and in the world, not as citizens, but as strangers and pilgrims; thus St. Peter teacheth, “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims to refrain yourselves from carnal desires which war against the soul;” on the contrary, the citizens of the world are said in Holy Scripture to be, “Strangers to the Testament, having no hope of the promise, and without



God in this world.” These words St. Paul makes use of in his Epistle to the Ephesians. Since, then, this is the truth, let no one deceive himself, let no one imagine that he can be a citizen of the world and a citizen of heaven at the same time. Citizens of the world are of the world, citizens of heaven are not of the world. To be of the world, and not to be of the world, are contradictory terms, therefore they cannot be united. Hence those whom earthly objects delight, can have no place in the heavenly city, unless they first flee from the world, unless they renounce it, unless they despise its pleasures. And since these considerations are important and understood by few, or not considered as they ought to be, therefore that no one may plead ignorance at the Last day, the apostles and evangelists inculcate and repeat them over and over again; hear our Lord: “You are of this world, I am not of this world;” and to the Apostles He says, “If you had been of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you;” hear St. Paul: “The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God;” and again, “You must needs go out of this world that we be not condemned with it;” hear St. James: “Know you not that the friendship of this world is the enemy of God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God;” and St. Peter saith: “Fly the corruption of that concupiscence which is in the world;” and St. John; “Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him.” Hear, in fine, our Lord himself, in his prayer to his Father: “Pray for them, not for the world do I pray; but for them whom thou hast given me And the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, as I also am not of the world.” Here we can most clearly perceive, that the world is thus condemned and excommunicated by God, that Christ does not pray for it all. But if Christ does not pray for the world, how can He say in another place, “God so loved the world as to give his own beloved Son?” Doth the Father love the world, and the Son hate it? Or how doth the Son exclude the world from His prayer, whom the Father doth not exclude from His love? St. Augustine, explaining this question, says, that the world for which Christ did not pray, signifies only the wicked, as St. Paul mentions in his first Epistle to the Corinthians; “That we be not condemned with this world.” It may also be said that Christ did not pray for the world, because what He then was asking for the Apostles, did not in the least regard the world; for He prayed for the gift of perseverance: “Keep them in thy name.” And at the same time He prayed that they might possess eternal glory, when He said, “Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me, that they may see my glory.” (St. John, chap. xvii. 24.) Now these words cannot apply to the world, for it is not fit for the kingdom of heaven, unless it be first purified; as a man covered with dirt and mire, would not be fit to enter the chamber of a king. But God loved the world, and delivered his Son for it, that he might cleanse it, and make it fit for his kingdom. Wherefore Christ prayed for his enemies, not that they might remain in their wickedness, but that his Father might pardon them, and thereby cleanse them, that so they might not be of the world. This our Saviour observed in his prayer, when he said, “Not for the world do I pray,” for he added a little lower, “That the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” The conclusion, therefore, is, Christ prayed for his friends, not for the world, because unless we first leave the world before we leave the body, we cannot arrive at the kingdom of God. Wherefore, whoever loveth this heavenly city, let him hasten to depart from the world, lest the last day suddenly come upon him, and he be snatched from life, when there will be no hope of his salvation. And when in spirit he shall have left the world, let him forget it and its pleasures, and remember continually the city of the Lord alone, vowing with the prophet David: “If I forget thee, Jerusalem, let my right hand be forgotten. Let my tongue cleave to my jaws, if I do not remember thee: if I make not Jerusalem the beginning of my joy.” (Psalm cxxxvi.) This is a true mark of being citizens of the eternal city, if truly from our heart we prefer rather to be deprived of our tongue and of our hands, than to do or say any thing against the love of God our Father, and our heavenly country: and if “the beginning of our joy” be indeed that City, which maketh its inhabitants so blessed as not to take pleasure in any earthly happiness, and the mere remembrance and expectation of future joys, be alone sufficient to gladden our heart in this our exile. We will now conclude this with a passage from St. Augustine, that those who may not perhaps believe my words, may at least credit those of so great a man. In his Explanation of the 61st Psalm, he mentions what are the true marks of the citizens of the world, and of the inhabitants of the city of God: “All who seek after earthly things,” he saith, “all who prefer the happiness of the world before God, all who mind their own interests, and not those of Jesus Christ, belong to that city which is mystically called Babylon, and have for their king, the Devil; but all who mind the things that are above; who meditate on heavenly truths; who live in the world with fear lest they should offend God, and who when they do offend

him, are not ashamed to confess their sins; the mild, the holy, and just, and good, all these belong to that city which hath Christ for its King.”

### **Book III (The House of the Lord)**

#### **Chapter I**

##### **All The Blessed Are The Familiar Sons Of God**

“I REJOICED at the things that were said to me: We shall go into the house of the Lord.” (Psalm cxxi.) That good and faithful servant has abundant and unspeakable cause to rejoice, who hath either diligently laboured in the vineyard, or multiplied his talents in business, or was the first to win the prize in the race, or who hath gained a crown in war or single combat, who hath carefully fed the flock entrusted to him, and courageously defended them from the wolves: and now having completed all his labours, he enters with joy into the house of his Lord. But let us consider why that is called a House which before was named a city: it is not because the house is narrow, and therefore doth not deserve the name of a city: on the contrary, it is infinitely more extensive than any city or kingdom. Hear how the prophet Baruch exclaims: “Israel, how great is the house of God, and how vast is the place of his possession! It is great, and hath no end: it is high and immense.”(chap. iii. 24.) But why is the House so great? The first reason is, because the blessed although occupying every part of the kingdom of heaven, are all the familiar friends and domestics of God. For if mention were only made of a kingdom or city, it might be supposed by some, that there would be many in the city of our God, who could never see him, never speak unto him, except they gained admittance by other greater saints. But this is not the case; for all behold God always; they hold converse with Him, they speak with Him face to face whether seraphim or cherubim, apostles or prophets, or inferior angels and saints. Of our angel-guardians who belong to the last order of spirits, our Lord saith: “Their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.” And St. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, tells us, that all the blessed are not only citizens of the saints, but also “domestics of God.” Wherefore, their habitation is not only called a city, but likewise a House. There are many mansions in heaven, some high, some low; there is also a diversity of crowns, some great, some inferior, according to the degree of merit: but yet all the citizens are blessed and happy, and all clean of heart, and full of charity. Wherefore, every one in that House sees God, and converses with him as a domestic and friend; although in earthly kingdoms and cities, there are many who can never see the king, and very few who are admitted to his friendship, or to an interview. Another reason appears to be, because although in a city many do see the king and speak to him, yet all are not his sons and heirs, but only those who live in the palace, and are acknowledged to be his sons and heirs. But in the kingdom of heaven and in the city of our God, all the saints, without any exception, are true sons of God, brothers of Christ, heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ: neither do the great despise the inferior, nor is there any envy or jealousy amongst them. And when our Lord taught us to recite daily the “Our Father,” he therein excluded no one: and when he will say at the last day, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” he will not exclude any one of the just: and when the Apostle said to the Romans, “Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God;” and again, “For the Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ,” no one is excluded, neither great nor little, provided he possess the Spirit of God, and suffer himself to be led by him. This is also given to all who have been regenerated in Christ, and who shall persevere in faith, hope, and charity. St. Peter also, in his first Epistle, promises to the regenerated “an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that can not fade, reserved in heaven.” In fine, St. John in his Epistle says to all the Just, without exception: “Behold, what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God.” (chap. iii.) Justly, therefore, is the habitation of the blessed called a House and not merely a city and kingdom, wherein all are sons and heirs of our great King, and all beloved by Him as his sons, and by Christ as his brothers: with reason may they exclaim with the prophet: “How good and pleasant is it, for brethren to dwell together in unity.” What greater happiness can be conceived, than to converse with innumerable angels, to be loved by them with a most sincere love, to be treated as a brother, to be embraced as a brother!

#### **Chapter II**

##### **The Magnitude And Beauty Of The House Of God**

ANOTHER reason may be assigned, why the habitation of the saints is called a House, because it has especially if the abode of royalty ornaments, consisting of halls, chambers, and other apartments, which a city does not possess. For who can number the carpets, tapestry, pictures, precious vests, and gold and silver vessels which adorn the palaces of kings? And not only the interior decorations are of a great value, but the building itself also is admirable, on account of the precious marble, the pillars, the gilded or painted courts, the hanging gardens, and other things which it would be too long to enumerate. After Solomon, king of Jerusalem, had built a temple to the Lord of suitable magnificence, he also erected a palace for himself of such extent, that the building thereof took thirteen years; though at the same time he employed many men, and had at hand an abundance of precious stones and cedar-wood. With the same expense and industry, he built a palace for his wife, the daughter of the king of Egypt, and the house “of the forest of Libanus,” of which a description is given in the third Book of Kings: and so sumptuous was it, that it seems incredible. Wherefore, when the sacred Scripture calls that the House. which before it had called the city of God, the meaning is, that both the city and the kingdom shine as resplendent as a royal palace doth shine. For the prophet Baruch hath told us, “the house of God is so great, that it occupies the whole extent of the kingdom of God. If a whole kingdom possessed as much magnificence as its chief city, this would indeed excite our admiration. Who will not therefore be astonished, when he recollects that the kingdom of heaven is called the House of God, because all the beauty and value of its ornaments are the same, as the house of God itself? Justly doth the prophet David exclaim: “My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord.” (Psalm Ixxxiii.) Who will not then desire with his whole heart, to see and to possess this royal and most noble palace, which equals in its extent a whole kingdom? And, on the other hand, to see and to possess this boundless kingdom, which equals any royal palace in beauty and magnificence? But not only would our souls desire such a house and such a kingdom, were it attentively to consider, and faithfully believe these words; but it would even be quite ravished by the consideration of the beauty and magnitude thereof. But alas! being solicitous for earthly goods, we deem those objects alone great, which we see on earth, and therefore we think not of invisible things: we act just as children do, who never having left their father’s house, love it beyond all others, and never think of the palaces of kings; or like rustics who have never visited any great city, they are solicitous only about the cultivation of the fields, about the repair of their thatched cottages: but no cares ever disturb them about palaces, towers, forums, theatres, honours, dignities, riches, or splendid banquets. And, perchance, these rustics and children are more happy than rich citizens and great princes, because those things which appear grand, bring with them more trouble and danger than solid utility and dignity. But the good things in the heavenly House of God our Father, are both truly great and cause no trouble unto us, nor danger: they will free us from every evil, not for a time only, but for ever and ever. Wherefore, St. Paul saith, who was neither a child nor a rustic, who had known the goods of this world, being a most learned man, and intimate with the Wise; who had been in the house of God, and had visited the heavenly city, being rapt into paradise and the third heaven he saith of himself: “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal;” and again: “Our conversation is in heaven. Seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth.”

### **Chapter III**

#### **The Chambers Of The House Of God**

THERE is another reason why the kingdom of heaven is called the house of the Lord: it is derived from these words of our Master, “In my Father’s house there are many mansions.” In earthly dwellings there are dining-rooms, couches to sleep on, and halls or courts for various purposes, which cannot be performed outside the house. Now in the house of the Lord there are many chambers, wherein all the saints not only feast on royal banquets, but what is most wonderful, and not possible to be credited, had not the Holy Spirit revealed it to us, the King himself ministers unto them, being girded! Thus our Lord speaks in St. Luke: “Blessed are those servants, whom when the Lord cometh he shall find watching. Amen I say to you, that he will gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and passing will minister unto them.” (chap. xii. 37.) What a banquet is this, I ask thee! Who ever heard of such a feast? The Lord stands, the servant reclines; the Lord is girded, that He may “minister” without impediment, the servant is ungirded, that he may recline more freely; the Lord

passeth bringing food, the servant eateth with pleasure the royal food! O! did we but consider and understand these things, how insignificant would all earthly pleasures become! Our Lord on one occasion girded himself with a towel, that he might wash the feet of his disciples. But Peter was astonished, and could not endure to see his Lord wash the feet of servants. And with reason was Peter thus astonished, because he beheld majesty humbling itself to give an example of humility. But in our celestial house, this ministering of the Lord is not an humiliation, but a favour; for the servants of God in heaven, where the proud will not enter, stand not in need of an example of humility, for all are confirmed and made perfect in every kind of virtue. Wherefore the girding of the Lord signifies, that He will as freely and as readily be a Lord unto each one of his servants, by loading and refreshing them with every blessing, as if He had nothing else to do, and were alone with each one of them! O Christian soul! what doth this mean? Would that thou wert wise, and couldst understand with what honour and joy the Lord will fill his servant for ever! If these truths could descend deeply into thy heart, truly thou wouldst become fervent in spirit; and with thy loins girt, thou wouldst joy fully devote thy whole being to the service of so sweet a Lord. And if any one of his poor brethren met thee, not only wouldst thou not despise him, or look angrily at him; but with the bowels of charity enlarged, thou wouldst relieve him and nourish him, mindful of these words: "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me." (St. Matthew, xxv. 40.) Where it is said, "He will make them sit down to meat," signifies, that the blessed being now admitted into their Father's house, can sit down without the least danger or solicitude, and enjoy all the good things with which the house of the Lord is filled. From henceforth, no one will be able, either by force or by fraud, to hinder them or forbid them enjoying every good most freely. Lastly, where it is said that, "passing he will minister unto them," this signifies, there is a special banquet for the saints in the Lord himself, for he is the bread of life; he is the fountain of wisdom; he is a hidden manna, which no one knoweth of but he that receiveth. Wherefore, He passeth unto all, he giveth unto all ineffable banquets, that satiate without loathsomeness, and fill with out satiety.

#### **Chapter IV** **On The Couches In The House Of God**

LET us now pass from the chambers to the couches. "The saints shall rejoice in glory," saith David, "they shall be joyful in their beds." (Psalm cxlix.) These "beds" signify nothing more, than the eternal rest of the saints, and that "sleep" of which the prophet speaks in other places, "When he shall give sleep to his beloved; behold the inheritance of the Lord," &c. And again, "In peace in the self-same I will sleep, and I will rest." In fine, this is that rest of which St. John makes mention; "Write, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; for their works follow them." (Apocalypse, chap. xiv. 13.) Great is this blessing, possessed only by the saints; for in this life no one is entirely free from labour, and those who seem at rest, such as nobles and rich men, are often oppressed with the greater troubles. Not without reason hath our Lord compared riches to thorns, in the parable of the sower; and Job saith; "Man's life upon earth is a warfare," and one of his companions: "Man is born to labour and the bird to fly." But Ecclesiasticus is the clearest of all on this point: "Great labour is created for all men, and a heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam, from the day of their coming out of their mother's womb, until the day of their burial into the mother of all. Their thoughts, and fears of the heart, their imagination of things to come, and the day of their end: From him that sitteth on a glorious throne, unto him that is humbled in earth and ashes. From him that weareth purple and beareth the crown, even to him that is covered with rough linen: wrath, envy, trouble, unquietness, and the fear of death, continual anger and strife." (chap, xl.) Thus Ecclesiasticus most beautifully teacheth us, that no mortal can enjoy rest at any time. But I will briefly explain these words, that all may understand how great is the "sleep." that is, the rest of the blessed. "Great labour is created for all men, and a heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam." Occupation is opposed to rest: but because many are occupied in pleasant things, in hunting, in games, in music, in dancing, it is added "A heavy yoke," to show us that he speaks of laborious and troublesome labours with which no one is pleased, and which all fly from. But these troublesome labours are "created for all men," that is, destined for men from their creation, as their individual and inseparable companions. This Ecclesiasticus explains, lest perhaps he might not be understood by some, "From the day of their coming out of their mother's womb, until the day of their burial in the mother of all." Wherefore, oxen that sometimes bear a heavy yoke, but rest at night, are better off than man who is compelled to carry his "heavy yoke" day and night. He then briefly mentions a

part of the troublesome occupations, which like unto a most heavy yoke, press upon the neck of mortals. "Their thoughts and fears of the heart, their imagination of things to come, and the day of their end." The first portion of their labour is the thought of the future, for they are always solicitous about to-morrow, saying within themselves, What will happen after this? Shall we lose the little we possess? From this solicitude proceeds a continual fear, which does not suffer man to be at rest. This solicitude, with its offspring, which is fear, is two-fold: one which the mind imagines to itself; the other which is certain, and which one can avoid. Of the first Ecclesiasticus speaks, "Their imagination of things to come:" of the latter, "The day of their end." Men imagine, that is, represent to themselves various future contingencies, which no less disturb them than if they were certainly to happen. But the thought and fear of death especially frightens them, which is called "the day of their end:" all await this with so much terror, that St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews, calls it a continual "servitude:" for the expectation of death can embitter all the pleasures of life. Lastly, Ecclesiasticus adds, that this laborious occupation is so common to all the sons of Adam as to be long to all men, from the first unto the last; "from him that sitteth on a glorious throne, that weareth purple and beareth the crown, unto him that is humbled in earth and ashes." Thus all men, since the sin of Adam, are more miserable even than the beasts of the field: for these live without fear, and are not solicitous for to-morrow, neither do they remember past labours, nor are they disturbed by the imagination of things to come. And therefore hath Ecclesiasticus said, that this yoke is upon "all the children of Adam," in order that he might both exclude the beasts of the field, and show us that the cause of all this misery, was the sin of our first parent. But the lot of those who aspire not after their heavenly home is the most miserable of all, because, after having carried a heavy yoke in this life, they will be forced to bear a still more heavy one in hell. In this world our troubles are often united with some consolations; but in hell there will be labour and sorrow, without rest or consolation: for, in the blessed House of God alone can there be rest without labour, and consolation without sorrow. With reason doth the prophet say: "The saints shall rejoice in glory: they shall be joyful in their beds." (Psalm cxlix.) They rest not as those that sleep, who do not feel their rest, but they rest with great joy, knowing and feeling with eternal gratitude their most happy rest, free from labour, pain, fear, and trouble. Truly, if there were nothing else in the House of the Lord but this eternal rest, would it not be worthy of being purchased by all the sorrows and labours of this life? and if in hell there were no other torment but an everlasting want of rest, would it not be worthy of being redeemed by the daily prayers and tears of a whole life? As it will be consoling to the saints to be hold, at their departure from this world, the end of all their labours and sorrows, so, likewise, will it be bitter for the wicked to reflect, at their death, that henceforth they can hope for no rest from their sorrows. Death is said to be the chief of all terrible things; and yet, because it appears to bring some rest, therefore most miserable are they who shall descend into hell, for "They shall seek death, and shall not find it: and they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them." (Apocalypse ix. 6.) Wherefore, the being deprived of all rest will be a more grievous evil than even death itself. And yet, so great is the blindness of men, that they think nothing of losing eternal rest, and of descending into that pit wherein their torments will never admit of consolation.

## **Chapter V**

### **On The Courts Of The House Of God**

IN earthly houses certain places are set apart for various purposes. But, in the courts of the blessed, all are occupied in one occupation alone, the praise of their great King. Here, in this world, some are occupied in gaming money, in acquiring dignities, in acquiring knowledge, either to teach or to learn; whilst others devote themselves to mechanical arts, in order to provide the necessaries of life. But amongst the living, immortal inhabitants of heaven there will be no wants, no ignorance, no necessity, no ambition: all being content with their state, neither desire nor require anything more - they are entirely devoted to the enjoyment, love, and praise of their "chief Good." But some one may say, that the duty of praising God in psalms and hymns, and especially in reciting the canonical hours, is laborious and tiresome; and some there are who even consider it a heavy burden imposed upon them to spend so much time in singing in the Churches, and in praising God. To whom we answer, that "praising" God in this life is a meritorious act, but in the next it will be a reward. Hence it is, that what may be to many laborious here, in heaven will be a sweet occupation to all the saints. Now, we read and sing many things which we do not understand, whilst we labour much in driving away vain thoughts, which are like so many trouble some flies. Moreover, our body, which is mortal,

cannot for any long space of time attend to the functions of the mind without being fatigued. But, in our blessed country, the body will be immortal and impassible; vain thoughts will depart; we shall most perfectly understand what we sing; and, what is the greatest of all, the divine praise will be nothing more than the exercise of our happiness. Wherefore, if eternal happiness will not be troublesome, neither can the eternal praising of God be. That the praising of God is an exercise of beatitude, the prophet teaches thus: "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord: they shall praise thee for ever and ever." (Psalm lxxxiii.) As beatitude consists in always loving and beholding the "chief Good," so the exercise of beatitude consists in always admiring and praising God; and as no one will be wearied in loving Him, so no one will be wearied in praising Him. And again: we shall not only not grow weary in seeing and loving God, but we shall never be tired in seeing and praising the works of God, which will always be before us, showing forth His wonderful beauty, Nor can we praise the beautiful works of God without our praising the Author of them at the same time, for they will ever cry out unto us: "He made us, and not we ourselves." In fine, as we can never forget the benefits with which God hath loaded us, so we cannot but exult with the most grateful hearts in the praises of our most bountiful Benefactor. Let us then conclude with St. Augustine, and say: "What else could be done, where neither any sloth will be admitted, nor any want shall labour? God Himself will be the end of our desires: He will be seen without end, loved without weariness, praised without fatigue. This gift, this love, this exercise, will be truly shared by all, as eternal life itself will be common to all. There we shall rest and see: we shall see and love: we shall love and praise. Behold, what will be in the end without end. What other end have we than to arrive at that kingdom which hath no end?"

## **Chapter VI**

### **On The First Gate Of The House Of God, Which Is Faith**

HAVING explained these points, it now remains for us to consider what is the gate by which we shall be enabled to enter that most blessed House. But our Lord Himself, in the Gospel, not only makes mention of the gate, but also tells us that it is very narrow, for, being asked, "Lord, are they few that are saved?" He answered: "Strive to enter by the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter, and shall not be able. But when the Master of the House shall be gone in, and shall shut the door, you shall begin to stand without, and knock at the door, saying: Lord, open to us. And He shall say to you: I know not whence you are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." (St. Luke, chap, xiii.) Thus our Lord plainly teaches us, that the "gate" of the house of God, which is in heaven, is very narrow, although the House itself is most extensive; and that, because it is narrow, many will not enter therein who otherwise would; that they indeed desire to enter, but will not strive for it, nor be willing to suffer any violence. But we will explain how it is that the gate of this most extensive House is narrow. The gate has four divisions: the threshold, the inner court, and two side passages that is, four stones: one below, another above, and two at the sides; which, in our gate, are four virtues, essentially necessary in order to enter the heavenly house. These are faith, hope, charity, and humility. Faith and hope are the two lateral stones, charity is the inner court, humility is the threshold on which we walk. But all these stones that is, all these virtues have their length and breadth so small, that in them selves they are narrow, and, accordingly, they make the gate very narrow.

Let us begin with faith. True Christian faith is so narrow that, unless the mind do violence to itself, and suffer itself to be reduced as it were into captivity, to be bound and trampled upon, no one can enter by it. This is what St. Paul means in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians: "Bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ." (chap, x.) The Christian faith proposes many things to be believed, which are so beyond all understanding that it is most difficult to give our consent to them; and yet are we commanded to believe them so firmly that we should be prepared (if necessary) to die a thousand times rather than deny one article of faith. This is a difficult duty, and no wonder so few comply with it. This is the reason why so many go over to Mahometanism and other heresies, because they cannot bear the strictness of faith, but have made the gate very wide, which nevertheless leads, not to life, but to destruction, according to the words of our Lord in St. Matthew: "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat." (chap, vii.) Every one naturally desires knowledge, but all do not readily assent to a proposition, unless it be demonstrated, or a probable reason for it be given. St. Paul, the Apostle, experienced this; for, although he eloquently preached from an infused and acquired learning, and by the gift of tongues,

yet when he spoke of the Resurrection of the dead many laughed at him, and others said, "What is it that this word-sower would say?" And when he preached "Christ crucified," it appeared foolishness to the Gentiles, and to the Jews a stumbling block, as he mentions in his First Epistle to the Corinthians. Hence, the ancient heretics, in order to widen the narrow gate, invented various errors. Some denied the mystery of the Trinity, as the Sabellians and Arians; others the mystery of the Incarnation, as the Nestorians and Eutychians; others the Resurrection of the dead, as the Origenists, &c. But all these gates (besides many more) being built by human architects, and wanting a solid foundation, fell in a short time, so that now we scarcely know their names: and these even would not have reached us, had we not read them in the works of those who exposed them, as St. Irenaeus, Philaster, St. Epiphanius, St. Augustine, Theodoret, &c. The Mahometans, whose sect is now so widely extended, have cast away nearly all the most difficult points in the Christian faith: the blessed Trinity, the Incarnation of the divine Word, the death and resurrection of the Son of God, the sacrament of Penance, and the holy Eucharist. These being thus cast aside, the gate is widened to admit an innumerable multitude. But the heretics of our own time have endeavoured to enter by another way, for they have taken away those narrow barriers which relate not so much to the understanding as to action. The Christian faith teaches that all sins are to be avoided; that we shall have to give an account even of every idle word; that if we fall into mortal sin, we must confess it to a priest, and blot it out by serious contrition and satisfaction; that good works, though laborious and difficult, are to be performed if prescribed by our superiors; that the kingdom of heaven can be acquired by good works, as a crown of justice, and a reward of labour; that "celibacy" is to be observed by priests; that monks and nuns are obliged to keep their vows. These and other points, which make the gate narrow, the heretics have so taken away as to make it very wide. For they assert, that faith alone is necessary for salvation, so that a Christian could not perish, though denied with every sin, provided only he believed; that there is no need of confessing our sins to a priest, but only to God; that contrition is not required, a certain terror of the mind being sufficient; that works of penance and satisfaction are not necessary; that a priest is at liberty to marry, and monks and nuns to violate their vows; that superiors cannot oblige the faithful to perform good works, &c. These and other doctrines of faith being taken away, the heretics made the gate of salvation very wide for themselves: but they opened a way that leadeth to destruction, and through it they brought to perdition, together with themselves, an immense multitude of foolish men. But neither do all Catholics keep within the narrow boundaries of faith, for, although they believe what their faith teaches them, yet because they live differently from what their faith commands, they are proved to be in the number of those of whom St. Paul speaks where he says: "They profess that they know God, but in their works they deny him." Thus, these likewise enter in at the wide gate that leads to destruction. Wherefore, with regard to faith, when our Lord was asked, "If they are few who are saved?" we answer, few there are; and hence all must strive to enter in at the narrow gate.

## **Chapter VII**

### **On Hope, Which Is The Second Gate Of The House Of God**

HOPE likewise has its difficulties, whether we consider the greatness of the reward promised, or our own weakness and nothingness. If an ignorant rustic, without experience were commanded to hope that in a short time he should possess the wisdom of Solomon, or that of Plato and Aristotle, and at the same time the kingdom of Alexander the Great or of Augustus how, I ask, could such a humble individual be persuaded to hope for such great things? But this is much more easy than that a mortal man could hope to possess the wisdom and power of the angels in heaven, who are pure intelligences. For this rustic, and Alexander, and Aristotle, were of the same nature, and alike mortal; and the wisdom of Aristotle did not exceed all human wisdom, neither did the empire of Alexander occupy a third part of the globe. But Christians are commanded to hope for an equality with the angels, according to the words of our Lord: "But they that shall be accounted worthy of that world, and of the resurrection of the dead, shall neither be married nor take wives. Neither can they die any more: for they are equal to the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." (St. Matthew, chap. xx. 38.) Again: if a man that crawls upon the ground were commanded to hope that in a short time he would fly through the air, or subsist in the water for some time, and go here and there, how could he be induced to believe these things? And yet large birds, as cranes and storks, fly through the air as swiftly as eagles; and large ships, heavy laden, sail up and down the waters just as the pilot directs them. But Christians are without doubt commanded to hope, that with their bodies they will one day ascend

above the heavens; and that from heaven to earth they can descend without the least danger of falling, and contend with the sun itself in its course from east to west, with the certain hope of victory. In line, if some poor orphan were commanded to hope that he would be adopted as a son by a great king unknown to him, truly it would take much labour to induce him to think this could be possible; and yet both are men, children of the earth, and doomed to die. But Christian hope teaches us, that every one, provided he be baptized in Christ, and observe his commandments, will have the “spirit of adoption” from God, will be truly chosen His son, and made heir of all things which God Himself possesseth co-heir with Christ, who is His natural and only Son, and whom the Father hath appointed Heir of all things. If these great and sublime hopes were entertained by Christians as they should be, they would certainly make them fearless as lions, so that no dangers or terrors could conquer them; and they would exclaim with the prophet: “The Lord is my keeper: I will not fear what man can do unto me If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear;” and with the apostle: “I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me;” and again: “If God be for us, who shall be against us?” But few there are who hope for such aid as they ought; whilst many are found who do not look even for temporal blessings from God, but trust more to their own cunning, to theft and lies, than in the aid of the Most High. Our Lord Himself, in St. Matthew and St. Luke, admonishes the faithful by most beautiful parables, not to be too solicitous about food and raiment, because our heavenly Father, who nourishes the birds that neither sow nor reap, and clothes the lilies of the field that neither labour nor spin, will much more take care of His children for whom He intends an eternal kingdom: but yet, so little confidence have many people in God, that often in their troubles they rather have recourse either to human fraud or diabolical arts, than to the Almighty. Wherefore, if these do not hope to receive from God what He gives to the birds of the air, and the lilies of the field, and which He hath, promised to give them if they trust in Him, this is a great proof that their hope is not of that character which belongs to the sons of God, who hope to receive a share in His eternal kingdom. And since no one can attain salvation without a certain and living hope, which is a part of the gate of the heavenly “House.” therefore few are they that are saved. There are also other and greater difficulties in the virtue of hope. It commands us to despise present things, which are seen, and to hope for future goods, which are not seen; to give alms to the poor, that, being multiplied, they may be returned to us in heaven, though no one here can see them, or conceive what we shall there receive, if we sow them on earth. A rustic can indeed be easily persuaded to sow his seed in the ground, because the experience of many years teaches him that what is sown with labour will be reaped with joy. But no experience teaches us that what is given to the poor will be received back again with interest in heaven. Therefore, it Appears difficult to men to lose present things, which are seen, and to hope for future blessings, which are not seen. Lastly, it is an evident proof that a firm confidence in God is a very narrow gate, to behold such a great number that weep, lament, murmur, blaspheme, and despair. Those who confide in God, He either takes away from them their afflictions, or gives them patience, united with such great consolation, as to enable them to exclaim with the Apostle: “I am filled with consolation, I super-abound with joy in all my tribulations.” They, therefore, that immoderately weep and lament in their troubles, prove as St. Basil shows in his Explanation of the 45th Psalm that they may exclaim in words: “The Lord is our refuge and our strength;” but that few truly and earnestly say so in their hearts.

## **Chapter VIII**

### **On Charity, Which Is The Third Gate**

LET us now speak of charity, which is the court of the heavenly gate. Charity is the queen of virtues, and on one side seems boundless, because it extends to God, to the angels, to men even those who may be unknown to us, and our enemies; but, on the other side it is made “narrow,” on account of the incredible difficulties it brings along with it, since its precepts are to be observed, not only in word and in tongue, but “in deed and in truth.” For what, I ask, doth this queen command? First, that we love God “with our whole heart, with our whole soul, with our whole strength.” We are reduced to great difficulties when we endeavour to fulfil these commands. For, to love God with our whole heart and strength, what else is it but a true and earnest love? “With our whole heart and soul” signifies, that our love must be real, not feigned; not in word and in tongue, as St. James saith, but in word and in deed. “With our whole strength” signifies, that our love of God ought to be supreme. The force of the precept, therefore, consists in loving God with a true and perfect love, so that we should prefer nothing before Him, but be prepared with the patriarch Abraham, if the glory of God



required it, to sacrifice our only begotten and most beloved son. And not this merely; but also, as our Lord commands us in the Gospel, to hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, even our own soul, and to renounce all that we possess: that is, we should be ready to be deprived of all these things with such promptitude as we should have, if we hated them in reality. This is truly a severe command, and who can understand it? But how easily will men be found, and these not a few, who would rather renounce God and his promises than their riches and temporal honours, and much less their life or that of their sons! St. Cyprian, in his Treatise on the “Lapsed,” beareth testimony, that in the primitive Church, when the fire of charity was much more ardent than now, there were many deserters, who preferred their riches and their lives before God; and Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History, testifies the same. But what shall we say of charity towards our neighbours? What doth charity command us to do with regard to our neighbours? That we love them as we love ourselves; and that what we wish to be done to ourselves, we do to our neighbours also. Who therefore is there, being much in need, would not wish the rich to give him something out of their superabundance? Neither would he consider it as an excuse, if the rich man answered, “That he was encumbered with debt, that he had purchased a villa at an enormous sum, that he was building a sumptuous palace, or, at least, adorning it with precious marble.” But these were perhaps not necessary, and therefore charity does not allow our indigent neighbours to be deprived of subsistence. On this point I beseech the reader to consult St. Basil in his “Sermon to the Rich;” and also St. Bernard on the words: “Behold, we have left all things.” He will see, and be terrified at the danger of those who do not think they will have to render an account to God of their riches, but live according to their own pleasure, not according to the will of God, and in charity towards their neighbours. If we shall have to give an account of “every idle word,” much more shall we of money ill-spent. But let us hear St. John the apostle, and from him learn how extensive is the duty of charity. He saith: “In this we have known the charity of God, because He hath laid clown His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” (1 Epist. chap. iii. 16.) Christ laid down His life for His servants: can it, therefore, be a great thing if we lay down our life for our brethren? The apostle does not say we can, but “we ought to lay down our life for the brethren;” neither did he say, I think, I advise, but absolutely, “We ought.” And if we ought to give our life, why not our riches much more? Wherefore, St. Gregory justly concludes: “Since our soul, by which we live, is incomparably superior to our earthly substance, which we possess, who will not give his substance when he ought to lay down his life?” The same may be said on other points; for he who ought to lay down his life for the brethren, ought much more to pardon an injury or an affront. And ought he not also to be on his guard, lest he injure his brother in word or in deed? But, because this precept of charity towards God and our neighbour is so difficult that few comply with it; therefore, when our Lord was asked, “If few are saved,” with reason did He answer, “Few:” we must then endeavour, with our whole strength, to enter with the few the narrow gate.

## **Chapter IX**

### **On Humility, Which Is The Fourth Gate**

THERE now remaineth humility, which also hath its difficulties, and these not a few. What doth our Master command, who hath most truly said of Himself: “Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart. Go, sit down in the last place”? When He came into this world, he was born in a stable, and died on a cross. Truly, no one, when born, could have found a more lowly place; nor, dying, a more disgraceful one. And whilst He lived, He was poorer, not only than men, but even than the beasts of the field: for the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air their nests, “but the Son of man had nowhere to lay His head.” But what means, “Sit down in the last place”? This is the meaning: wherever thou art, how ever great thou mayest be, always consider thyself worthy of the last place. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, gives a reason for this where he says: “If any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.” (ch. vi. 3.) He did not say, he who thinks himself to be great, or superior to others, either in wisdom, or power, or virtue; neither did he say, if any one think himself not to be great, or superior to others, but only equal to them; he said, “If any man think him self to be something.” In fine, he did not say, since he is poor, or unlearned, or ignoble, but, “Whereas he is nothing.” Thus the apostle could not descend lower, in order to designate the “lowest place,” and to give a worthy explanation of the words of our Lord. But it may be said, it is necessary that men should be in high stations such as, prelates, princes, kings, emperors, and pontiffs. Be it so: but yet each one ought to sit down in the lowest place, until the Lord shall say, “Ascend higher.” Of this St.

Augustine gives us an illustrious example, which I will mention in his own words: “From these that love the world I have separated myself: with those who govern the people I have not considered myself equal, nor at the banquet have I chosen the highest place, but the lower: but the Lord said unto me, Ascend higher. But so much did I fear the episcopacy, that I would not have approached it, since amongst men the fame of a certain name had spread; and in this place I knew there was no bishop. I was on my guard, and endeavoured, as far as possible, to be saved in an humble situation, not to be in danger in a high one. But, as I have said, the servant ought not to contradict his Lord.” Oh, that all men would imitate such an example! we should then have many good prelates, many good princes, many excellent magistrates. But, because many push themselves forward, not waiting for a vocation from the Lord, the Almighty is oftentimes angry; and for an example to others, He compels many to sit down in the lowest place, that all may learn how honours and riches, as well as spiritual blessings, depend on Him alone. Hence, we frequently see very rich men reduced in a short time to extreme poverty, and great princes cast down from their thrones. But it is not sufficient to wait for a vocation from God; but we ought also, in the prelacy or sovereignty, not to be overwise, but, according to the advice of the Wise man, the more we are elevated, the more humble should we be unto all: not in demeanour, but in heart, as St. Gregory teacheth in his pastoral, and St. Augustine more clearly in his 109th Epistle: “Let your dignity,” he saith, “be honourable before men; but, before God, place it under your feet.” Each one ought to think others better, and therefore higher than himself. For he is properly and truly the greatest, who is the greatest in the sight of God; and he is the greatest who is the best; and he is the best who excels in virtue, whatever may be his dignity, riches, titles, &c. Virtue alone makes a man good, not dignity, riches, or titles; and if virtues make a man good, greater virtues make him better, and the greatest make him the best. And they who possess virtue in a higher degree excel all others. Now, we may know that humility is one of these great virtues, because our Lord Himself says: “He that shall humble himself shall be exalted,” which words the blessed Virgin follows in the Cantic: “He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart, and hath exalted the humble.” And St. Peter saith: “Be you humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in the time of visitation;” and St. James: “Be humbled in the sight of the Lord, and He will exalt you.” In fine, St. Paul says of Christ: “He humbled Himself, and therefore hath God exalted Him.” Since, therefore, these virtues, and especially those of charity and humility, make men good before God; and since again, no one truly knows what he is in the sight of “the Almighty, or what others are or will be therefore, it is dangerous to prefer ourselves to others, but most useful to humble ourselves before all men. Wherefore, our Lord absolutely saith: “Sit down in the lowest place.” But how many comply with this divine precept? For what do men contend more than for precedence? What labours do those endure who endeavour to reconcile men that quarrel about a point of honour! How many do we often hear using these words of Scripture, “I will not give my honour to another?” And yet the Most High speaks thus in Isaiah, to whom alone such words belong. God alone ought not to be humble, since humility is the virtue that restrains a man from desiring to ascend above himself, but since God dwelleth in the highest heaven, nothing can be above Him. Wherefore, pride is intolerable, because a worm of the earth dares to say, “I will not give my glory unto another.” And yet, these same worms whom pride so swells that they say with God, “I will not give my glory to another,” humble themselves as to acknowledge they are the slaves of honour that is, of a false esteem. And so faithfully do these serve their master, honour, that they rather prefer to be cruelly slain in single combat, and to descend into hell, (and thus lose eternal life, and their temporal one at the same time,) than suffer any affront to be given to the idol of their honour. vanity of vanities! Oh, how much doth this smoke of honour blind the eyes of the soul! And yet we call ourselves Christians, and know that Christ heard from His enemies: Behold a man that is a glutton and a wine-drinker; Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil; He casteth out devils, by Beelzebub, the prince of devils;” and yet no one heard Him exclaim, “Thou art a liar;” but, because He was meek and humble of heart, When He was reviled, He did not revile; when He suffered, He threatened not, &c. From these considerations, it is manifest that the “gate” of life is narrow, both on account of humility, as well as of the theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity: “Few” enter this gate; and therefore, when the question is asked, “If few are saved,” most truly must we answer, “Few;” because few there are who endeavour, with their whole strength, to enter in at this narrow gate.

## Chapter X

### **More Considerations On Faith**

BUT lest we should seem, by too much severity, to drive men away from entering the gate, I will show (since in this book it has been our endeavour to inflame the minds of the faithful with a desire of our most delightful and happy country) that the “gate” which on one side appears most narrow, on account of the perfection of virtue required; on the other is very wide and easy to enter, by reason of the omnipotence, truth, and mercy of God, if we be truly desirous of entering it. Let us begin again with faith. Faith certainly proposes for our belief mysteries most difficult, far above our reason and understanding, and sublimely exalted even above the natural capacity of the angels themselves. But since the doctrine of faith admonishes us, that these mysteries are to be believed on the authority of God, who cannot deceive, and not on that of angels, or of men, then the bounds begin to be enlarged. If faith said, “Believe in one God, and three persons; believe that the Son of God was born of the blessed Virgin; believe that Christ rose immortal from the dead on the third day by His own power:” believe all these points most firmly because SS. Peter, Paul, and John, Isaias, Jeremias, and Ezekiel, have said so, I should hesitate, not daring to believe men like myself on such difficult subjects. It is said, “Every man is a liar;” and therefore it is that we require oaths and witnesses, before we put our trust in men. But since faith says, “All these things hath God revealed;” and neither Peter, nor Paul, nor John, nor the other apostles and prophets, taught them on their own authority, but learned them from God; and since they preached His word, not their own, then my heart enlargeth itself, and is prepared to believe. And that it was God who spoke by the apostles and prophets, hath been manifested unto us by Him in so many signs and wonders, that it would be foolish and rash not to believe. Thus speaks the apostle to the Hebrews: “Which having begun to be declared by the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him. God also bearing them witness by signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and distributions of the Holy Ghost according to His own will.” (chap. ii.) What God says, who will gainsay? God cannot lie, for if He could, He would not be God. But these mysteries, which are proposed to our belief, are above our reason. They are: but they are not above the power and wisdom of God. Therefore, saith St. James, “God is greater than our heart;” because He can do what we cannot understand, and His essence and existence are more elevated than our mind can comprehend. If an unlearned man easily believes the many incredible things philosophers and astronomers mention concerning the magnitude of the sun and of the planets, why should not man readily believe also whatever God hath deigned to reveal, since there is an infinite distance between the wisdom and power of the one, and the small spark of reason with which the other is endowed? They therefore, who consider these remarks, will find no difficulty in believing what the Church proposes.

### **CHAPTER XI**

#### **More Considerations On Hope**

WE may say the same of the virtue of hope: for if what we hope to receive in the life to come, were said to depend on the promises of man, justly should we be rejected as vain impostors, because men can both deceive, and are quite unable to give such great rewards. But we say, they are not to be hoped for from man, but from God, who can neither lie, since He is truth, nor deceive us, since He is goodness: nor is anything impossible with Him, since He is omnipotent. Wherefore, justly would that rustic think himself mocked at, were any one to promise him the wisdom of Solomon or the power of Augustus, because he that would promise such things would be a man, deceitful and weak. But ought not a Christian to hope, to whom God promises eternal life, the kingdom of heaven, and a paradise of every pleasure? Perhaps we want pledges of this bountiful intention of God. But, as a figure of present things, did not God lead His people through a dry path across the Red Sea? Did He not rain down upon them manna from heaven? Did He not conduct them by Josue into the promised land? Should such a remarkable figure be considered vain and useless? Moreover, if “God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son,” hath He not “with Him given us all things?” That which we hope to receive from God, is it not excelled by the “gift” which He hath given to us, when we neither hoped nor asked for it? If He hath given to sinners and to His enemies the death of His Son, will He not give to the justified and to His friends the life of the same divine Son? But, not content with this, the Holy Spirit is added as a pledge of our inheritance. He crieth in our heart, “Abba (Father); and giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God; and if sons, heirs also heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: yet so, if we suffer with Him.” (chap. viii. Epistle to the Romans.) Wherefore, if the magnitude of the things promised seems beyond our hopes, yet they cannot exceed the power of the

Promisor; and since this power is infinite, it can easily strengthen our hopes, that we shall without doubt receive the promises. And this promise God hath confirmed with an oath, as the apostle proves in his Epistle to the Hebrews: so that by two certain things, .by the promise of Him who cannot lie, joined to an oath, we can rest our hope, as on a safe Anchor, of approaching even within the veil where Jesus hath entered for us, being a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech.

## **Chapter XII**

### **Other Considerations On Charity**

BUT what shall we say of charity? It is very narrow, on account of the difficulty of fulfilling its precepts; but, because of the divine goodness, to which it directs us, it may be said to be very wide. For why should it appear difficult to love God with our whole heart, and, soul, and strength, since He is most beautiful, most wise, and most worthy of infinite love? It is not difficult to love that which is excellent and beautiful on the earth; but it is not to love. Doth God, then, seem to do us an injury when He so strictly commands us to love Him, as if we were not bound to love Him of our own accord? We ardently love what is beautiful in the world, because we clearly see it, but “God no one hath ever seen.” Thus we do not see God, but we daily behold His works, which are so beautiful, and of which the Wise man speaks: “With whose beauty if they, being deceived, took them to be Gods, let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they: for the first Author of beauty made all these things.” (ch. xiii. 3.) We also experience His goodness in His daily benefits to us; and we have Him for a testimony who beholds us, and who cannot deceive: viz. the Holy Spirit, who speaks by the apostles and prophets in the holy Scripture. God, therefore, is so good and beautiful, that He alone deserves to be called good and beautiful. But you will say, it is hard that we should, for the love of God, be sometimes compelled to lose our property, friends, and even life itself. I acknowledge that it is so to those who love not God: but to those who do love Him, and desire to possess Him, I assert that it is very easy, especially since, if we despise temporal goods for the love of God, we shall possess those that are incomparably superior to them. And what are these? You lose corruptible riches, but you will acquire an eternal kingdom; you lose father, brothers, and friends, but you will possess God for your father, Christ for your brother, and all the angels and saints for your friends and companions: you lose a temporal life, full of misery, but you will gain an eternal one, full of happiness. Hear the Canticle of divine love: “If a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing;” and a little above:”Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it.” Hear, again, a lover of God; “Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? But in all these things we overcome, because of Him that hath loved us.” (Epistle to the Romans, chap. viii. 35.) But so to love my neighbour as to share my goods with him; and, even though he were my enemy and had grievously injured me, I should be obliged not only to pardon him, but also to be kind towards him: this seems to be against nature. It may be against nature corrupted by sin, but not against nature regenerated by the grace of Christ. Does not God himself share His blessings with His enemies, and daily pardon them, and return them good for evil? “He maketh His sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust.” Now, if God thus acts towards His enemies, it is not against the nature of God, nor the nature of men created after His image, to love his enemies, and do them good. But it is opposite to the nature of beasts, and of those, “who, when they were in honour, did not understand; but they are compared to senseless beasts, and are become like to them.”

## **Chapter XIII**

### **Other Considerations On Humility**

I NOW come to humility, which, like its other sisters, is hard to be acquired by the proud and the arrogant; but to those who attend the School of Christ and wish to learn of Him, it is very easy of attainment. “And first, we should humble ourselves ... under the powerful hand of God,” as St. Peter admonishes us, and his co-apostle St. James confirms. But what difficulty can there be, in a mortal man humbling himself before his Immortal and Omnipotent God? Secondly, we should choose the last place amongst men, because “each one should esteem others better than them selves,” as the apostle tells us in his Epistle to the Philippians. They who know themselves and are conscious of their own infirmities, and know not those of their neighbour, find no difficulty in esteeming all others before themselves, and conceding them a higher place. For as pride

springs from ignorance, so does humility from a knowledge of one's self. The heart of the proud man easily sees the vices which others have, because they are all outside him; but his own vices, often very numerous, he sees not, because they are within him; just as the eye does not behold what is within, but only what is without. Of this the Pharisee is an example for us, who gave thanks to God, that he was not as the rest of men a thief, unjust, an adulterer. He did not observe these vices in himself; but there were others concealed within; pride, blindness of soul, and impenitence, which he did not see; therefore he preferred himself to the publican praying in the same temple. But the publican, who had better eyes, saw his own faults, and not his virtues; therefore he sat down in the lowest place, and standing afar off, struck his breast, imploring the mercy of God: by His judgment, the one went home justified; the other condemned. Wherefore, if we seriously endeavour to know ourselves, we shall find no difficulty in entering the "gate" of the House of the Lord. But to all this we must add, that the gate which appears so very narrow, and almost impenetrable, to those who are heavy and corpulent, or covered with many garments, or that attempt to enter with an erect body; this same gate is broad and wide to those who enter unencumbered, naked, and lowly. Wherefore, we are to blame, if we cannot easily enter at the same gate, through which so many saints have before us, without any difficulty or trouble. Begin then, Christian soul, to cast aside the burden of riches: remember that your riches have been given you by God, as to a steward, not as to a master, in order that you should distribute them amongst the poor, but not to hoard them up carefully for yourself alone; and thus your soul being free from the love of riches, having thrown aside as it were a great burthen, will easily enter the "narrow gate." Cast away also a love of carnal pleasures, or rather cast out those noxious humours that produce wind, and inflate the body. In fine, reject the opinion of your own excellence; put on the humility of Christ; bow down your neck to the obedience of His commands, and then complain, if you cannot easily enter in at the gate of salvation.

#### **Chapter XIV**

##### **The Necessity Of Entering This Gate, However Narrow, If We Wish To Be Saved**

BUT whether this gate be broad or narrow, we must necessarily strive to enter by it: for after this life, which passeth as a shadow, there is no other place where we can well remain, except within this gate. Therefore our Lord admonishes us, saying, "Strive ye to enter in at the narrow gate," because, as He adds in the same place, those who remain without, will all be banished to a place where there will be eternal weeping and gnashing of teeth: these signify the greatest torments with a despair of any remedy; and thence comes a madness that impatiently endures what it does not wish to endure, and will always be compelled to endure. But how much better is it to strive to enter in at the narrow gate, where rest and joy will be found, after we have borne a little labour and sorrow? If indeed men could escape the narrowness of the "gate," and the pains of hell at the same time, perhaps their frailty might excuse them from using violence to enter. But since we are compelled, either to labour here for a time by doing violence, or to fall hereafter into eternal sorrows, what judgment, what reason can we have that would induce us to avoid minor evils, and so to find those that are intolerable and most grievous! But even if no evils would follow after this life, but being deprived of the House of God, where alone are eternal joys, this ought to induce us to strive to enter, not only through the narrowness of the gate, but through briars and thorns, and fire and the sword. And though during this life we cannot feel what a loss it is to be deprived of beatitude, yet after the separation of the soul from the body, the eyes of the mind will be opened and will most clearly see what a loss, what an infinite loss it is, not to have obtained the end for which we were created. This desire is signified by those words which are mentioned in the Gospel, as being used by those who shall remain outside: "Lord, Lord, open unto us;" "The desire of their last end will ever torment these wretched beings, and the remorse of conscience will never rest:" thus the words will be fulfilled, "Their worm will never die, and their fire shall never be extinguished." Oh! if we could now seriously think with what ardour these men will then exclaim, "Lord, Lord, open unto us:" as if they said, we cannot live without entering into the House of the Lord, and yet we cannot die! Wherefore we exist not to live, but to be for ever miserable. Wherefore "open unto us," because we are prepared to suffer everything, provided only we can enter. But He will answer: "I know you not. The year of jubilee has ended; when you could have entered, you would not; now therefore it is but just, that when you wish to enter, you cannot." Thus though deprived of all hope, they will never cease exclaiming, being impelled by a natural desire, "Lord, Lord, open unto us." But because in their lifetime they were deaf to the exhortations of the Lord

crying out to them, “Strive ye to enter in at the narrow gate,” now the Lord will turn a deaf ear to them exclaiming, “Lord, Lord, open unto us.” Wherefore, if we be wise, let us now consult our own welfare whilst we have time: let us do now, while we are able, what we shall then wish to have done, and shall not be able to do it.

## **Book IV (The Paradise of Delights)**

### **Chapter I**

#### **True Joy Is To Be Found In Heaven**

PARADISE is a name of pleasure and delight, for it signifies a garden, or most beautiful orchard, suitable both for recreation and amusement. In the book of Genesis this paradise of pleasure is not once named, when the terrestrial paradise is the subject of the discourse. But in the prophet Ezechiel speaking of the heavenly paradise, it is said of the chief angel who afterward fell and became the devil: Thou wast in the pleasures of the paradise of God.” But since the Holy Scriptures mention nothing of Paradise, but that there were in it many trees and the fountain of living water, therefore it is my intention under the word “Paradise,” to explain the joys and pleasures which the blessed possess in heaven. And this will be, unless I am deceived, a useful contemplation to excite our minds to seek and reflect upon the things above: and thus so to regulate our life, that when we depart hence, it may not be to sorrow and darkness, but by the divine assistance, to Eternal light and happiness. All men, with few exceptions, are influenced more by pleasure, than by any thing else. And the Church in one of her prayers says, “There may our hearts be fixed, where our true joy is.” And first we shall consider what the Holy Scripture says of the heavenly Paradise, whence we shall prove that in it are true joys; then we shall endeavour to explain what these joys are: and lastly, by various reasons, or rather comparisons, we shall prove that these joys are far more excellent than we can either comprehend, or think, or even imagine. First, then, the name of paradise signifies pleasure and delight, as we have already seen from the Book of Genesis. And that there is a Paradise in heaven, Ezechiel testifies. Our Lord also testifies in the gospel, when he said to the thief hanging by him: “This day thou shalt be with me in paradise,” He used the word paradise for the kingdom of God, and its essential beatitude: for the good thief had said, “Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom.” St. Paul testifies in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, where he says, “I know a man in Christ Such an one rapt even to the third heaven, and was caught up into paradise.” St. John testifies in his Apocalypse, where he introduces the Lord thus speaking: “To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God.” From these passages it is evident, that the region of the “blessed” is a place of happiness and delight. And when our Lord says to the good and faithful servant, “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,” does He not most clearly declare, that the house or city of God is a place of joy, to which good and faithful servants are admitted when they leave this world? Our Lord in many places compares the kingdom of heaven to a supper, as we read in St. Luke, where it is said: “A man made a great supper.” And again, “I dispose to you, as my Father hath disposed to me, a kingdom: that you may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom.” And when likewise we are told in the Apocalypse, “Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” The Scripture, by the figure of the supper, certainly points out the pleasure and delight of the heavenly paradise; unless some one assert, that there is no pleasure in the sense of taste. In addition to these passages, the kingdom of God both in the Gospels and the Apocalypse is compared to royal nuptials: as we learn from the parable of the king, who made a marriage for his son; and from the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, of whom the wise went with the bridegroom to the marriage; but the foolish virgins remained without. The same also is found in the Apocalypse, where many things are said of the “marriage supper of the Lamb” celebrated with great magnificence in the kingdom of heaven. Now the beatitude of the saints may be compared to a royal marriage, because on such occasions every variety of pleasure is experienced and enjoyed. But of this we shall treat in the following Book. In fine, in the Apocalypse St. John sees a choir of virgins who followed the Lamb wheresoever He goeth, and sang a new canticle which no one else could sing. Which passage St. Augustine explains in his Book on “Holy Virginity” as having relation to certain joys and holy pleasures, which virgins alone will enjoy. Thus it is manifest, that in our heavenly kingdom and city, there are many true joys and most abundant pleasures.

### **Chapter II**

### **On The Joy Of The Understanding**

SINCE it has been proved from Holy Scripture, that in the kingdom of heaven there is true joy, we will now explain what those joys are. And first, we will briefly explain the joys of the Understanding, of the Will, and of the Memory, which relate to the mind: afterwards the joys of the other senses which relate to the body. We do not here mean to assert, that the understanding, memory, and the senses of the body are the proper seat of joy; since we are not ignorant that joy as well as desire, properly belong to the will in the superior part, and to the appetite in the inferior. But we speak as men generally do - who hesitate not to say, "The eye is delighted with the beauty of colour, and the ear with the harmony of sound." By the joy of the understanding, therefore, or of the memory, or external senses, we mean the pleasure which men experience from those objects, which they either understand, or remember, or derive from their external senses. The chief joy of the "Blessed" then will be, to behold with the eyes of the soul God face to face, as St. Paul mentions in his first Epistle to the Corinthians: and to behold Him as He is, according to St. John. And how great this joy will be, we can conjecture from what the prophet Isaias and the apostle Paul testify, that it exceeds all the joys which we have seen, or heard, or desired, or can imagine: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." (1 Corinth, ii. 9.) The holy Scripture also speaks of a particular and essential happiness which consists in seeing God according to the words of our Lord: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God:" and also: "Now this is eternal life: that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (St. John, xvii. 3.) This truly seems a great privilege, that no one can see, or hear, or desire, or imagine any good equal to that which the sight of God will convey to us; and yet this is no exaggeration, but the simple truth, because the eyes, the ears, and the heart of man are accustomed to finite and limited joys: but the sight of God is a vision of light inaccessible, of an infinite Good which contains every good, according to what the Lord said to Moses when he had asked, "Show me thy face." He answered, "I will show thee every good thing." But that we may prove this from reason, we learn from St. Thomas that delight which comes from knowledge requires three things: power, a sensible object suitable to that power, and an union of the object with this power; and that in proportion as the power is capable of knowledge, and the object more noble, and the union more intimate, so much the greater pleasure is derived. But no one can doubt but that the mind is much more pure and noble, and more capable of knowledge than the exterior senses. Now, all must admit that God is the highest and most noble object, placed not only above all objects of sense, but also above those of the mind, being infinite Goodness itself. But it is also equally certain, that a union of the mind with God by a clear vision is so intimate that the essence of God will penetrate the whole soul, whilst the soul herself will be transformed into God as if she were plunged into a great sea. Who, therefore, can imagine the greatness of this joy? The sweetness of this embrace from an infinite Good, from a Spouse of infinite beauty? From the beautiful union of colour with the sense of sight, and the sweetest sounds with the sense of hearing, we certainly experience great pleasure; and often it is so great, that many by it almost lose their senses. And yet the sense of feeling is material, and common to us with beasts: the objects also are corporal, and deceive us as often as they delight us. In fine, the union is superficial and external; and in many of the senses it is not an union of the object itself, but of its image with the mind. But the spiritual union of God with the understanding is more firm, durable, and complete; whilst corporal pleasures that are derived from the senses, because they are mutable, cannot be durable nor complete, being given to us as it were by drops. Wherefore, without doubt, the pleasure of the mind is greater than that of the senses. Wherefore, Man! recollect thyself, and weigh impartially the pleasure which the world offers thee, with that which God offers thee, when He promises Himself to those that love Him: choose what thou wishest for. If thou love pleasure which is certainly pleasing to thee, thou wilt choose the greatest, rather than the least; the ever-enduring, rather than the momentary. But not only the sight of God is promised to the good in heaven, but also the sight of all those things which God hath made. Here on earth we perceive by our eyes the sun, moon, stars; the sea, rivers, animals, trees and minerals. But our mind does not know the substance of these created things, their essential difference, their properties or power: we cannot see even our own soul, but like blind men we feel for effects, and by reasoning, acquire a little knowledge. What then will be the joy, when our mind in the vision of God, will clearly see the substance of all things, their difference, properties and power! And what great exultation will be ours, when we shall behold the innumerable army of angels, not one of whom resembles another, and shall clearly see the difference of all! What unbounded joy will it be, when we shall

behold those holy men, who have been from the beginning of the world even unto the end, united together with all the angels! When we shall behold the merits of each, their crowns and palms of victory! We shall also see with feelings of pleasure, the crimes and torments of the damned, in which the sanctity of the good, and the justice of God will wonderfully shine forth; for then the just will wash their hands in the blood of the wicked, as the prophet saith. And what doth “washing their hands in the blood of the wicked” signify, but that the good works of the blessed will shine more Brightly, in comparison with the works of the wicked? The virginity of some will be more resplendent, when compared with the adulteries of others: and the fasts and alms-deeds of many, when compared with the gluttony and revellings of others. It will then be said: this young man was beautiful, and yet he observed perpetual chastity: this other youth was beautiful also, but not content with his own wife, he often committed adulteries and sacrileges. This man was rich and of noble extraction, and yet he fasted and prayed often, and gave abundant alms: another was equally rich and of noble extraction, but being addicted to gluttony and drunkenness, he spent his money in pleasures, so that he had nothing to give to the poor. Hence it will be, that the joy of the Just will be increased, by knowing the crimes of the wicked. At the same time, their joy will also be great, from the contemplation of the justice which will be so conspicuous, in the rewards of the blessed and the punishment of the wicked. Now, in human affairs, we perceive a great anomaly, because crime is often united with reward, and virtue with punishment, so that the justice of God seems in a manner to be obscured amongst men. But then every crime will have its punishment, and every virtue its reward, so that the beauty of God’s justice will excite incredible joy in the minds of the blessed.

### **Chapter III**

#### **On The Joy Of The Will**

THERE are three things which produce the greatest love in the will. One is a most ardent and inextinguishable love of God and of our neighbour; for love is the chief ingredient of every thing loved. He that loves, thinks that every thing which he loves, is most beautiful and excellent; and therefore he rejoices greatly when he sees them; and when absent from them grieves inconsolably. We see parents, who naturally have great love for their children, consider them the most beautiful, talented, and prudent, although they are often deformed and devoid of judgment and knowledge. And if a choice were given to them, they would not exchange their sons for any others, however superior to their own in the judgment of men. We often, too, behold people, either by chance or any other cause, in love with deformed persons; to converse with whom they consider a great pleasure, and to be separated from them a great calamity. This would certainly not be the case, unless, as we have said, love is the ingredient of every thing loved. And since this is the case, how great will be the joy of the saints, to converse with God and all the blessed, whom they will ever love with the most ardent affection, and who not falsely, but very truly, are most beautiful and excellent, and from whom they know they will never be removed. On the other hand, one of the greatest torments of hell will be, to be united with those whom we shall hold in the utmost horror, and who we know circumvented us with a thousand artifices. Another circumstance that will cause great joy in the mind of the blessed, will be a certain inexpressible repose, and satiety without fulness, which will make them happy and contented in every way. Here on earth no one is contented with his lot, no one but wishes for more than he has, which he cannot obtain. Hence all are hungry, all thirsty, all live in discontent. Nor ought this to appear wonderful to us, since our soul is capable of an infinite and eternal good, and created things are frail and insignificant, which cannot last long. What then will be the joy of that man, who shall see himself in a place where he will live quite contented! where he will desire nothing, fear nothing, require nothing, nor seek for any thing more! Peace! that exceedeth every pleasure which the world can give, and which alone is found in the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of our great and peaceful King! “For thee my soul sigheth, full of troubles and temptations: in the recollection and expectation of thee alone, it resteth for a little time.” The third circumstance that will give joy to the blessed, is perfect justice, and that more perfect than original justice was in Adam. The one subjected the inferior part to the superior, till the latter was subject to God: but the other will subject the inferior to the superior, and the superior to God, by a most firm and indissoluble union. The one was like a woollen or linen vest: but the other will be all of gold or silk, which will make the will most beautiful and lovely to God, to itself, to the angels, and to all the blessed. This is that perfect justice which hath no stain, not even a venial one; so that of such a soul clothed with such a garment it may be said: “Thou art all



beautiful, my be loved, and there is no spot in thee.” This includes all those virtues which admit of no imperfection, and how great joy and pleasure this justice brings with it, the wise man beareth witness in the Proverbs, “A secure mind is like a continual feast.” (chap, xv.) That mind alone is secure, whose conscience never stings, and which by perfect justice is so established in good that it cannot fall, even for a moment. Of this St. Paul beareth witness when he says, “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but justice, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” (Epistle to the Romans, chap. xiv. 17.) Here the holy Apostle plainly teaches us, that the kingdom of heaven possesses in itself great joy; but that it does not consist in the pleasure of meat and drink, as carnal men might perhaps wish, but in justice, which produces in the mind a solid peace and true joy. For he that is perfectly just, hath not in his heart any thing to reprehend him, nor in his actions what others might reprehend. Hence arises a solid and sweet peace with God, with himself, and with all others: hence, an unspeakable joy in the Holy Ghost, with which no earthly or temporal pleasure can bear any comparison.

#### **Chapter IV**

##### **On The Joy Of The Memory**

THE memory will supply no small matter for joy, from the recollection of the past. First, the recollection of the benefits of God in the spiritual and corporal, the natural and supernatural life, as well as the temporal and eternal, will bring incredible joy, when the just recollect in how many ways the blessings of heavenly sweetness were given to them. Then the recollection of the dangers from which God delivered them so wonderfully, in every age and every state, will be a source of unbounded joy. And amongst other dangers I consider this the chief, that often they were near committing mortal sin, and therefore near hell, and yet that God, moved by His goodness alone, prevented the sin. This singular mercy of God being often considered by the elect in their most peaceful kingdom, will give them the greatest delight. And if the saints had not the recollection of these things in heaven, how could they, as the Psalmist saith, “sing the mercies of the Lord for ever”? “Nothing will be sweeter in the city,” says St. Augustine, “than this canticle for the glory of the grace of Christ, by which we were redeemed.” What shall I say of the course of ages from the beginning, even to the end of time? What pleasure will the remembrance of so many vicissitudes bring, of such a variety of things, which the wonderful providence of God so wisely governed, ruled, and conducted to their proper ends! This perhaps is “the stream of the river which maketh the city of God joyful.” What is the course of ages flowing with so great velocity and never interrupting its course, except the stream of the river that rolls its waters continually, till they disappear and are lost in the ocean? And then, whilst the stream floweth and time flieth, many doubt of the providence of God: and some even of His servants are disturbed by this “stream of the river” which often brings evil to the good, and blessings to the wicked; which takes away the good land from the just, and carries it to the camp of the wicked, and brings them so many temptations, that they seem to complain of the providence of God. Hear the royal Prophet: “But my feet were almost moved: my steps had well nigh slipt. Because I had a zeal on occasion of the wicked, seeing the prosperity of sinners:” and a little lower: “Behold these are sinners; and yet abounding in the world they have obtained riches. And I said: then have I in vain justified my heart, and washed my hands among the innocent. And I have been scourged all the day.” (Psalm Ixxii.) Hear Jeremias: “Thou indeed, Lord, art just, if I will plead with thee, but yet I will speak what is just to thee. Why doth the way of the wicked prosper: why is it well with all them that transgress, and do wickedly? Thou hast planted them, and they have taken root: they prosper and bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from, their reins.” (chap, xii.) Hear the prophet Habacuc: “Why lookest thou upon them that do unjust things, and boldest thy peace, when the wicked devoureth the man that is more just than himself? And thou wilt make men as the fishes of the sea, and as the creeping things that have no ruler.” (chap, i.) But when the course of time shall be accomplished, and the river shall be lost in the sea, then the saints in heaven, calling to mind all its revolutions, shall clearly read the reason of its vicissitudes in the book of divine providence, and thereby it is incredible, how the stream of this river, represented to them by memory, will make joyful the city of God! There they will see, why God permitted the first angel and the first man to fall: why the mercy of God liberated man, and did not liberate the angel. There they will see, why God chose for His peculiar people the children of Abraham, who, nevertheless, he foresaw, would be a stiff-necked people: and how great blessings he was preparing, on account of their obstinacy, for the Gentiles. In fine, to omit speaking of His universal providence, there they

will see why He permitted many, and nearly all the just, to suffer afflictions; it was, that He might crown them more gloriously. And thus, from the remembrance of them, they will bless with great joy all those crosses which they suffered, since they see them changed into eternal crowns, and they will exclaim with the Prophet: "According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, thy comforts have given joy to my soul."

## **Chapter V**

### **On The Joy Of The Eyes**

LET us now consider the joys of a glorified body.

And first, there will be the joy of the sense of "seeing," which amongst corporal senses is the most noble, and its office the most extensive. This sense then will rejoice at the splendour and beauty of its own body in heaven; for it will see the body "reformed by Christ, and made like to the body of His glory," as St. Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Philippians. Nor will its brightness be less than that of the sun, for the Apostle testifies in the Acts of the Apostles, that he saw Christ (to whose splendour we shall be made conformable,) shining above the brightness of the sun: and our Lord himself in St. Matthew says: "Then the just shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." What a glorious spectacle therefore will be presented to the eyes of the blessed, when they shall behold their hands, their feet, and all their members, sending forth rays of light; so that they will no more stand in need of the sun, or of the moon, or of any other inferior light, to dissipate the darkness! But not only will their own bodies shine as the sun, but the bodies of all the saints also, and especially the body of Christ himself and of His most blessed Mother. How doth one sun rejoice at his rising - the whole earth! What then will it be, to behold innumerable suns, most beautiful not only by their brightness, but also by the variety and glory of the members! Nor will the blessed be here obliged to close their eyes, lest they should be injured by the dazzling splendour: for the eyes themselves will be blessed, and therefore made impassible and immortal. For He who will make the eyes of the soul like to His glory, lest seeing God face to face they should be overpowered, will also endow the eyes of the body with impassibility, that they may behold not one sun only but many without injury. It will also be an addition to the joy of the eyes, as St. Augustine teaches us in his "City of God," that the blessed martyrs will display the most illustrious marks of their virtues, in those particular parts of the body in which they endured torments. What joy, therefore, will it be to see St. Stephen adorned with as many illustrious jewels as he endured blows of the stones in his body! What to see St. John the Baptist, St. James the Great, and St. Paul the Apostle besides others almost infinite in number, who suffered for Christ all shining in unspeakable beauty, more resplendent than any gold! What to behold St. Bartholomew, who was flayed alive, then so glorious beyond the beauty of the richest purple! And, not to mention others, what will it be to behold St. Peter and St. Andrew, and many others who endured the punishment of the cross, now with their hands and feet shining like stars in the greatest splendour! And with regard to Christ, the King of the martyrs, who for His own glory, and for our comfort, hath deigned to bear the marks of the cross, no tongue can express with what glory these most sacred marks will shine! And all the glory of the saints, when compared with that of Christ, is less than the beauty of the stars when compared with the beauty of the sun. But what shall I say of the pleasure which the eyes will derive from viewing this most extensive city, which Tobias and St. John, not being able to find sufficient words to express, have described it as adorned with gems and precious stones! What of this new heaven and new earth, which is promised us in the Holy Scripture after the last day? What of the renovation of this whole universe into a better state? For, as these things are unknown to us, so will they delight the eyes of the blessed, when their beauty shall be seen.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **On The Joy Of The Ears**

THAT the sense of hearing will be an instrument of speech in heaven, we cannot doubt, for the bodies of the blessed will be truly animated and perfect in every part; such was the body of Christ after His resurrection, which all the apostles, many of the disciples, and many women clearly saw. They heard Him speaking, and He answered their questions. St. Paul also tells us, that he heard Christ speaking from heaven, and that he answered Him. That there will likewise be "Canticles" sung in heaven, and especially that of "Alleluia," Tobias and St. John testify. From them it is evident, that there will be in that city many most sweet canticles,

by which God will be praised, and the ears of the blessed wonderfully delighted. And if everything be in proportion, there can be no doubt but that this canticle will be as sweet and excellent as the cantors themselves are learned, as He who will be praised is so holy, and as the place wherein the canticle will be sung is so glorious, and the choir of hearers so intelligent and numerous! What then will it be amidst a most profound peace, in such concord of mind, and ardour of charity towards their great Benefactor, to hear the most melodious voices singing "Alleluia!" If St. Francis, as it is related by St. Bonaventure, was so moved by the sound of a harp touched by an angel for a moment, that he supposed himself to have been in another world, how will our ears be delighted when thousands of harps and cantors shall praise God with most melodious voices! when other thousands, with the like harmony, shall repeat the same canticles again and again! But the praises of God only will not be sung in this city; for the triumphs of the martyrs also, the merits of the confessors, the glory of the virgins, and the victories of all over the snares of the devil, will be celebrated in song: all these praises will redound to the glory of God. Ecclesiasticus says: "Who hath been tried thereby, and made perfect, he shall have glory everlasting. He that could have transgressed, and hath not transgressed; and could do evil things, and hath not done them: therefore are his goods established in the Lord, and all the Church of the saints shall declare his alms." (chap, xxxi.) Now, although these words are to be understood as relating to the praises of those who dwell in the Church on earth; yet nothing prevents us from applying them to the blessed in heaven, and the Church triumphant. For there the saints will have true and eternal glory: there truly the Church of the saints. And since in the Gospel our Lord saith, that faithful and prudent servants will be praised by God in heaven in these words: "Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;" what prevents us from supposing that these words of our Lord will be taken up by the whole choir of the celestial city, and most sweetly repeated again and again? The Catholic Church has not hesitated to say of St. Martin: "Martin, here poor and mean, now rich, enters heaven, and is honoured with heavenly hymns." In fine, St. Augustine, in the last book of the "City of God," affirms the same in these eloquent words: "There will be true glory, where no one will be praised, either by the error or flattery of the praiser. True honour will be there, that will be denied to no one who is worthy of it, nor given to any unworthy of it. Nor will any unworthy person aspire to it there, where none but the worthy are admitted." Oh, thrice blessed then will those be, who in this place whence flattery is banished, and where no deceit is found, shall hear their praises sung without danger of pride, but not without an increase of their joy!

## **Chapter VII**

### **On The Joy Of The Nostrils**

ON the other senses only a few remarks must be made; not because they will not have great and peculiar pleasures, but because the Holy Scripture does not inform us what these pleasures will be. But this is sufficiently evident, that many bodies of the saints, immediately after their death, began to send forth a most sweet odour, such as no one had perceived before. This St. Jerome relates of the body of St. Hilarion, for he affirms that ten months after his burial his body was found perfect, as if he were still living; and so fragrant was it, that it seemed to have been embalmed. St. Gregory, in his "Dialogues," relates the same thing of the body of St. Servulus, a paralytic. These are his words: "At the departure of his soul such sweet fragrance was scattered, that all who were present were filled with an inconceivable sweetness; and until the body was buried, every one felt the fragrance." Other examples of a like nature are to be found, both in ancient and modern times. From these cases we may argue, that if the bodies of the deceased saints, after the soul was assumed to glory, breathed such a sweet odour, much more will these bodies breathe the same when they shall be glorified and alive. St. Gregory in his "Dialogues" also speaks of the body of our Saviour, in the following manner: "Then Tarsillathe virgin, looking up, beheld Jesus coming; and suddenly with such a wonderful fragrance was she covered, that it was a proof to all the Author of sweetness was present." And thus, if the glorified body of our Saviour breathed such an odour of sweetness, it is certain that all the bodies of the saints will send forth the sweetest odours: for it is meet that the members should be conformable to their head, not only in their glory, but also in the sweetness of their fragrance. Let those, therefore, who are delighted with odours, think with what sweetness they will be filled, when in that divine garden, adorned with thousands of heavenly flowers, they will inhale such various and sweet odours.

## **Chapter VIII**

### **On The Joy The Senses Of Touch And Taste Will Have**

ON the sense of taste theologians write, that the blessed will not use earthly food; but yet that this sense will have a certain pleasure, lest it should appear to be superfluous; but this pleasure will be suitable to the state and condition of the just. On the sense of touch, all agree that it will be possessed in heaven, since the bodies of the blessed can certainly be touched, being true and animated bodies, according to the words of our Lord: "Handle and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me to have." But we do not wish to enter on those points which are disputed in the schools. We believe, however, that the sense of touch will derive no small pleasure from the perpetual beauty of the body endowed with glorified properties, of which St. Paul speaks in his First Epistle to the Corinthians: "It is sown in dishonour, it shall rise in glory. It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power. It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body." (chap, xv.) Of these four endowments or privileges of a glorified body, that concerning its splendour relates to the sense of sight, as we have already mentioned; the other three seem properly to relate to the sense of touch. For as, when the body is attacked with any disorder, or receives a wound which is mortal, it is the sense of touch that suffers; so also, when the body is in health, the same sense rejoices. Greatly, therefore, will the sense of touch rejoice in heaven, when, after the resurrection, the bodies of the blessed will be immortal and impassible, and, consequently, endowed with perpetual health. What would not men give, and especially princes, if, during their whole life, they could be free from the gout, the head-ache, or any other pains? What then will be the joy in heaven, from which not only death, but every disease and sorrow will be far removed! Wherefore, those endowments by which a corruptible body will rise incorruptible, and that which is infirm will become impassible, relate to the sense of touch. The endowments of agility and subtilty, by which what is corporal will be spiritual, seem also to relate to the same sense. It will be a spiritual and glorified body; not because it will not have truly flesh and bones, but because it will be so subject to the spirit, that, by the mere nod of the soul, it will be able without difficulty to move with the greatest velocity, to ascend and descend, to go and to return, to penetrate any place, as if it were not a body but a spirit. As, therefore, the sense of touch suffers when a heavy body is forced to ascend upwards, or to be moved from place to place quickly; so, on the contrary, it rejoices when the body without labour either ascends or passes quickly from place to place. Behold, then, from what a servitude of corruption the "blessed" will be free, when they will no more stand in need of horses, or chariots, or arms, or servants, or any other thing; but their bodies will of themselves go wherever they wish, and everywhere be free from danger, even in the midst of armed forces. Would that those who cannot enjoy spiritual delights because they have a vitiated taste, would at least consider these corporal endowments, which are so excellent and desirable, and seek after them! And thus they might be induced gradually to ascend higher; and by these steps, they would at length, by the divine assistance, reach unto eternal joys.

## **Chapter IX**

### **The Joys Of Heaven Compared With Those Of Earth**

WE have already explained, according to our ability, what joys are prepared in heaven for those that love God; we will now, by certain external arguments, endeavour to show how great they are. And, first, we shall consider the pleasures which God often gives, even to his enemies, in this life. And truly, so great joys are found in riches, honours, power, and various other pleasures, which God gives to those that even blaspheme Him, or believe not in Him, that nearly all men consider them happy beings. David exclaims: "They have called the people happy that hath these things." (Psalm cxliiii.) Who amongst the lovers of this world does not envy Solomon, who reigned forty years, and abounded in riches and every delight, besides having seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines? And yet, according to the opinion of S. Augustine, it seems that he was lost, for thus he speaks: "Solomon himself was a lover of women, and was cast off by God." And in his book on the "City of God," he says of Solomon what Sallust said of Cataline, "He began well, but ended badly." St. Gregory also follows St. Augustine in the 2nd Book of his "Morals." Not unlike Solomon are, in our own times, the kings of Turkey, Persia, China, and Tartary, who possess the most extensive kingdoms, and are addicted to carnal pleasures; they indulge their heart, their eyes, their ears, and palate in every thing they desire. But not to dwell on these pleasures, which belong only to a few, how great are the joys which God gives to mortals in general, the greater part of whom neither know, nor love, nor fear God!

Hath He not given to all the earth with its riches and pleasures, animals, fruit, flowers, and metals? Hath He not given to all men in general the sea, fountains, rivers, and lakes, filled with so many kinds of fishes? Hath He not outspread the heavens, to be as it were the roof of His great house, adorned with innumerable stars? Doth not this same great and most bountiful Lord command His sun to rise and His rain to fall, both upon the just and the unjust? Now, if He hath given so many pleasures to reprobate sinners and ungrateful slaves, who are deserving of the severest punishments, is it not just that He should reserve for His friends and children joys infinitely greater? Hear St. Augustine: "To sinners that blaspheme His name daily, He gives the heavens and the earth: fountains, fruits, health, children, riches, abundance. He who giveth such to sinners, what thinkest thou will He not give to His faithful servants?" It is mentioned in the Life of St. Fulgentius, that when he once saw the glory of the Roman senate he exclaimed: "how beautiful must the heavenly Jerusalem be, if earthly Rome be so glorious! And if in this world so much honour be given to those that love vanity, what honour and glory will be given unto the saints, who behold truth itself!" St. Augustine, who was such a wise judge of things, does not hesitate to assert there is such a difference between heavenly and earthly joys, that the enjoyment of celestial pleasures for one day only, would be more desirable than the enjoyment of earthly pleasures for thousands of ages. These are his words: "So great is the glory of eternal life, that, supposing we could only enjoy it for one day for this alone countless years of this life, full of earthly goods and happiness, should justly be despised; for not without reason has it been said, 'Better is one day in thy courts above thousands.' What then shall we say? If these words are true, as they most certainly are, is it not reasonable that we should now at length begin to be wise?" Hitherto we have been accustomed to exhort you to despise earthly goods because they are momentary, and to love heavenly things because they are eternal. But now we hear St. Augustine, a most learned doctor, affirming that although earthly goods were eternal, and heavenly ones only momentary, yet that the latter should be preferred to the former! Are we not therefore deaf, blind, stupid, and foolish, if, on account of earthly goods, which are not only vile, but frail and transitory, we despise heavenly treasures, which are most precious and eternal? Cure, O merciful Lord! our deafness: enlighten our blindness: rouse our stupidity: heal our madness. Why is the light of thy countenance shined upon us, Lord, if we discern not things so great and so necessary? And why hast thou given unto us the judgment of reason, if we see not objects so evident?

## **Chapter X**

### **The Earthly And Heavenly Paradise Compared**

WE have compared the joys of this world with the joys of the kingdom of heaven: we will now compare in a few words the joys of the earthly paradise, with those of the heavenly one. We may know how great were the pleasures of the terrestrial paradise from this circumstance, that it was a garden of pleasure given to men, who were created according to the image and likeness of God, whilst the other parts of the earth were given to the animals. But when Adam by his sin had lost the honour in which he had been placed by God, and had become like senseless beasts, he was then cast out of paradise into this place. St. Alchimus, in his poems on Genesis, and others describe paradise as a most beautiful region, and very temperate; where neither the heat of summer could burn, nor the cold of winter injure, but a perpetual spring of flowers flourished, and autumn gave its fruits of every kind. St. Basil thus speaks of it in his book on Paradise: "God planted paradise where there is no violence of wind, no in clemency of seasons, no hail, nor thunder, nor storms; no cold of winter, nor damp of spring, nor summer's heat, nor autumn's dryness: but the seasons are temperate, and in peace among themselves, for they dance around that place; yea, the pleasures of spring, the nourishment of summer, the joy of autumn, and the rest of winter meet there together with their blessings. Clear are its waters, affording great joy to the eye, but possessing more utility than joy. God, therefore, created this place at first as worthy to receive His plants. Afterwards he planted therein a variety of beautiful trees, most pleasing to the sight, and by them He bestowed a most sweet enjoyment." St. Augustine, in his "City of God," thus speaks of paradise: "What could these fear or grieve for, being in possession of such an abundance of good things; where neither death was feared, nor any distemper of the body, and every thing was present which the will could desire; nor could anything enter to injure the body or soul of those that lived so happily? Their love of God was undisturbed, and they lived together in a faithful and sincere friendship: from this love came great joy. There was a tranquil avoiding of sin, which, while it remained, no evil could happen to give them sorrow. How happy, therefore, were these first men, whose minds were

agitated by no fears, nor their bodies injured by any evils! The whole human race would have been as happy, had not these committed sin, which they passed to posterity, and had not every one of their descendants sinned, and thus brought damnation." So far St. Augustine. I omit others who have written on the wonderful beauty and fruitfulness of the earthly paradise, such as Claudius Marius Victor, St. John Damascene, St. Isidore, &c. But whatever we may think of these particular accounts, we learn from the Holy Scripture itself that paradise was doubtless a more happy place than this our habitation, since, as a punishment for sin, it was said to Adam: "Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work: with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee," &c. And to the woman He said: "I will multiply thy sorrows and thy conceptions; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee." (chap, iii.) In paradise, therefore, there would not have been sterility of the earth, neither would its cultivation have required labour, nor would it have brought forth briars and thorns; women would always have conceived with fruit, and although they might be subject to their husbands, the subjection would not have been despotic, but mild and moderate. These, therefore, would have led a happy life, without fear or sorrow, without labour and trouble. Now, if the earthly paradise, had not sin been committed, would have been free from every evil, and have abounded in all good, what ought we to think of our heavenly Paradise, which must be so much more beautiful as it is more excellent, being created for more excellent beings? The heaven of the blessed is, without any comparison, much more sublime than the paradise of Adam; and the blessed inhabitants therein, as they cannot sin or die, are therefore far, far better off than the inhabitants of this earthly paradise, who are exposed to sin and to death. This, then, being the truth, let us give thanks to God that by the Passion of His Son, instead of the terrestrial paradise snatched from us by the envy of the devil, we have now gained a celestial one, far more excellent than the other; and lest we should be ungrateful to so great a Redeemer, let us strive with our whole strength to enter the heavenly paradise, and to open its gates for ourselves by a lively faith, by a sincere hope, perfect charity, and good works.

## **Chapter XI**

### **The Goods Of This World, And Those Of The Earthly Paradise Compared With The Joys Of The Heavenly Paradise**

WE will now advance further, and compare all the goods of this world, as well as those of the earthly paradise, with the joys of the heavenly paradise alone; and these being united together, we shall see which preponderate. To accomplish this, let us imagine that the riches, power, pleasures, and glory of Solomon, and of other like fortunate men, could be acquired without labour, and retained without fear: let us also suppose, that these men could never sin, nor ever die. These points then being granted, I affirm that the joys of the heavenly paradise alone far excel all the goods of this world and those of the terrestrial paradise united together. And hence I conclude, that all these joined together can never fill the soul, can never satisfy her desires, because the heart of man is capable of an infinite good: but these are finite. Wherefore, the words of St. Augustine, which are to be found in the beginning of his "Confessions," will always be true: "Thou hast made us, O Lord, for Thyself; and our heart cannot rest until it rest in Thee." True also are the words of David, "I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear." (Psalm xvi.) But as long as the heart is not at rest, it will be miserable, and if miserable, it will not be happy. Now, our heavenly paradise will both satiate the soul, and take away all fear and uneasiness. For what can he desire who will be like unto God, because he will see Him as He is? What can he desire, whom God "shall place over all his goods?" What can he desire who will reign with God, and be a co-heir with Christ, "whom the Father hath appointed heir of all things?" More over, because the goods of this world, and those of the earthly paradise also, may be lost, however great they are, they are not therefore perfect goods; nor can they satiate and satisfy the soul; and, on this account, they cannot make it blessed and happy. But the goods of the heavenly paradise are, in every way, perfect and secure: they cannot be lost, nor diminished in the least. For the saints, placed on their most blessed thrones, can neither die nor sin, and are most certain of their eternal happiness! May mortals therefore open the eyes of their soul, and seriously ponder how important it is, not to lose their heavenly paradise. The subject is truly of the deepest interest, and not concerning things; for the wisdom of God hath said, "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

## Chapter XII

### On The Price That Paradise Was Purchased At, Compared With Paradise Itself

THE last comparison will be on the “price“ by which Christ purchased paradise for us, and by which we also ought to purchase it with all its goods. Christ, at the price of His blood, purchased paradise for us, which the envy of the devil had snatched from us; not that he might possess it himself, but that he might deprive us of it. For this purpose he seduced Eve, and by her Adam, that he might make them both partakers of his punishment. Christ therefore is that wise merchant, who sold all that he had to purchase the precious pearl, by which is clearly signified the kingdom of heaven, as He himself teaches, of whom St. Paul speaks: “You are bought with a great price;” and St. Peter says, “Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver .... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled:” and again, “They deny the Lord who bought them.” Christ at the same time that He bought paradise, bought us also; for we were captives, and had lost paradise by sin: but Christ redeeming us from our sins, and from the captivity of the devil, made us sons and heirs of God at the same time, and by this means restored paradise to us. Hence, the greatness of paradise is shown to us, by appearing to the wisdom of God worthy of an infinite price. If amongst men, some wise and very rich merchant were to purchase a precious pearl by selling willingly all his goods, certainly no one would doubt but that this pearl was so wonderful and valuable, that scarcely a sufficient price could be given for it. How greatly therefore ought we to value, if we possess any judgment, the possession of heaven, which the wisdom of God, the Word incarnate, by all his labours, sufferings, and sorrows for the space of thirty years purchased for us, at the price of His most precious death! We must truly be quite senseless, if we sell for the vile value of any earthly goods whatever, that which Christ our Lord deemed worthy of an infinite price. But not only Christ purchased paradise for us by His blood; all the saints likewise taught by Him, most joyfully gave up whatever they possessed whatever they were worth whatever they were, in order to purchase this same paradise. St. Paul exclaims, “I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.” (Epistle to the Romans, viii. 18.) But although the blood of Christ was not only a worthy price for paradise, but also (if I may so speak) more than worthy, being super-eminent and exceeding the dignity of the thing purchased; yet He wished to purchase us also, that He might honour and exalt us. Great is the glory of man, because he can obtain paradise, not only through the merits of Christ, but also by his own merits, which however derive their efficacy from Christ. He therefore that is unwilling to purchase paradise by doing good and avoiding evil, is expelled from the inheritance of Christ, as a wicked and slothful servant in the parable of the Talents. And the apostle seriously admonishes us where he says: “And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ: yet so, if we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him.” (Epistle to the Romans, viii. 17.) But lest we should perhaps complain that we have not a worthy price, we must know that nothing is required of us but what we already have. St. Augustine thus speaks: “The kingdom of God is worth as much as you possess:” he proves this by examples from the Holy Scriptures: “What so vile, what so earthly, as to break our bread for the hungry? The kingdom of heaven is worth as much; for it is written, Possess ye the kingdom of heaven, because I was hungry, and you gave me to eat. The widow purchased it by her mite: Peter purchased it by leaving his nets: Zaccheus by giving away the half of his patrimony.” With these words of St. Augustine, Venerable Bede also agrees when he says: “The kingdom of heaven requires nothing else but thyself: it is worth as much as thou art: give thyself, and thou shalt possess it.” Poor Lazarus had nothing to give but his patience in affliction, and he was carried by angels to Abraham’s bosom: the good thief had nothing in this world of his own, besides that voice by which he exclaimed, “Remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom” and immediately he heard, “This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”! truly great is the goodness of God!! ineffable happiness of man, who can so easily pass over every thing most precious, with the price of his Lord! Dost thou wish, O man! to obtain from God a paradise of every pleasure? Give thyself to Him, and thou wilt possess it. What meaneth “Give thyself?” Love God with thy whole heart: humble thyself under His powerful hand: praise Him at all times: be willing to do His will, whether He wish thee to be rich or poor illustrious or not illustrious in health or in sickness. His will is adorable, and just are all His judgments. Say then unto God, I am thine: do with me according to thy pleasure: I do not resist, I do not murmur, I obey thy commands. “My heart is ready, O Lord! my heart is ready. Not my will, but thine be done.” This holocaust is beyond all value in the sight of God, who standeth in no need of our goods. “Doth the Lord desire holocausts and victims,” saith Samuel,

“and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed?” This holocaust of obedience Christ daily offered to His Father, according to His own testimony: I do always the things that please Him.” And St. Paul, the true imitator of our Saviour, saith: “And therefore we labour, whether absent or present, to please Him.” This perfect renunciation of all things we possess, or desire to possess: this denying of one’s self in order to please God alone, is the “true price of paradise.” And he who gives himself in this way to gain paradise, does not lose himself; but most truly finds himself, according to our Lord: “He that findeth his life, shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for me, shall find it.” But since this truth is hidden from the wise and prudent of this world (who are fools before God;) and since the number of fools is infinite, therefore “Many are called, but few are chosen.”

## **Book V (The Happiness of the Saints in the Parables)**

### **Chapter I**

#### **On The Treasure Hidden In A Field**

HITHERTO I have spoken what God hath suggested to me in my meditations, concerning the happiness of the saints, under the names of those places wherein they who are truly happy and blessed dwell; that is, concerning the Kingdom of Heaven, the City of God, the House of the Lord, and the Paradise of delights. I will now add a few remarks on the same subject, under the name of those things by which our Lord hath described the happiness of the Saints, in the parables. But we must first be informed, that these words of our Lord, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like,” &c., which He continually makes use of in the Parables, do not always refer to the words immediately following: as if when our Lord saith, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant,” He meant that it was like to this man: the words relate to the whole narration, in which by a similitude the way to the kingdom of heaven is pointed out. And sometimes the happiness of this heavenly kingdom is described obscurely; sometimes clearly, and at other times it can in no way be comprehended. I will explain each part of this division. When our Lord, in St. Matthew, proposes the parable of the Sower, He describes the fruit which the preaching of the Gospel produces according to the various dispositions of the land, and this is called the “Mystery of the Kingdom of God:” but He mentions nothing of the happiness of the saints. But when in the same place, He adds the parable of the cockle, He alludes briefly to the happiness of the saints, when He saith, “The wheat gather ye into my barn, but bind the cockle into bundles to burn.” But when in the same chapter He speaks of a merchant seeking good pearls, and of one that found a treasure hidden in a field, He then clearly compares the kingdom of heaven to the pearl and the treasure. I find only six parables of this kind: the first being of the treasure hidden in a field; the second of the precious pearl; the third of the labourers in the vine yard; the fourth of the talents; the fifth of the supper; the sixth of the marriage-feast. To which I shall add two similitudes from the Apostle Paul; one concerning those that run for the prize, the other concerning those that contend in the race. Thus there will be eight “Considerations” in the blessed life of the saints, taken from the parables. The first parable, therefore, (which is found in St. Matthew,) makes “the kingdom of heaven like unto a treasure hidden in a field;” and it briefly teaches us how it may be acquired, in these words: “Which a man having found, hid it, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.” (St. Matthew, xiii. 44.) A treasure signifies an immense sum of gold, silver, and precious stones; and it ought to be so old, that no memory of it exists, and therefore not having a proper owner, it belongs of right to him that finds it. Now this “treasure” is the Divinity itself, which is hidden in the field of the humanity of Christ, according to the Explanations of St. Hilary, and of St. Jerome in his Commentary on the 13th chapter of St. Matthew; for in Christ, as the Apostle saith, “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” But the Divinity is the truest treasure of all good, and so ancient is it, that no memory remaineth of it, because it is eternal and before all ages: nor had this great treasure ever any owner, since He is himself the Lord of all things. But it is said to belong to those that find it, because He willingly gives it to them, who having sold all their goods, hasten to purchase it. But it is said to be “hidden” in the humanity of Christ, as if buried in a field; because although the Divinity be every where present, yet nowhere is it more so, than in the humanity of Christ, with which it is so united, as to make God and man but one person. Wherefore the Apostle saith: “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.” And although he was nowhere more than in the humanity of Christ, yet he appeared to be so hidden, that a “Light” was necessary to show God was in Christ. This Light was St. John the Baptist, who, as St. John the Apostle writes, “Was a burning and shining light,” and of whom David spoke in the person of God the



Father, "I have prepared a lamp for my anointed." (Psalm cxxxi. 17.) St. John made Christ manifest, and truly proved Him to be the only-Begotten Son of God, where he says: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him." (chap. i. 18.) And again: "He that cometh from heaven, is above all;" and a little lower, "The Father loveth the Son; and He hath given all things into his hands. He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting; but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (chap. iii. 35, 36.) But although this "burning and shining light" so clearly proved Christ to be the Son of God; yet the blind Jews could not, or would not, acknowledge the Divinity hidden in Christ; for, as the Apostle saith: "If they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory." He therefore, who, being divinely enlightened, findeth the treasure, "hides it, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." To hide the found treasure, is nothing more than under the veil of humility, to conceal the grace we have received; not to be elated by the light given to us from above, nor to boast of our divine consolations and revelations, lest vain glory corrupt our true glory. Wherefore, the Prophet Isaias was accustomed to say, "My secret to myself;" and the Apostle Paul, "If I must glory (it is not expedient indeed): but I will come to the visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago," &c. (2 Epist. to Corinth, xii.) The wonderful revelations he received when rapt into paradise, he passed over in silence for fourteen years; and forever would he have concealed them, had he not been obliged to reveal them. He plainly says, "it is not expedient" to make known such gifts; and under a feigned name he reveals them, to show how greatly it was against his inclination. Something like this happened to St. Francis, when the sacred "Stigmata" were miraculously impressed upon him, as St. Bonaventure relates in his life: "he was always accustomed to conceal his divine revelations, and to exclaim with Isaias, 'My secret to myself:' but yet when he perceived it could not be concealed, he related the whole case with great fear to his inquiring brethren." "With joy to sell all that we possess, and to purchase the field where the treasure was concealed," means that he who wisheth to enjoy God and Christ in the kingdom of heaven, must be entirely free from all affection to temporal things, and deliver himself and all that he possesseth, to the disposal of God; and this he should do, not in sadness or through necessity, but with great joy, for "God loveth a cheerful giver." But he that truly understandeth how great will be the treasure to enjoy Christ in His eternal country; to see with the eyes of the mind His divinity, and with those of the body His humanity, and to be made a partaker of all the good things of God and of Christ, and to possess these securely for ever, to him it will not appear a great sacrifice to despise all temporal goods, and life itself, for the love of God and of eternal happiness. Of this St. Ignatius the martyr is witness, who in his Epistle to the Romans, thus writes: "Let fire and the cross; let the companies of wild beasts; let breaking of bones and tearing of members; let the shattering in pieces of the whole body, and all the wicked torments of the devil come upon me: only let me enjoy Jesus Christ." He that could speak thus, would much less fear want, ignominy, exile, and the prison, in order that he might not lose that incomparable treasure. He therefore who truly desireth to possess the treasure of eternal life, should seriously consider again and again, whether he be prepared to despise all other goods; otherwise he will never obtain, either living or dead, that treasure without which he will be eternally poor and miserable. But whence is it, that so many anxiously seek after treasures of gold and silver; and not content with human diligence, employ the aid of evil spirits, to the great changer of their life and character? But why do so few seek after Thy treasure, O Lord, my God, who alone canst make men rich, and which can be found without labour, without cost, or danger? I find no other cause, except either the slender faith of Thy people, or their being too occupied in temporal things, which leave them not any time for considering Thy divine promises to men. Wherefore, dear Lord! increase our faith in Thy promises, and extinguish the thirst of acquiring temporal riches: thus we shall be enabled with greater ardour to seek after Thy treasure; and when found, with Thy especial assistance to purchase it, by selling all our goods.

## **Chapter II**

### **On The Precious Pearl**

THE next parable, on the precious pearl, is like to the preceding one: this also comes in St. Matthew. (chap. xiii.) In the former was a treasure, and in this is a pearl which may be considered like a treasure. In the former parable, it was necessary by the sale of all our goods, to purchase the hidden treasure; in this one likewise, the merchant sold all his goods, in order to buy it. Wherefore, it will only be necessary to explain in

what point this parable differs from the other. It differs in two things; for in the one a treasure is mentioned, in the other a pearl: and whilst the treasure is accidentally found, the pearl is diligently sought for by the merchant. In this parable, the heavenly beatitude, or Christ himself, is named a “pearl,” as the holy fathers St. Ambrose and St. Gregory Nazianzen teach. But that which in the preceding parable is called a “treasure,” in this is named a “pearl,” that we may understand how the divinity of Christ is indeed a treasure, but not divided into many parts of gold, silver, and precious stones, for it is one containing within itself the value of an infinite treasure. A pearl is one substance: but according to Pliny, it contains the essence of all precious things. Besides, a treasure consists in money alone, in immense sums; and it tends not to pleasure and beauty, but to utility only. Wherefore, lest from the preceding parable any one might suppose, that heavenly beatitude was only useful, and not beautiful nor glorious, our Lord added this other parable; in which He teacheth us, that the divinity of Christ and our happiness are like unto the precious pearl, which, beside the utility of it as a treasure, possesses also the beauty and splendour that adorn and delight us. I will also remark, that a pearl is a symbol of Christ, both as the Son of God, and as the Son of the Blessed Virgin. For as a pearl is produced by the light of the sun, and from the dew of heaven, as Pliny and others remark; so the Son of God also, as regards His divinity, is begotten of the Father of Light, the uncreated Sun; and therefore we say in the creed, “Light of Light, true God of true God.” Again, Christ according to His humanity, was born of the dew of heaven, that is, conceived of the Holy Ghost, not by man. In fine, a pearl is white, shining, solid, pure, light and round. Now, the humanity of Christ, and much more His divinity without any comparison, is white by innocence; shining by wisdom; solid by constancy; pure, because without spot; light, because meek and mild; and round, because perfect in every part. But the pearl is not found by “chance,” but is diligently sought after by the prudent merchant. And yet, this parable is not contrary to the preceding one, in which the treasure is said to be found by chance: both are true, but the persons are different: and therefore our Lord, in His divine Providence, joined this parable to the former one, lest we should think all men may find the treasure as it were by chance. Some there are, whom God, by a particular grace, suddenly enlightens, so that neither seeking, nor desiring, nor thinking, they arrive at the true faith and a most ardent charity, and therefore have a certain hope of obtaining eternal life. These find indeed, as regard themselves, the treasure by chance: but God pre-ordained them to this grace and to future glory, not by chance, but by His eternal Providence. Others there are whom God prevents by His grace, but not suddenly doth He show them the treasure, for He inspires them with a desire of seeking the truth: He makes them careful merchants, and then aids and directs them till they find the precious pearl. St. Paul and St. Augustine are examples in this respect. St. Paul sought not the true treasure which is Christ, but persecuted Him as a seducer, and the Christians as men deluded. And when he was on his journey, “breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,” our Lord appeared unto him; and at the same time that He blinded the eyes of his body, He illuminated those of the soul with such great light, that immediately he became a preacher, from being a persecutor. And although this was a fortunate event to him, yet what appeared chance, was in God Providence. For thus he speaks in his Epistle to the Galatians: “For you have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews religion; how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it. And I made progress in the Jews religion above many of my equals in my own nation, being more abundantly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. And when it pleased him who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, immediately I condescended not to flesh and blood.” (chap, i.) Wherefore, St. Paul was separated from the womb of his mother by Divine providence, that he might preach the Gospel of Christ; yet he did not seek this precious pearl himself, nor the treasure in the field; but the treasure was offered to him, and he became so much in love with it, that he spared no labours; yea, he endured every danger, and counted all things as dung, that he might gain Christ.” On the other hand, St. Augustine began from his youth to burn with a desire of finding the “precious pearl,” that is, true wisdom and eternal happiness. But when he fell into the sect of the Manichees, long and greatly did he labour, complaining to himself and disputing with others, that he might discover the truth of the Christian religion. But when he had discovered in that sect nothing but fabulous and lying accounts, he then almost despaired of finding the truth having spent many years in seeking it. Thus he speaks in his Confessions: “I had come into the depth of the sea, and despaired of finding truth.” But yet it pleased God that he should at length discover the “precious pearl:” and then without any delay, having sold all things that is, having rejected carnal desires by which he was strongly bound, and despising honours and

emoluments, to which he ardently aspired (as he himself tells us,) he gave himself up forever to the service of God alone. This therefore, is the reason, why in the first parable our Lord compared the kingdom of heaven to a treasure found without labour, and by chance; but in the other likened it to a pearl, sought after by a merchant, with great labour and diligence. It now only remains that the Christian soul, removing aside for a time all other occupations, should seriously consider with in herself, and before God, what is the nature of this business how useful, and how easy it is at the present time; but how difficult, or rather how impossible it will become, if worldly things occupy the attention. Truly, the children of this world would not omit the opportunity of purchasing a pearl which could be sold for many thousands of pounds. And shall the children of light be so imprudent as to refuse to purchase the “pearl” which will make them eternally rich and happy, and when they will neither be compelled to receive money in usury, nor to travel here and there to seek a purchaser, but it will be quite sufficient willingly to give what they possess, even if they had but two farthings. Wherefore, O Lord my God, let Thy light shine in my heart: grant that I may know the worth of Thy invaluable pearl, and at the same time the littleness of the price which is required of me to purchase it. Add, Lord, to thy mercies, that thou mayest not in vain show unto me so precious a pearl; and Thou who hast said, “Cast ye not your pearls before swine,” grant by Thy grace that if at any time I have been like unto swine, ignorant of the value of Thy pearl, and preferring the husks before it, I may now, enlightened and instructed by Thee, discover the pearl, and selling all my goods, purchase it with joy.

### **Chapter III**

#### **The Labourers In The Vineyard**

THE third parable follows, concerning the “penny-a-day,” promised by the house holder to those labouring in the vineyard. This parable comes in St. Matthew (c. xx.) and, at first sight, the reward of eternal life appears to be greatly lessened in it, since what before was likened to a treasure and a precious pearl, is now compared to “a penny a-day.” But this comparison is used that the reward may agree with the toil and labour: for the similitude would be inappropriate if a great treasure, or a pearl, or sceptre, or royal diadem were promised to those labouring in the vineyard but for one day. But it can easily be proved, that the “penny” does not consist in the value of a few brass coins, but that it is a heavenly coin, abundantly sufficient for food and raiment during a whole eternity. The reward ought to correspond with the labour; but the toil of those labouring in the vineyard of Christ must not be estimated by the work alone; (for we should all say with the Apostle: “I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us;”) but we must estimate the labour from the grace of God dwelling in the hearts of the just, which is a “fountain of living water” springing up into eternal life. And likewise from the virtue of charity, which is infused into us by the Holy Spirit that is given to us; but a crown of eternal life is prepared by God for them that love Him, as St. James writes. Likewise, from our union with Christ, who being the true vine, gives the greatest value to the fruit of living branches, and to the works of living members of His mystical body, of whom He is the head, and to whom He hath said: “Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.” In fine, will not our Lord say at the last day, when the reward will be given to those that labour in the vineyard: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat” &c. Thus, works of charity especially relate to the labour by which we toil in the vineyard of the Lord. Behold, then, how precious this “penny” is, which is called by our Lord Himself a kingdom! Nor without reason is it called so, since it represents Christ no less than the treasure or pearl does. For on the coin is impressed the image of a prince, and words are inscribed on it, and the figure is round. Now, Christ is “the image of the invisible God,” and the “Word” of the eternal Father, “having neither beginning of days nor end of life,” which is signified by the round figure. And in fine, “All things obey money,” as Solomon saith: now, Christ is the “Lord of all,” as St. Peter testifieth in the Acts of the Apostles. Wherefore, the “penny” given to those labouring in the vineyard is Christ, true God, and by Him eternal life, according to St. John in his First Epistle: “And He hath given us understanding, that we may know the true God, and may be in his true Son. This is the true God, and life eternal.” (chap. v.) But let us consider to whom this precious reward is given, which, when once possessed, we shall no more stand in need of any thing else. “Call the labourers, and pay them their hire,” saith the Lord. The reward, therefore, will be given to those who labour without intermission, without negligence. But it will not be given to those standing in the market-place, idle, or engaged in fowling, hunting, or gambling: the

reward will be bestowed on the deserving, not given gratis, and much less will it be given to the undeserving. When the Apostle saith, "The wages of sin is death; but the grace of God life everlasting," he therefore speaks, because, without the preventing grace of God, no one can do good so as to merit the reward of eternal life; but when grace is received, which is given "gratis," and not from our works, then the reward of good works will be eternal life. Thus St. Augustine speaks in his Epistle to Sixtus, a priest at Rome: "As death is the merited reward as it were of sin, so eternal life is the reward of virtue." But because the same reward is given to all, we must not suppose that, in the kingdom of heaven, all the rewards are alike. The coin signifies eternal life, whether God or Christ; now eternal life, that is, God and Christ, are common to all the saints. But, as the same sun is seen more clearly by the eagle than by other birds, and as the same fire gives more warmth to those that are near it than to those at a distance, so in eternal life one will see and enjoy God more clearly and sweetly than another; for, since there is a diversity of merit, so also will there be a diversity of reward. This may have been the reason why our Lord changed the order in the distribution of his payments, saying, "Call the labourers, and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first. So shall the last be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen." But these words relate to the grace of the New Testament, informing us that we are more happy than our fathers under the Old law, and therefore we should be grateful to God, and labour with more cheerfulness and diligence in his vineyard. The holy men that cultivated the vineyard of our Lord before the Ascension of Christ, such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and other patriarchs and prophets, who were called at the first, third, sixth, and ninth hour laboured not only for a long time because they lived longer, but, even after death, they were expecting their reward for many centuries, and some for many thousands of years. The apostles, martyrs, and other labourers, who came to cultivate the vineyard at the eleventh hour, that is, at the last hour, according to the interpretation of St. John, laboured but for a few years, and immediately after death, having entered the kingdom of heaven, they received their reward. How great is this grace, by which, if a Christian wish, after enduring but very short labours, he can immediately ascend to that place, for which the most holy patriarchs and prophets sighed for so long a period! Not without cause did these ancient saints murmur as it were (though this seems to signify admiration rather than complaint) when they said: "These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us that have borne the burden of the day and the heats." But our Lord answered for us: "Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine, and go thy way: I will also give to this last, even as to thee." This answer does not mean that men under the new law receive by grace, and not by their justice, a reward equal to those under the Old law; but that they received a more abundant grace, by which they have no less laboured in the vineyard for a short time than the others did during a long period, and therefore they have justly received an equal, and even greater reward. The Apostles certainly laboured for a short time: but they brought forth the greatest fruit in the vineyard of the Lord. When did the patriarchs or prophets, having abandoned all temporal things, ever traverse almost the whole earth, and bring so many kingdoms of the Gentiles to the true worship of God? When, in those ancient times, did so numerous an army of martyrs endure every torment and the most cruel deaths for the true faith? When, in the Old Testament, were so many choirs of holy virgins found, who followed the spotless Lamb, and vowed and gave unto God their soul and body? Where were then so many pastors and doctors, who, watching over their flocks, fought against the wolves, that is, against heretics and pagans, by their most learned writings? Where, in fine, was so great a number of hermits and monks, and other religious men, who, emulating the life of angels, spent the day and night in the praise of God alone and in prayer? These and other examples of the most eminent virtue belong to the New Testament and its blessings, on account of which our Lord justly concludes the parable in these words: "Thus the last shall be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few are chosen;" that is, many have been called to cultivate the vineyard in all ages of the world, but few have been chosen to the grace of the New Testament, by which they have produced great fruit, and have in a short time received the greatest rewards. But we must not suppose that all who have been called at the eleventh hour, will receive a reward; but those only who have laboured, with their whole strength and for a short period, in the vineyard of the Lord. For many there are, who, knowing that this hour is the last, and that time is short, say not as they ought to do: "Our life is short, therefore let us diligently labour that, in so short a period, we may bring forth much fruit." But they speak as the foolish do in the Book of Wisdom: "They have said, reasoning with themselves, but not right: The time of our life is short and tedious, and in the end of a man there is no remedy, and no man hath been known to have returned from hell. Come, therefore, let us

enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures as in youth. Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments; and let not the flower of the time pass by us. Let us crown our selves with roses, before they be withered: let no meadow escape our riot: let us every where leave tokens of joy, for this is our portion, and this our lot." (chap, ii.) Such is the language of those, who either know not God, or, acknowledging Him, deny Him by their works. And these are indeed so numerous, that to them may be referred the concluding words of the parable: "Many are called, but few are chosen." Many are called at the last hour, but few chosen, because few so labour as to be deserving of the reward. Woe therefore to us, who, being called at the last hour, spend the greater part of it in play and sleep, whilst we ought to be so careful of every moment as not to suffer one single portion of it to pass by unprofitably; for on these moments dependeth an eternity of happiness or of misery. And doubtless, in proportion as the grace granted to Christians under the New Law is greater, so much more grievously will they be punished who receive this grace in vain. And as the last shall be first in receiving the reward, because they laboured dili gently at the last hour; so also will the last be the first in receiving punishment, who shall neglect diligently to labour at the last hour.

#### **Chapter IV**

##### **On The Talents**

THE fourth parable is that in which our Lord thus speaks of the reward of beatitude: "Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (St. Matthew, chap. xxv. 21.) In these words two things are promised to faithful servants, the most ample power and the greatest joy: "I will place thee over many things;" and what these "many things" are, He explains in another place where it is said: "Blessed is that servant, whom, when his Lord shall come, he shall find so doing. Amen, I say to you, he shall place him over all his goods." (chap, xxiv. 46.) But what means being placed "over all the goods" of the Lord, except to receive power over all inferior things, and to be made a partaker of that sovereignty which God possesses over the whole universe? Who can comprehend the greatness of this power? What king or emperor upon earth can be compared with the least of the saints? But since man cannot possess such great power without having great care and trouble, therefore our Lord adds: "Enter into the joy of thy Lord." As if he wished to say, "As I make thee a partaker of the greatest power, so also do I make thee enjoy rest and pleasure, which no cares can destroy or dimmish." How great this "joy" will be, which is promised to the just in heaven, is quite inexplicable, nor shall we know it before we have experienced it. But yet, from the consideration of three words in the sentence, we may in some measure conceive how great will be the "joy." The first word is "enter;" for as it is not said, May the joy of thy Lord enter into thee, but enter thou into the joy of thy Lord, this is a proof that the joy will be greater than we can conceive. Wherefore, we shall enter into a great sea of divine and eternal joy, which will fill us within and without, and surround us on all sides. In this abundance of joy, what room will there be for sorrow? Another word is "into the joy," by which an indefinite joy concerning this or that good is not promised, but a joy absolutely pleasure itself, sweetness itself, delight itself. And doth not our whole soul dissolve as it were, being surrounded with such sweetness? But the third word, "of thy Lord," greatly increases this joy; for we shall enter, not into the joy which men or angels possess, but into that which God possesses, in whom are all infinite riches. Who can conceive what this joy of the Lord will be, but He who perfectly knoweth His own infinite goodness, and enjoys it in an infinite degree? And yet, Christian soul! what thou canst not now conceive, thou wilt experience, and taste, and eternally enjoy, if thou be a good and faithful servant. Let us now consider to whom these promises relate. They relate, without doubt, to those who have faithfully endeavoured to multiply the talents entrusted to them by God. The parable is drawn from a rich man, who went into a far country, and delivered his goods to his servants. And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one, commanding them all to multiply their talents by careful and prudent business. Various are the opinions of interpreters concerning the signification of these "talents;" Some understand by them "blessings" given gratis; others the Holy Scriptures; others the knowledge of external things acquired by the senses, is meant by the five talents; that the two talents signify understanding and action, and the one talent understanding alone: others, in fine, consider them to refer to natural gifts, such as genius and judgment, or to the spiritual ones of faith, hope, and charity. But all agree in this, that the multiplication of the talents consists in labouring diligently for our own salvation as well as that

of others. But another explanation occurs to me, not repugnant to the others, and which altogether appears to agree with what our Lord says concerning the talents. And first, the talents are called "the goods of the Lord;" "He delivered to them his goods;" then the servants are commanded to multiply the talents: "Lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents, behold I have gained other five over and above." Thirdly, it is said, "He gave to every one according to his proper ability." Lastly, the talent is taken away from the wicked and slothful servant. I therefore understand by the talents the souls of faithful and pious men, entrusted to the care and fidelity of bishops. These are truly the "goods" of the Lord, which are not given to us, but only committed to our care to be multiplied. Our Lord did not say to Peter, "Feed thy sheep," but "Feed my sheep." Other things are our own goods, although bestowed by God, as genius, judgment, the Holy Scriptures, blessings given gratis, &c. But faithful and pious souls He calls His "goods," His vineyard, His family, His spouse: for these He came into the world, for their redemption He poured out His blood, to gain these He sent His apostles, to whom He said, "I will make you to be fishers of men." Now faithful souls are multiplied, when bishops convert sinners by word and by example. This St. Peter did when, after our Saviour had entrusted to him one hundred and twenty Christians, saying, "Feed my sheep," he converted on the day of Pentecost, by his first sermon, three thousand people, then five thousand, and afterwards many thousands. And St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, when made bishop of Neocesarea, found only seventeen Christians: but he so multiplied them, that when he was on the point of death only seventeen infidels were left in so large a city: this circumstance St. Gregory of Nyssa relates, in his Life of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus. But these talents are given to each one "according to his proper ability," For God who knoweth the strength that is, the prudence, knowledge, charity, and strength of all men, commits souls to those only who He thinks are fit to bear such a burden. And, therefore, no one ought to undertake the care of souls, and especially accept of the episcopacy, unless called by Him who gives the talents, according to the ability of each one. But if otherwise, we cannot wonder that many fall under the burden: neither will it be an excuse before God to say, that their shoulders were not equal to such a burden: He will answer, Who forced thee to bear a burden beyond thy strength? Didst thou not wish, and ask, and endeavour to obtain it? Now therefore thou shalt be cast out into the exterior darkness. In fine, the talent given to the slothful servant is taken away from him. And if we say, that the talents are the souls of the faithful, this will perfectly agree with the parable. For he who received only one talent, that is, the care of his own soul alone, will lose it if he neglect to take pro per care of it: the devil will make it his property. And as the blessed possess the liberty of the sons of God, by which they freely remain where they wish, and do whatever they desire; so on the contrary also, the wicked lose all liberty, and their hands and feet being bound, they can neither walk where they wish, nor do what ever they desire; but they are compelled to remain where they wish not, being unable to do what they wish: this is, to lose their soul. Wherefore this interpretation, in which by the talents faithful souls are understood, is quite consistent with the parable. But how the other opinions can be reconciled, it is no easy matter to teach: they are not, however, false on this account, or to be rejected, because it is not necessary to accommodate every explanation to the parable, as St. Chrysostom wisely remarks. "We shall still continue our exposition, not rejecting, as we have said, the exposition of others. Wherefore, our Lord has committed his talents to three sorts of men; to those who are perfect, such as bishops ought to be, He has given five talents, that is, a great number of people to take care of; to others less perfect, such as priests generally are, He has given two talents, that is, the fewer souls which are contained in a parish: but to others more rude and infirm, such as the common people, to each of them He has given one, that is, the care of his own soul, these also ought, as far as they can, by words of private exhortation and good example, to lead others from sin to the path of virtue, and in this way multiply the talent entrusted to them. And what is said of bishops and priests, ought also to be understood as relating to princes and magistrates, and fathers of families. Thus writes St. Augustine: "Every head of a family should be by his name, the paternal love of his family. For the sake of Christ and of eternal life, he should admonish, instruct, exhort, and connect all his dependants: he should manifest love to them, and likewise exercise discipline: thus in his own house he will fulfill in a certain degree, the spiritual office of a bishop." In this sense, Constantino the Great used to say, that he was a bishop out of the church, because he was solicitous that the church should be protected and extended: but yet, he did not usurp the ecclesiastical office. But lest any one should suppose that one man alone, or one class of men only is comprehended in this parable, because he alone who received the one talent was punished, we must know, that our Lord wishes us to understand the dangers to which superiors are exposed. For as at the last

day he will reward those who do corporal works of mercy, and punish those who do them not; from which we know that greater will be the rewards of those who perform spiritual works of mercy, especially of the holy apostles and martyrs, and virgins of heroic virtue; and on the other hand, that greater will be the punishment of thieves, robbers, perjurers, and the sacrilegious, than those who give not alms to the poor: so also in this passage, because he who received the one talent which he might easily have multiplied, and yet did not, was most grievously punished, we must understand, that in proportion as bishops, pastors, and princes fail in this point, so will they be punished the more grievously, as the loss of many souls is greater than that of one. Let us hear what St. Augustine says on the danger of the ecclesiastical state: "Above all things, I beseech you piously and diligently to reflect, that in this life and especially at this time, nothing is more easy, pleasing, and acceptable to men, than the office of a bishop, priest, or deacon, if it be discharged in a careless or fawning manner; but before God nothing is more afflicting and offensive. Again, nothing in this life and especially at this time, is more difficult, laborious, and dangerous, than the office of a bishop, priest, or deacon; but before God nothing is more blessed, if it be fulfilled in the manner our great king commands." In the remaining part of this epistle he treats the subject in such a manner that I wish all ecclesiastics would attentively read it, and especially those who rashly aspire to the episcopacy or priesthood. For many when they have obtained what they asked for, and found what they sought after, either desert their flock, or being intent on other things, care little about attending to their flock and increasing the number of faithful and pious souls. On the night of the birth of our Saviour, the shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks: and if this was done for senseless sheep, by those who were a figure of the shepherds of the church, how much more ought it to be done by the shepherds of that flock, for which our Saviour when on earth, watched whole nights in prayer, not for Himself certainly, but for His sheep? And if the patriarch Jacob laboured so much for the flocks of his father-in-law, Laban, that he should say, "Day and night was I parched with heat, and with frost, and sleep departed from my eyes," what ought the shepherd of the flock of Christ to do, for which He shed His blood? And if the devil goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, is it not proper that the good shepherd should also go about, seeking whom to save? But it may be said, business connected with the Church often compels one to leave his flock. I admit this, when the business is important, and only a short time is spent in attending to it: otherwise great things are to be preferred before less, and the former should be performed by ourselves, the latter by others. For if business compels us to leave our much more important business, even dreadful wars, compel us not to leave our flock defenceless. The trumpet of St. Paul sounds forth: "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places." (Ephesians vi. 12.) And if the general be absent, who shall teach the soldiers to extinguish the fiery darts of the most wicked one? Our Lord said to Peter, and through him to all pastors, "Feed my sheep:" He was silent on other things, to teach us that this duty was the chief duty. And in the consecration of a bishop it is said, Go, preach unto the people committed to thee; but on temporal matters nothing is added, that the bishop may be admonished, not to make temporal things equal to spiritual, much less to prefer the first before the latter. In fine, in the fourth council of Carthage, bishops are seriously commanded not to undertake by themselves the care of widows, minors, and strangers, but to entrust them to their arch-priest or deacon; not to undertake the settling of wills, not to engage in law-suits for transitory things, not to be occupied with domestic cares; but to attend only to reading, prayer, and preaching. Wherefore this council, composed of two hundred and fourteen bishops, at which St. Augustine was also present, wished that bishops should commit all temporal matters to others, that they might more freely attend to the care and increase of their flock. As this parable therefore shows us, that eternal happiness is an object especially to be desired, since it contains the highest power united with the greatest delight; so also it proves, that the means of arriving at this happiness, consists in labouring assiduously for the salvation of our own soul, and in seeking and procuring that of others. And they who refuse to endure this labour, are deprived not only of this happiness and pleasure, but are condemned to eternal torments in hell, for thus our Lord speaks: "The unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Here we should particularly notice, that the servant who is so severely punished, is not said to be wicked or impious, but only "unprofitable." Thus although a bishop, or priest, a prince, or magistrate, or head of a family, were free from other crimes, yet should he be unprofitable, that is, neglectful of his salvation and that of his subjects, he will be cast out into "the exterior darkness" &c. But if the unprofitable servant shall suffer

this punishment, what will be done to the covetous, proud, luxurious servant, addicted to various vices? If the unprofitable servant be condemned, what an account will the impious prevaricator have to give to God, of the talents entrusted to him? Truly they that consider these things, will not seek after high places; and if they should be compelled to receive them, they will ever watch with fear and trembling, as having to give a most strict account of the souls entrusted to them.

## **Chapter V**

### **The Parable Of The Supper**

THE fifth parable, which is found in St. Luke, makes the happiness of the saints like to a great supper: and truly, not without reason. For in a nuptial or royal supper, everything is found that can delight the human sense, and exhibit the power, riches, and glory of this world. Wherefore, when king Assuerus ruled over a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, and wished to display the riches of the glory of his kingdom, and the greatness of his power, he found nothing more adapted for his purpose, than to prepare a most magnificent banquet. First, in a great banquet the eyes are delighted with the costly ornaments of the palace, with the numerous servants clad in beautiful and precious robes, with the gold and silver vases in which the viands are carried; the ears are delighted with various musical instruments, and the songs of many voices; the sense of smell is delighted with the odour of flowers, precious ointment, and scented water, &c.; the sense of taste with viands of every description, and precious wines from every land; in fine; the sense of touch is charmed by the softest and most elegant couches. Wherefore, as in a royal or nuptial banquet, nearly every corporal good is found that can be procured on earth, not without reason did our Lord, wishing to represent that "happiness" which in itself includes all good things, compare it to a great supper. Of this we read in the Apocalypse: "Blessed are they who are called to the nuptial supper of the Lamb." We may learn how great the supper of the Lord will be, from this circumstance, that the beauty of all the glorified bodies will be, the table on which the last service is placed. But so great is the sweetness of the last course, that when St. Peter once saw the body of the Lord resplendent as the sun, he said, "It is good for us to be here." And if these things be such, what will the supper itself be, which consists in the enjoyment of the divinity! In fine, all the good things of this world are nothing else than the rind and shell as it were, of the fruits of paradise. And if these parings be such, that men are enchanted with a love and desire for them, what will the fruit itself of paradise be! And if the fruit be such, what will the more solid and excellent food be! Truly it will be such, as always to be eaten without satiety, always to be desired. But we must not suppose, that the supper in heaven will be such as great princes give here on earth at their espousals; in heaven we shall be as the angels of God; "we shall neither marry, nor be married," nor shall we stand in need of food to support life. The supper therefore will consist of spiritual riches, and delights, and glory, and ornament, suitable to the state of the blessed. Riches and delights are mentioned in this life, because we see not things more excellent. But from these we may learn, that the spiritual supper will be so superior to our most splendid banquets, as heaven is to earth, and as God who will prepare it, is above all mortals in power and majesty. But some one will say, Why is the happiness of the saints compared to a supper, rather than to a dinner? The reason is this; because dinner is taken at mid-day and after it business is attended to till evening: but supper is taken towards evening, when all business is finished, and afterwards come rest and sleep. Wherefore in another parable which is found in St. Matthew, respecting the Incarnation of our Lord, dinner is introduced on account of the marriage which the king made for his son. The reason is, because our Lord's Incarnation, and the marriage with His spouse the Church, were commenced at mid-day, that is, a long while before the end of the world. After dinner, the redemption of the world, and the reconciliation of man with God, were celebrated. But when the bride shall be conducted to the palace of the bridegroom, and to the nuptial supper, all business will cease, and the sweetest sleep shall follow, that is, there will be eternal rest. This therefore is the reason, why the perfect glory of the blessed is compared to a supper, rather than to a dinner. But it will be useful to consider what we must do, in order to be admitted to the supper. This our Lord plainly teaches us in the parable, for He saith: "A certain man made a great supper and invited many And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him: I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it: I pray thee, hold me excused. And another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them: I pray thee hold me excused. And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." (St. Luke xiv.) How wonderful! Men are invited by God to the nuptial supper, and they refuse! What would they do if they were



called to military service, or to undertake a long and dangerous journey? Such is the blindness of men, that they can scarcely be induced to believe what they do not see. But what is that which mortals prefer before the nuptial supper, that is, before their greatest, eternal good? Our Lord mentions three impediments to salvation, which of their own nature are not evil; but yet, too great an affection for them hinders our eternal salvation. To buy a farm, to try oxen, to marry a wife, are not sinful: but to prefer them before the kingdom of heaven, is an incredible blindness. And yet, there are many Christians who pursue temporal goods with such ardour; and honours, dignity, and power, signified in the purchase of the farm; and riches, signified by the oxen; and pleasure, by the marriage; that they spend days and nights in seeking and enjoying them, entirely forgetting those eternal rewards which God hath promised to them that love Him. And many are not content with purchasing farms, trying yokes of oxen, and marrying; but in order as it were, more completely to neglect their salvation, they seize the farms of other men, steal their oxen, and support concubines: nor do they ever consider what a misfortune it will be, for such husks of swine to be deprived of the supper of the Lord. Truly, if our Lord had promised to us worms of the earth, not a supper of infinite sweetness, but crumbs falling from that table; even then it would be advantageous for us to despise all temporal goods, that so we might possess those crumbs. What madness therefore is it, to prefer insignificant and fleeting pleasures, before this divine supper, which abounds with every eternal delight, and in which we shall sit down with the holy angels, and even with the King of Angels in heaven! After our Lord hath shown us what are the impediments to our being present at the great supper, He also added the means by which they may be removed: He continues in the parable: "Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the feeble, and the blind and the lame." Because the rich were occupied in buying farms, and oxen, and marrying, they refused to attend the supper of their great Master. He therefore calls the poor, who have neither money to purchase farms and oxen, nor are able to support their wives, if they can find any. He calls the feeble, who cannot visit farms, nor buy oxen, nor marry wives: He calls the blind, who cannot see farms, nor manage oxen nor easily find a wife: He calls the lame, who cannot without the greatest difficulty, walk to a farm, manage oxen, or dance at a marriage. These therefore being free from every impediment by which the others are bound, and being admitted to the supper, ought justly to rejoice that God made them feeble, and blind, and lame. Many in this life complain, that they were born poor, or that they are often infirm, or blind, or lame, and they appear to be most unhappy thereat. But they know not what good things God hath prepared for them hereafter, on account of that very affliction which men call "misfortune:" but if they did know, they would certainly be glad and rejoice. No one ought to complain of the providence of God, but in all things give thanks to God the best of Fathers, who taketh care of us: to His will we should always resign ourselves. But although we must thus act, yet in this place those are properly considered poor, who are poor in spirit, not in riches; who are infirm, not in strength, but in confidence in themselves; who are blind, not in sight, but to craftiness; who are lame, not in their feet, but in their affections. I will explain my meaning more plainly. The poor who are admitted to the supper of the Lord, are those who hearing the words of the Apostle, do not wish to become rich: and if they possess money, do not hoard it up, nor spend it in vanity, but in doing what the Holy Spirit speaks by the mouth of David: "He hath distributed, he hath given to the poor; his justice remaineth for ever and ever." The infirm are those who confide not in their virtue, nor glory in their strength. The blind are they who truly believe what they do not see, especially as regards the rewards of the just, and the torments of the wicked. For he who is truly persuaded, that the rewards of the blessed are indeed most glorious and eternal, and the torments of the wicked most dreadful and everlasting, will not certainly be attached to the earth nor to its goods, but will fix his heart there, where alone is true joy. In fine, the lame are those and they can justly aspire to the supper of the Lord whose right foot is much longer than the left; that is, whose love of God and affection for eternal goods, are greater than the love of themselves and of temporal things, signified by the left foot. But let us consider the sentence of our great Master, against those who blindly and most foolishly despised His Supper: "But I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper." Our Lord knew well, that they who had been invited, and who through love for present goods despised the future ones as useless, would hunger after that supper with an incredible ardour when the senses of the flesh were extinct in death, and all earthly things had been removed: for the prophet David saith: "They shall return at evening, and shall suffer hunger like dogs; and shall go round about the city." (Psalm Iviii.) At evening, when the day of this present life is finished, they will return and repent, but their sorrow will be useless, and they will be

hungry like mad dogs, and go round about the City of God, seeking to obtain, if they can, a few crumbs from that supper. But the sentence of the Lord is fixed “None of them shall taste of my supper”! if thou didst know, my soul, the meaning of these words, “None of them shall taste of my supper;” if thou couldst comprehend how great will be the hunger of those miserable men, and of what sweet food they will for ever be deprived! And what would they then give, if they could but taste of that for which they so ardently long? But nought will they obtain, even if the whole world were at their disposal, and they were willing to renounce it. Since then this is the case, let us be converted whilst we have time, whilst it is our day, whilst penance is profitable. Let us now hunger after that most delicious supper, not as mad and unclean dogs, who think of nothing but of their food, but as men endowed with reason; let us hunger after the food of eternal life, and the bread of angels, even that hidden manna “which no one knoweth but he that receiveth,” and which God Himself enjoyeth from eternity unto eternity. And let us so live in this our exile, as not to be in love with it, but to sigh after our true country. When we shall have arrived there, we shall not be obliged to “go round about” the city, but we shall enter the open gate; and being admitted to the supper of the Lord, we shall be filled with the bread of life and the water of wisdom, a most sweet and pleasant food.

## **Chapter VI**

### **The Parable Of The Wise And Foolish Virgins**

THE last parable is that which makes the happiness of the saints like to a royal marriage, to which ten virgins were invited, five being wise and five foolish. We shall first briefly explain who is the bride, and who the bridegroom; then how excellent a good is signified by the word “marriage;” and lastly, what is required for our attaining so great an object. First then, no one can doubt but that Christ is the bridegroom. This is expressed by St. John the Baptist, where speaking of Christ he says: “He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth with joy because of the bride groom’s voice.” Our Lord Himself also intimates the same in the parable of the king who made a marriage for his son. The Apostle confirms the same, in his Epistle to the Corinthians: “I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” So also does St. John in the Apocalypse: “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give glory to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath prepared herself:” and again, “Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” It is equally certain, that the Church is the bride. This the Apostle clearly asserts in his Epistle to the Ephesians: “Therefore as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it, that he might sanctify it For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church.” (chap. v. 24, &c.) But although the Church be the spouse of Christ, and the faithful be called the Sons of the Church, because by baptism she has brought them forth, as it were, for Christ; yet, because the Church is nothing more than an assembly of the faithful, therefore all pious souls are individual spouses, as the Church is an universal spouse. For not falsely doth the Church sing of holy virgins, “Come, spouse of Christ, and receive the crown which the Lord hath prepared for thee for ever.” But although holy virgins are, in a special manner, called spouses of Christ, because they have rejected a carnal marriage, in order to be spiritually married to Christ alone; yet other Christian souls are also “spouses” of Christ, for they are espoused to Him by faith, united to Him by charity, and aspire to a consummation of the spiritual marriage in the kingdom of heaven. But if we could sufficiently conceive what a good it will be for the human soul to be united with marriage in Christ, we should find nothing more honourable, nothing more useful, nothing more sweet, either in this world or in the next. Great is the glory, advantage, and sweetness in serving the King of kings; greater to be numbered amongst his friends and domestics; the greatest to be called a son of God and the brother of Christ. But to become the “spouse” of God, a partner of His throne, of His crown, and of all His titles, appears to me to be more than the greatest, if I may so speak. This it is of which our Lord speaks in Isaias concerning spiritual eunuchs: “I will give to them in my house, and within my walls, a name better than sons and daughters;” that is, I will give to them the name of a spouse. Who can comprehend, how noble, how honourable and sweet it will be, not only to behold God and to converse with him, but to become one spirit with Him, and to be transformed into Him? These are the words of the Apostle: “He who is joined to a harlot, is made one body But he who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit:” and again, “But we all beholding the glory of the Lord with

open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Epist. to the Corinth, iii. 18.) How great will be the pleasure, when being united to God and irradiated by the brightness of His countenance, we shall be transformed into His brightness, and made most like unto Him! “We shall be like to him,” saith St. John, “because we shall see him as he is.” We shall be like to Him, not only as images created according to His likeness; but like in glory, in beatitude, in happiness. St. Paul the apostle, in that wonderful rapture he had when he was caught up into paradise, heard secret words which it was not in the power of man to utter; and yet he was so absorbed in God, that he knew not whether he was in the body or out of the body. How great, therefore, will be that most happy union of the soul with God, when absorbed and immersed in the sea of His sweetness, she will be “one spirit” with God! So great will be the joy, that as St. Bernard says, “All other joy compared with it will be sorrow all sweetness will be bitterness; all honour, dishonour; whatever else, in fine, can delight us, will be troublesome.” But since this union of the most beautiful spouse with a blessed soul be ineffable, let us rather inquire from the present parable what are the conditions on which we can be admitted to this most happy marriage? These we shall learn from the qualities of the wise virgins, for they alone entered into the nuptials of the heavenly spouse. The qualities or conditions are five; first, that we be virgins; secondly, that we be prudent; thirdly, that we have our lamp lighted; fourthly, that we have oil in it; and lastly, that we watch, and by watching diligently await the coming of the bridegroom. As far as regards the first condition, the spouses of Christ ought all to be virgins, not necessarily in the flesh, but in faith and morals, as St. Augustine justly explains in his Sermon on these words of the Apostle: “I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” By a chaste virgin he understands the whole Church of Corinth, in which it is evident that all were not virgins in the flesh, since the Apostle in his First Epistle admonishes married people of their duties. In this parable, therefore, all those are virgins who are not corrupted in their faith and morals, and who, declining from evil, do not defile their souls. But, because it is not sufficient for perfect justice to decline from evil, but also to do good, therefore the second condition is added, that we be prudent, not foolish. Nor must we think it sufficient, if we injure no one, nor kill any one, nor steal, nor bear false testimony; but we must consider our last end, and adopt the means to attain it. And because this end is eternal life, and the means the merit of good works, therefore the third condition is added, that our lamp be lighted, which signifies good works. This St. Augustine teaches in the above-mentioned place, and our Lord Himself, where He says: “So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” But since good works spring from charity as from a root, and cannot be preserved unless nourished by the same charity, as a lamp necessarily goes out if oil be wanting; therefore, a fourth condition is required, that the prudent virgin always have oil in her lamp. St. Augustine teaches that charity is signified by oil, because, as oil is superior to all liquids, so charity is superior to all virtues, according to the Apostle: “And I show unto you yet a more excellent way;” and again: “And now there remain faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greater of these is charity.” If, therefore, we should prefer anything in our heart, or make it equal with charity, immediately she departs; for she ought either to have . the first place, and reign in our heart, or she will leave us. And because oil is a most subtile liquid, which easily ascends above other things, the power of the oil of charity is so great in ascending, that if it be poured out on the soul of a public sinner, immediately it draws that soul up, and of a sinner makes a saint, of a carnal man makes a spiritual man. I will even venture to say, that if this oil were poured on the souls of the damned, or could drop on the devils themselves, we should immediately behold them all ascend on high. And if, on the contrary, this oil were to desert the souls of the holy angels, apostles, martyrs, and virgins, they would quickly descend down into hell. Behold, then, the excellence of this oil, and how justly those virgins are called foolish who have not this oil. But there is also another reason why charity is signified by oil, because it maketh things that are hard and rough soft and pliable. This oil renders the yoke sweet, of which our Lord speaks, “My yoke is sweet.” What made the yoke of obedience sweet to the Apostles, of going into the whole world and preaching the Gospel to every creature, but the oil of charity? What made the yoke of patience sweet to the martyrs, to endure so great and unheard of torments, but the oil of charity? What made the yoke of poverty, of chastity, and of obedience, so sweet to many thousands of religious men and women, but the yoke of charity? No thing is more sweet to a lover than to show his love for his Beloved by doing or enduring great and difficult things for his sake. There now remaineth a fifth condition, which is the most important of all, being especially commanded by our Lord in this parable, viz., watchfulness: “Watch ye therefore, because you know not the

clay nor the hour.” And in order that these words may be deeply impressed upon the hearts of the faithful, He constantly repeats “Watch;” and again, in St. Matthew: “Wherefore, be you also ready, because at what hour you know not the Son of man will come;” and in St. Mark: “Watch ye therefore, for you know not when the Lord of the house cometh: at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning; lest coming on a sudden, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch.” And in St. Luke: “Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching.” And by the apostle Peter He speaketh: “Be prudent therefore, and watch in prayer;” and by St. Paul also: “Therefore let us not sleep, as others do; but let us watch and be sober;” and by St. John: “Behold I come as a thief: blessed is he that watcheth.” All these passages signify, that the coming of the Lord to judgment, whether at the end of the world, or at each one’s death in particular, is uncertain; and therefore God requires of us that we should always watch, waiting in expectation of His coming, that so He may find us prepared, and may not be compelled to exclude us, with the foolish virgins, from the marriage-feast. Wherefore, to “sleep” meaneth nothing more than to be careless of death and judgment, or so to live as never to care or think of so important a matter, on which dependeth eternal salvation. But corporal sleep is not forbidden the faithful, otherwise it would not be said in the parable, “They all slumbered and slept:” only forgetfulness and want of consideration are forbidden. Every Christian therefore, to whom the salvation of his soul is dear, ought every day, morning and evening, shutting the door of his heart against all other business, attentively consider that this day or night may possibly be his last: and therefore he should seriously watch, lest he be found unprepared. All men dislike the thought of death, and gladly turn their mind to the consideration of something else; but the sick man dislikes the bitter physic, and yet through love of life he willingly takes it. So also it behooves a prudent man to esteem the loss of his soul more than the fear of death; and therefore, again and again, he should think that there is no hour in which he may not die. For when this thought deeply descends into the bottom of our heart, it will soon change the whole and from, carnal make him spiritual, from a sinner a saint: so that he will no more fear, but love the coming of the Lord. Not without reason, then, does our Lord so frequently exhort us to watch, nor Ecclesiasticus to admonish us: “In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.” (chap. vii.) For who, remembering that he is hastening to judgment, and that quickly he will have to stand before the divine tribunal, can dare to sin before his Judge? We are all hastening every moment to judgment; but yet, so great is human blindness, that even on the journey itself we offend our Judge, and most justly provoke His anger against us. Who is there, when condemned to suffer death, and being led out to execution, would laugh and joke, and speak of his former crimes, or of attaining dignities, and gaining money by traffic, unless he were mad? Now, we are all certainly condemned to death, nor can any son of Adam escape the sentence: our mortal life is nothing but a journey towards death: but yet, on this journey, which cannot be a long one, how do the generality of Christians act? What do they think of, what do they speak of, what are they busy about, but honours, riches, pleasures, and even wickedness, as if they would never die! And what is this but to sleep over serious things, and to watch over foolish things? Justly, then, doth our Lord cry out: “Watch, watch;” blessed are those who, excited by these words, reflect where they are, and whither they are going, and so endeavour to have their lamp burning and filled with oil, that when the cry shall be heard, “Behold the spouse cometh, go ye forth to meet him.” They may with joy run forth to meet the Bridegroom, and enter with him into the marriage. But woe to them who, forgetful of this, and deaf to the voice of God, shall be found sleeping with their lamps extinguished: being excluded from the delights of the marriage-feast, they will in vain exclaim, “Lord, Lord, open unto us.”

## **Chapter VII**

### **On The Prize**

HAVING explained a few of the parables which are to be found in the gospel, there now only remains the explanation of those names which are used in St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians; these are the “Prize” and “Crown.” Of the former the Apostle thus speaks: “Know you not that they that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize; so run that you may obtain.” (chap. ix. 24.) The same Apostle in his Epistle to the Corinthians teaches, that by the “prize” eternal happiness is signified; he says, “But one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press towards the mark, to the prize of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus.” (chap. iii. 13, 14.) Wherefore the prize is in heaven, and to it the Almighty invites us by His Son Christ Jesus. The prize which the kings of this

world offer us, is no very valuable object; but our “heavenly prize” is in every way most glorious, whether we consider God who promises it, a Prince of infinite power and glory, of whom the prophet sings, “Thy magnificence is elevated above the heavens;” or whether we remember, that the combatants are His children and the brothers of Christ, whom the King their Father, would not certainly invite to run in the race, unless the prize was so great that it might justly be desired, even by the sons of God. But it is more important for us to know, what is the meaning of running for the prize, and by what art we may so run as to be able to gain it. To run for the prize means nothing more, than faithfully to observe all the commandments of the Lord our God. That the “race” signifies the law of the Lord, David testifies where he says, “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord I have run the way of thy commandments, when thou didst enlarge my heart.” (Psalm cxviii.) Wherefore, they who run “the way” of the commandments, run in the race for the prize. Now the art of so running that we may gain the prize, includes three points: First, we must not go out of the course, for they who do so, however quickly they may run, will never reach the goal, because they run not for the prize, but at an uncertainty. This the Apostle tells us he carefully avoided; “I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty.” What is it to run out of the race, except not to run in the way of the commandments, and to turn aside to the right or to the left? For example: the law says, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;” he that does this, runs in the race and for the prize. But he who loves his neighbour with so great a love as not to fear offending God for his sake, he turns aside to the right and runs out of the race; he runs not for the prize, but at an uncertainty. And the more benefits he bestows upon that individual who becomes an “idol” to him, the more does he wander, and the farther does he depart from the prize. But on the other hand, he that loves not his neighbour as much as he ought to do, and when he sees him in want, and “shuts up his bowels from him,” as St. John expresses it, then he turns aside to the left, and neither runs in the race nor for the prize, even though he should appear to perform many good works. We must, therefore, love our neighbours as ourselves, neither more nor less; that is, we ought so to act towards our neighbour, as to do to him, what we should wish to be done to ourselves. This is the explanation given by Christ our teacher, who gave the commandment. What I have said concerning the love of our neighbour, which is the positive command, may also be said of the negative commands. For he that steals, declines to the right of the commandment, “Thou shalt not steal,” and thus turns aside from the course; he however that steals not, but squanders away his own substance, declines to the left, and in like manner turns aside from the course. But the just man, who alone remains in the course, would no less depart from it if he stole, than if he squandered his goods, because liberality, which relates to justice, has two opposite vices, avarice and prodigality. The conclusion is, that he who wishes to remain in the race, must be entirely free from mortal sin. The second condition is, that he who wishes to gain the prize, must run quickly and with perseverance. He runs quickly, who observes the “commandments” with a fervent will, according to the words of the Psalmist, “Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, in His commands he delights exceedingly;” and the Apostle says, “Fervent in spirit serving the Lord.” He runs with perseverance, who is never fatigued nor ceases running, knowing what is written, “He only that perseveres to the end shall be saved.” But to run quickly, not to be fatigued, nor to interrupt our course these seem almost contrary to one another, or at least very difficult; for he that runs quickly, is soon fatigued and ceases running; whilst he that wishes not to be tired, goes slowly and perseveres on his course at a moderate pace. These remarks are true, and therefore few arrive at the prize. It is, however, absolutely necessary for him that wishes to gain the prize, to run both quickly and with perseverance, because the time is short and the way is long. But if Christians wish to imitate those that run for a corruptible crown, they can easily run quickly and without intermission for “an incorruptible crown.” What do those do who contend for the corruptible prize? They carry nothing burthensome, they cast off their garments, that so they may run free and unencumbered. This, therefore, should Christians do; they should cast off the burthens of worldly cares, and the garments of carnal desires, or at least every inordinate affection to earthly goods. And when this is done, they must glory not in their own strength, but place all their hope in God; then they will not be fatigued by running quickly in the race. This is not my doctrine, but that of Isaias and St. Paul; the former thus speaks: “But they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” (chap. xl. 31.) And the Apostle writes: “This therefore I say brethren, the time is short; it remaineth, that they also who have wives, be as if they had none. And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not. And they that used this world, as if they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth

away.” (1 Epist. to Corinth, vii. 29.) By these words, the Apostle does not forbid Christians from marrying, nor from weeping in adversity, nor rejoicing in prosperity, nor purchasing necessary things, or using the goods of this world; but he admonishes us, in all these things to use that moderation, and to be as little attached to them, as if they did not belong to us. The devout Melania is an example for us in this respect; she was a noble Roman lady, of whom St. Jerome thus speaks in his Epitaph on Blosilla: “St.. Melania is a pattern of true nobility among the Christians of our time; for whilst the corpse of her husband was still warm, not yet being buried, she lost her two sons together. I am about to relate a thing almost incredible, but Christ is my witness it is not false. Who would not suppose that she would tear her hair, her garments, and strike her breast, like one mad? but not one tear did she shed, she stood unmoved, and throwing herself at the feet of Christ, as if she actually embraced Him, she smiled saying, “More freely shall I now serve thee, Lord, because thou hast delivered me from so great a burthen.” Thus St. Jerome, who by this example shows us who those are that have wives, and children, and other goods of this world, as if they had them not, in order that they might run for the prize more freely. But we have a still more moving example in holy Job, who in one day lost all his sons and daughters, as well as his whole substance; and thus he lay full of ulcers on a dunghill, who a little while before, was esteemed most happy among all the Orientals. And yet, as if all these misfortunes did not concern him, he uttered these words so full of wisdom: “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done; blessed be the name of the Lord.” (chap. i. 21.) In fine, St. Peter and the other Apostles who first followed Christ in running for the prize, that they might teach us what is required in the same race, thus speak: “Behold we have left all things, and have followed thee; what therefore shall we have?” our Lord approving what they had done, thus answers, clearly promising them the prize: “Amen, I say to you, that you who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the seat of his majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (St. Matthew xix. 28.) The third condition is, that he who wishes for the prize, must be united with Christ. For as the Apostle saith, “All run indeed, but one receiveth the prize;” now “this one” is doubtless our Saviour, who “hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way;” and of Him St. John speaks: “And no man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven.” (chap. iii. 13.) But Christ hath not ascended alone, but with all those who were “one” with Him; that is, who were true and living members of His body, of which He is the head. Wherefore all who run labour in vain, even though they should give all their goods to the poor, and deliver their body to be burned, unless they are joined to Christ by faith and charity, and become one with Him, as He says in St. John, “That they may be one, as we also are one, I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.” (chap. xvii. 22.) But there is also another way of being united with Christ, which in a wonderful manner helps us to run quickly and with perseverance. Christ as man ran for the prize, although as God He is the “prize” itself; He is “true God and life eternal,” as St. John testifies; and this also our Saviour himself tells us, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” As the truth, He guides us; as the way, He leads us after Him; as the life, He brings us to Himself. In order to obtain the prize then, nothing is more useful than, for us never to turn away our eyes from Him, but to exclaim with the prophet: “My eyes are ever towards the Lord.” He that keeps the eye of his soul united with his prize, neither sees nor hears what his neighbours say or do, whether they smile or mock at him; he heeds not the opinions of others, whether they praise or dispraise him; but he says with David, “And I became as a man that heareth not;” and with the Apostle, “But to me it is a very small thing to be judged by you, or by man’s day.” The nearer he approaches the prize, the more does he see the greatness of it; and this greatness gives him additional strength, and induces him though wearied and fainting, not to interrupt his course. Wherefore, whoever aspires after this heavenly prize, must not turn aside from the course of the divine commands, he must run quickly and with perseverance; and being joined to Christ with true faith and charity, he must never turn away his eyes from the prize.

### **Chapter VIII On The Crown**

THE last name given to eternal happiness, is “a crown of justice,” of which St. Paul thus speaks in the same chapter that he mentions the prize: “And every one that striveth for the mastery, refraineth himself from all things: and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible one.” (1 Corinth,

ix. 25.) In this passage by the word “mastery” is not meant the race in the course, but rather a contest or battle; and that this comparison is different from the former, the words following prove: “I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty: I so fight, not as one beating the air:” and so also do these words addressed to Timothy: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept my faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice.” (2 to Timothy, iv. 7.) In both these passages St. Paul distinguishes the course from the fight; and in one of the comparisons he uses the word “prize,” and in the other the word crown,” which names are evidently distinct. Now by the “crown” is meant eternal happiness, and this is called by St. Paul “a crown of justice,” because it is given as a reward for good works. In St. James’s Epistle it is called “the crown of life,” because it comprehends life eternal. By St. Peter it is named “a never-fading crown of glory.” In fine, the prophet Isaias says: “In that day the Lord of hosts shall be a crown of glory, and a garland of joy to the residue of his people.”(xxviii. 5.) From this passage we may conclude, that the crown of which St. Paul speaks, and which is given to the victorious in battle, is a prize most high and noble, since God Himself will be the crown encircling and adorning the heads of the residue of His people that is, of those few among His people who shall gain the victory, by having been valiant in war. And as “many are called, but few are chosen” a truth evident from the testimony of Scripture; so the crown of the Saints will be the more glorious in the day of judgment, because so few will obtain it. Let us now consider what is the nature of the contest we are engaged in, and what we must do to gain the victory. The contest indeed is most terrible, and the struggle most dangerous, especially if it be compared with that contest in which men on earth engage, for a corruptible crown. The Apostle alludes to the games of the circus, which took place in the presence of the people. But the combatants fought with men like themselves, and used the same weapons, and were equally exposed to the danger of popular derision or ignominy. But Christians have to fight with enemies whom they see not, and by whom they themselves are observed: they are most numerous, strong, and crafty; their arms are not alike; the contest is carried on before God and his angels, and for a crown of life eternal, and at the risk of incurring everlasting death: in fine, the contest is not easy or imaginary, but real and most dreadful. Our antagonists are demons, whom the Scripture at one time names lions and at another, dragons and basilisks. And we also have traitors in our own houses that is, in our bodies, the concupiscence of the flesh which wars against the spirit, as St. Peter saith: “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, to refrain yourselves from carnal desires which war against the soul.” (1 Epist. xi.) Moreover, what is still most miserable, this contest takes place at the same time that we run in the race: and therefore the Apostle joins these two together that we may know how, whilst running for the prize, we are impeded throughout our whole course by these enemies, and hence that we must both run and fight at the same time.! if Christians did but consider these truths and know their true condition, truly they would not so easily squander away their time in temporal trifles, in jokes, plays, and banquets; in accumulating money and seeking after honours, as if their chief happiness consisted in these things: but they would listen to the Apostle crying out to them: “Therefore take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of justice. And in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, (which is the word of God.) By all prayer and supplication praying at all times in the Spirit.” &c. (Epist. to Ephesians, vi. 13, &c.)! What an exhortation is this; how full of terror how earnest! especially if we ponder on the words, “By all prayer and supplication, praying at all times.” And yet, how many of us so act as if we neither had to run in the race, nor fight in the battle! And now, I ask, what is to be done, that we prove victorious in such a dreadful contest? St. Paul tells us when he says: “And every one that striveth for the mastery, refraineth himself from all things: and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible one.” The meaning of these words is this: those combatants, that they might obtain a corruptible crown, abstain from all those things which might weaken their body, and render them unfit to engage in such a ludicrous contest, viz., from excessive eating and drinking, from carnal delights, from domestic cares, and from all other things, however pleasant or useful, which might retard or prevent the victory. We therefore who labour for “an incorruptible crown,” ought much more to refrain from every thing that may weaken our soul, and render it unfit for that terrible fight, and for running the race in the course. And what things weaken the soul? Excessive eating, indulgence in sleep, too frequent visiting, hunting, boisterous laughter and singing; not reading good books, not praying, not meditating, not bewailing

our sins, nor bringing forth worthy fruits of penance. From these ought we to abstain, if we wish our soul to be strong and fit to run in the race and fight in battle. "Take heed," saith our Saviour, "lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly." But on the other hand, the food of the soul which makes it strong, is fasting; the refreshment of the soul is prayer; the sleep of the soul holy contemplation; the purgation from noxious humours an humble confession of our sins; the joy and delight of the soul tears of compunction; and the triumph of the soul, the crucifixion of the flesh and the concupiscence thereof. "They that are Christ's," saith St. Paul, "have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences:" and again, "I so fight, not as one beating the air: but I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become a cast-away." Behold the true explanation of these words, "Every one that striveth for the mastery, refraineth himself from all things." I so fight, he says, in the contest that I abstain from all those things, which can please the body and which wage war against me; these are my carnal concupiscences. But by chastising my body by fastings and watchings, and other mortifications of the flesh, I reduce it into subjection that it may not rebel against the soul, nor serve my enemies. But who does not fear and tremble with his whole heart, when he remembers these words: "Lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become a cast-away?" If this vessel of election called by God Himself to be an Apostle, and who was rapt up into the third heaven, feared lest he should become a "cast-away," if he did not chastise his body and bring it into subjection, who amongst us will not also fear to be condemned, unless we crucify our flesh with its vices and concupiscences? This example of the Apostle ought truly to admonish all men, that they must not venture to hope for the crown, unless they be seriously converted; unless they bring forth worthy fruits of penance, and endeavour by every possible means to bring the flesh into subjection to the spirit. But how deplorable are the blindness and foolishness of the many, who mind not these things, nor abstain from what is unlawful, but live so securely as if they had received a most assured promise from God, that their salvation was certain! But this is only another proof, as we have already said, that few are saved, and "that many are called but few are chosen." Unto Thee then do I fly, good Lord! I am thy servant, and the son of thy hand maid: I desire with my whole soul that heavenly prize and most glorious crown, which Thou hast prepared and promised to those that love Thee. I know the greatness of the contest and the length of the course; I know my weakness, and I confess before Thee who searchest the reins and the heart, that I possess little or no virtue: neither am I ignorant of the great power and cruel hatred of my invisible enemies, who lament that we so insignificant are destined for that immense glory, from which they fell by pride. Enlighten my eyes that I never sleep in death; increase my strength, lest I faint on the way: may Thy grace defend me, lest at any time my enemy say: ] have prevailed against him. But what I ask for myself, I ask for all my Brethren also; and especially for those placed by Thee in high dignities, whether ecclesiastical or secular: their danger is so much the -greater, as their functions are more excellent. But the more glorious will be their crown, if they perform their duties properly; and on the other hand, the more terrible the punishment if through their fault those souls perish, whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy precious blood.

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## **1616 (French Publication)**

**St. Francis de Sales (1567 – 1622), Saint and Doctor of the Church**

**Now This Light Of Glory Will Regulate Sight & Contemplation Of Blessed, & According As We Have Less Or More Of That Holy Brightness, We Shall See Less Or More Clearly & Blessedly That Godhead Wherein We Shall Attain To Various Degrees Of Glory**

**Treatise on the Love of God**

### **Chapter XII**

**The Eternal Union Of The Blessed Spirits With God In The Vision Of The Eternal Birth Of The Son Of God**

O HOLY Spirit, Eternal Love of the Father and of the Son, be merciful to my weakness!



We shall see God then, Face to face, beholding the Divine Essence in a very real Presence, with all Its Infinite Beauty, Power, Goodness, Wisdom and all other perfections. We shall realise the infinite knowledge of His Own Beauty which the Father has from all eternity, and which He expressed by the Word, Which, comprehending and representing all the Father's Perfection, could be no other than One with Him in the Godhead, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal. Thus we behold the external and glorious generation of the Divine Word, by which He was eternally born in the Image and Likeness of God, a real and natural Likeness, without external accidents, inasmuch as all that is of God is substance, while all is interior, not exterior. Of one Substance with the Father; the Godhead, Glory, and Majesty all one, the Persons distinct. For how could God the Son be the true Image of His Father, if He did not possess the Father's Perfections? and how could He possess Infinite Perfections without being Himself Infinitely Perfect? and how could He be Infinitely Perfect, unless He were God? and how could He be God, and not be One with the Father?

So, then, God the Son is One with the Father in Substance, not confounding the Persons; He is of the Father, not made nor created, but begotten. The Father spoke, and the Word was. "The dew of Thy Birth is of the womb of the morning."

When S. Bernard was a boy at Chatillon-sur-Seine, he was waiting one Christmas Eve in church for the service to begin, and falling asleep, he beheld a very clear vision of the Birth of the Son of God, "coming forth as a Bridegroom out of His chamber;" and so mightily was he filled with joy and spiritual delight thereat, that henceforth, albeit continually sucking up the honey of Divine consolation, the Christmas solemnities had ever a very special attraction and meaning for him. Now if a mere mystical vision of the temporal Birth of the Son of God could so greatly kindle the heart of a child, what will it be when our hearts, enlightened by Heaven's Own Light, shall see the Eternal Generation of the Son of God, Light of light, Very God of Very God! Surely the soul so favoured will be drawn with incomprehensible attraction to that wondrous Grace, and will abide for ever inseparably united to It.

### **Chapter XIII**

#### **The Union Of The Blessed With God Through The Visilon Of The Holy Ghost's Production**

HOW could it be but that the Father, beholding the Infinite Beauty and Excellence of His Essence in His Son, and the Son beholding the Father as the Source whence that Beauty rises, must be united in an Infinite Love? But this Love is not like the love of creatures, either mutual or to their Creator. The love of creatures comes from manifold emotions; that of the Godhead is the influence of one Breath of Father and Son, and from that inspiration the Holy Spirit proceeds. David says,"Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down unto the beard, even unto Aaron's beard, and went down to the skirts of his clothing." And if human love is so beautiful and glorious a sight, what will it be to behold the mutual Love of the Blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?

S. Gregory Nazianzen says that the great love and friendship between him and S. Basil was renowned all over Greece; and Tertullian records that even the heathen marvelled at the more than brotherly love of the early Christians. How marvellous, how glorious, then, the Eternal Love of the Godhead! Surely we shall be lost in the depths of wonder and marvel in the contemplation of that most glorious beatific vision!

### **Chapter XIV**

#### **The Holy Light Of Glory Will Serve For The Union Of The Blessed Spirits With God**

THUS our human intelligence will behold the j Divine Essence without intermediary or veil, but not without some strengthening light enabling it to perceive and face so great and dazzling a Glory. The bat has sight suited for the dim twilight, but could not bear the brightness of noonday; and so we can perceive God's natural truths, and even to some extent His Supernatural Graces, by the light of faith, but we cannot attain to the vision of His Very Self. Therefore in His Eternal Love and Wisdom He prepares our mental capacity,

strengthens and renders it fit to receive a vision so far exceeding our natural capabilities. The sun only reaches our eyes when veiled by its rays; but the illustration fails, in that whereas the natural sunshine dazzles our feeble sight, the sunshine of God's Glory will so strengthen and perfect our spiritual gaze that we shall be able to fix it upon Him in all His brightness without being blinded thereby.

Just as God has given us the light of reason whereby to see Him as the Author of nature, and the light of faith by which to know Him as the Source of grace, so He will give us the light of glory by which to behold Him as the Fountain of eternal life and blessing; a Fountain Which we shall not then behold afar off as now by faith, but Which we shall see by the light of glory, and into Which we shall be plunged for ever. Pliny says that those divers who seek pearls fill their mouths with oil before plunging into the sea, so that by means of its spread they may see more clearly beneath the waters. And when the happy soul plunges into the ocean of God's Essence, He will shed the sacred light of glory around, so that it shall see clearly amid "the light which no man can approach unto," and thus by the brightness of His Own Glory we shall be enabled to scan the brightness of the Godhead."With Thee is the well of Life, and in Thy Light we shall see light."

## **Chapter XV**

### **There Will Be Different Degrees in the Union of The Blessed with God**

NOW this light of glory will regulate the sight and contemplation of the blessed, and according as we have less or more of that holy brightness, we shall see less or more clearly and blessedly that Godhead wherein we shall attain to various degrees of glory. All souls in Paradise will behold all that Godhead, but none will behold It in Its entirety. For God, being One and Indivisible, cannot be seen, unless it be all seen; but inasmuch as God is Infinite, limitless, boundless in His Perfections, no capacity save His Own, which is Infinite, can entirely comprehend or perceive that Goodness which is Infinitely Essential and Essentially Infinite.

The visible sun, which is finite and limited, is all seen by us who gaze; but it is never totally seen by one or all. So with all our senses. Of many who listen to sweet music, while all hear, some do not hear so well, or with so great delight as others, according as their perceptions are more or less delicate. The manna of old was sweet to all who ate it, yet diversely so according to their appetites, while none fully tasted it, because it had as many flavours as there were tastes among the Israelites. So in Heaven we shall see and enjoy the Godhead fully, but none will see or enjoy Him wholly, for His Infinity will ever possess infinitely more excellence than we have capacity to appreciate; and we shall find joy and rest in knowing that however fully we satiate every longing of our heart in the enjoyment of His Boundless Goodness, still there must ever remain an infinitude of perfection which none save God Himself can ever know or comprehend.

Thus the fish enjoy the vast space of ocean, yet none ever see all shores, or shoot through all waters. Birds have the vast atmosphere at will, but none has ever winged its way through all space. So our souls will swim in the boundless ocean, or fly through the measureless space of the Divine Presence in infinite bliss, but their capacity for bliss must ever remain immeasurably below the Infinitude of that Presence.

They will marvel alike at the Infinite Beauty they behold, and at the depths thereof which are beyond their ken. How marvellous is that they see! yet how far more marvellous that which they see not! Yet they are absolutely satisfied with that which they behold, and content therewith, the knowledge of that which they cannot attain to being a mere subject of further admiration and adoration to them as they fall down and worship the Infinite Beauty of their Infinite God.

These eyes, that, dazzled now and weak,  
At glancing motes in sunshine wink,  
Shall see the King's full Glory break,  
Nor from the blissful vision shrink.—John Keble.

**1617; 1832 (Boston)**

**William Fulke (1538-1589) English Puritan divine**

**As Stars Differ In Glory, Not According To Their Merits, But According To God's Gift In Their Creation, So Bodies Of Saints Shall Differ In Glory, Not According To Their Merits, But According To God's Free Gift In Resurrection**

**Confutation of the Rhemish Testament**

(1617; re-published in Boston in 1832)

Cited in Alister McGrath

An impudent slander, we take not away fasting, nor derogate any thing from the due estimation stand before God's judgment, his words are plain. Eiliorl. ad. virg. "Every one ia justified by the Lord, not of works, but of faith, for as the event of destiny is not in our power, but such as chance has brought, so the grace of our Lord is given, not as of merit of hire, but as of his will, whence have I so great merit, when mercy is 'my crown.'" And in the same Epistle ad Vercaleiaes, he saith, that unto God's judgment, "Only faith shall accompany you. Justice also shall be youi companion, if faith go before you." These places are sufficient to declare, that he speaketh of the fruiis of faith and repentance, not of the proper causes of justification and salvation, when he saith, "we wush away our sins by fasting," &c.

As the stars differ in glory, not according to their merits, but according to God's gift in their creation: so the bodies of Saints shall differ in glory, not according to their merits, but according to God's free gift in the resurrection.

**1622**

**Jacob Boehme (1575 – 1624), German Christian Mystic**

**Of Heaven and Hell**

**A Dialogue Between a Scholar and His Master**

Shewing Whither the blessed and the damned Souls go when they depart from their Bodies; and How Heaven and Hell are in Man; Where the Angels and Devils dwell in this World's Time; How far Heaven and Hell are asunder; and What and Whence the Angels and Human Souls are; What the Body of Man is; and Why the Soul is capable of receiving Good and Evil; Of the Destruction of the World; Of Man's Body in and after the Resurrection; Where Heaven and Hell shall be; Of the Last Judgement; and Why the Strife in the Creature must be.

THE Scholar asked his Master, saying;  
Whither goeth the Soul when the Body dieth?

His master answered him;  
There is no Necessity for it to go any whither.

What not! said the inquisitive Junius:  
Must not the Soul leave the Body at Death, and go either to Heaven or Hell?

It needs no going forth, replied the venerable Theophorus:  
Only the outward mortal Life with the Body shall separate themselves from the Soul. The Soul hath Heaven and Hell within itself before, according as it is written, The Kingdom of God cometh not with Observation, neither shall they say, Lo here! or Lo there! For behold the Kingdom of God is within you. And which soever of the two, that is, either Heaven or Hell is manifested in it, in that the Soul standeth.

Here Junius said to his Master;

This is hard to understand. Doth it not enter into Heaven or Hell, as a Man entereth into a House; or as one goeth through a Hole or Casement, into an unknown Place; so goeth it not into another World?

The Master spake and said;

No. There is verily no such Kind of entering in; forasmuch as Heaven and Hell are everywhere, being universally co-extended.

How is that possible? said the Scholar.

What, can Heaven and Hell be here present, where we are now sitting? And if one of them might, can you make me believe that both should ever be here together?

Then spoke the Master in this Manner:

I have said that Heaven is everywhere present; and it is true. For God is in Heaven; and God is everywhere. I have said also, that Hell must be in like Manner everywhere; and that is also true. For the wicked One, who is the Devil, is in Hell; and the whole World, as the Apostle hath taught us, lieth in the wicked One, or the evil One; which is as much as to say, not only that the Devil is in the World, but also that the World is in the Devil; and if in the Devil, then in Hell too, because he is there. So Hell therefore is everywhere, as well as Heaven; which is the Thing that was to be proved.

The Scholar, startled hereat, said,

Pray make me to understand this.

To whom the Master said:

Understand then what Heaven is: It is but the Turning in of the Will into the Love of God. Wheresoever thou findest God manifesting himself in Love, there thou findest Heaven, without travelling for it so much as one Foot. And by this understand also what Hell is, and where it is. I say unto thee, it is but the Turning in of the Will into the Wrath of God. Wheresoever the Anger of God doth more or less manifest itself, there certainly is more or less of Hell, in whatsoever Place it be. So that it is but the Turning in of thy Will either into his Love, or into his Anger; and thou art accordingly either in Heaven or in Hell. Mark it well. And this now cometh to pass in this present Life, whereof St. Paul speaking, saith, Our Conversation is in Heaven. And the Lord Christ saith also; My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give them the Eternal Life; and none shall pluck them out of my Hand. Observe, he saith not, I will give them — after this Life is ended; but I give them, that is, now — in the Time of this Life. And what else is this Gift of Christ to his Followers but an Eternity of Life; which for certain, can be nowhere but in Heaven. And also if Christ be certainly in Heaven, and they who follow him in the Regeneration are in his Hand, then are they where he is, and so cannot be out of Heaven: Yea, moreover none shall be able to pluck them out of Heaven, because it is he who holdeth them there, and they are in his Hand which nothing can resist. All therefore doth consist in the Turning in, or Entering of the Will into Heaven, by hearing the Voice of Christ, and both knowing him and following him. And so on the contrary it is also. Understandest thou this?

His Scholar said to him;

I think, in part, I do. But how cometh this entering of the Will into Heaven to pass?

The Master answered him;

This then I will endeavour to satisfy thee in; but thou must be very attentive to what I shall say unto thee. Know then, my Son, that when the Ground of the Will yieldeth itself up to God, then it sinketh out of its own Self, and out of and beyond all Ground and Place that is or can be imagined, into a certain unknown Deep,

where God only is manifest, and where he only worketh and willeth. And then it becometh nothing to itself, as to its own working and willing; and so God worketh and willeth in it. And God dwells in this resigned Will; by which the Soul is sanctified, and so fitted to come into Divine Rest. Now in this Case when the Body breaketh, the Soul is thoroughly penetrated all over with the Divine Love, and so thoroughly illuminated with the Divine Light, even as a glowing hot Iron is by the Fire, by which being penetrated throughout, it loseth its Darkness and becometh bright and shining. Now this is the Hand of Christ, where God's Love thoroughly inhabiteth the Soul, and is in it a shining Light, and a new glorious Life. And then the Soul is in Heaven, and is a Temple of the Holy Ghost, and is itself the very Heaven of God, wherein he dwelleth. Lo, this is the entering of the Will into Heaven and how it cometh to pass.

Be pleased, Sir, to proceed, said the Scholar,  
and let me know how it fareth on the other Side.

The Master said:

The godly Soul, you see, is in the Hand of Christ, that is in Heaven, as he himself hath told us; and in what Manner this cometh to be so, you have also heard. But the ungodly Soul is not willing in this Lifetime to come into the Divine Resignation of its Will, or to enter into the Will of God; but goeth on still in its own Lust and Desire, in Vanity and Falsehood, and so entereth into the Will of the Devil. It receiveth thereupon into itself nothing but Wickedness; nothing but Lying, Pride, Covetousness, Envy, and Wrath; and thereinto it giveth up its Will and whole Desire. This is the Vanity of the Will; and this same Vanity or vain Shadow must also in like Manner be manifested in the Soul, which hath yielded up itself to be its Servant; and must work therein, even as the Love of God worketh in the regenerated Will, and penetrates it all over, as Fire doth Iron.

And it is not possible for this Soul to come into the Rest of God; because God's Anger is manifested in it, and worketh in it. Now when the Body is parted from this Soul, then beginneth the Eternal Melancholy and Despair; because it now findeth that it is become altogether Vanity, even a Vanity most vexatious to itself, and a distracting Fury, and a self-tormenting Abomination. Now it perceiveth itself disappointed of every Thing which it had before fancied, and blind, and naked, and wounded, and hungry, and thirsty; without the least Prospect of being ever relieved, or Obtaining so much as one Drop of Water of Eternal Life. And it feeleth itself to be a mere Devil to itself, and to be its own Vile Executioner and Tormentor; and is affrighted at its own ugly dark Form, appearing as a most hideous and monstrous Worm, and fain would flee from itself, if it could, but it cannot, being fast bound with the Chains of the Dark Nature, whereinto it had sunk itself when in the Flesh. And so not having learned nor accustomed itself to sink down into the Divine Grace, and being also strongly possessed with the Idea of God, as an Angry and Jealous God, the poor Soul is both afraid and ashamed to bring its Will into God, by which Deliverance might possibly come to it.

The Soul is afraid to do it, as Fearing to be consumed by so doing, under the Apprehension of the Deity as a mere devouring Fire. The Soul is also ashamed to do it, as being confounded at its own Nakedness and Monstrosity; and therefore would, if it were possible, hide itself from the Majesty of God, and cover its abominable Form from his most holy Eye, though by casting itself still deeper into the Darkness, wherefore then it will not enter into God; nay, it cannot enter with its false Will; yea, though it should strive to enter, yet it cannot enter into the Love, because of the Will which hath reigned in it. For such a Soul is thereby captivated in the Wrath; yea, is itself but mere Wrath, having by its false Desire, which it had awakened in itself, comprehended and shut up itself therewith, and so transformed itself into the Nature and Property thereof.

And since also the Light of God doth not shine in it, nor the Love of God incline it, the Soul is moreover a great Darkness, and is withal an anxious Fire-Source, carrying about a Hell within itself, and not being able to discern the least Glimpse of the Light of God, or to feel the least Spark of his love. Thus it dwelleth in itself as in Hell, and needeth no entering into Hell at all, or being carried thither; for in what Place soever it may be, so long as it is in itself, it is in the Hell. And though it should travel far, and cast itself many hundred

thousand Leagues from its present Place, to be out of Hell; yet still would it remain in the Hellish Source and Darkness.

If this be so, how then cometh it, said the Scholar to Theophorus, that a Heavenly Soul doth not in the Time of this Life perfectly perceive the Heavenly Light and Joy; and the Soul which is without God in the World, doth not also here feel Hell, as well as hereafter? Why should they not both be perceived and felt as well in this Life as in the next, seeing that both of them are in Man, and one of them (as you have shown) worketh in every Man?

To whom Theophorus presently returneth this Answer:

The Kingdom of Heaven is in the Saints operative and manifestative of itself by Faith. They who carry God within them, and live by his Spirit, find the Kingdom of God in their Faith; and they feel the Love of God in their Faith, by which the Will hath given up itself into God, and is made Godlike. In a Word, all is transacted within them by Faith, which is to them the Evidence of the Eternal Invisibles, and a great Manifestation in their Spirit of this Divine Kingdom, which is within them. But their natural Life is nevertheless encompassed with Flesh and Blood; and this Standing in a Contrariety thereto, and being placed through the Fall in the Principle of God's Anger, and surrounded about with the World, which by no Means can be reconciled to Faith, these faithful Souls cannot but be very much exposed to Attacks from this World, wherein they are Sojourners; neither can they be insensible of their being thus compassed about with Flesh and Blood, and with this World's vain Lust, which ceaseth not continually to penetrate the outward mortal Life, and to tempt them in manifold Ways, even as it did Christ. Whence the World on one side, and Devil on the other, not without the Curse of God's Anger in Flesh and Blood, do thoroughly penetrate and sift the Life; whereby it cometh to pass that the Soul is often in Anxiety when these three are all set upon it together, and when Hell thus assaulteth the Life, and would manifest itself in the Soul. But the Soul hereupon sinketh down into the Hope of the Grace of God, and standeth like a beautiful Rose in the Midst of Thorns, until the Kingdom of this World shall fall from it in the Death of the Body; And then the Soul first becometh truly manifest in the Love of God, and in his Kingdom, which is the Kingdom of Love; having henceforth nothing more to hinder it. But during this Life she must walk with Christ in this World; and then Christ delivereth her out of her own Hell, by penetrating her with his Love throughout, and standing by her in Hell, and even changing her Hell into Heaven.

But in that thou moreover sayest, why do not the Souls which are without God feel Hell in this World? I answer; They bear it about with them in their wicked Consciences, but they know it not; because the World hath put out their Eyes, and its deadly Cup hath cast them likewise into a Sleep, a most fatal Sleep. Notwithstanding which it must be owned that the Wicked do frequently feel Hell within them during the Time of this mortal Life, though they may not apprehend that it is Hell, because of the earthly Vanity which cleaveth unto them from without, and the sensible Pleasures and Amusements wherewith they are intoxicated. And moreover it is to be noted, that the outward Life in every such one hath yet the Light of the outward Nature, which ruleth in that Life; and so the Pain of Hell cannot, so long as that hath Rule, be revealed.

But when the Body dieth or breaketh away, so as the Soul cannot any longer enjoy such temporal Pleasure and Delight, nor the Light of this outward World, which is wholly thereupon extinguished as to it; then the Soul stands in a eternal Hunger and Thirst after such Vanities as it was here in Love withal, but yet can reach nothing but that false Will, which it had impressed in itself while in the Body; and wherein it had abounded to its great Loss. And now whereas it had too much of its Will in this Life, and yet was not contented therewith, it hath after this Separation by Death, as little of it; which createth in it an everlasting Thirst after that which it can henceforth never more obtain, and causeth it to be in a perpetual anxious Lust after Vanity, according to its former Impression, and in a continual Rage of Hunger after those Sorts of Wickedness and Lewdness whereinto it was immersed, while being in the Flesh.

Fain would it do more Evil still, but that it hath not either wherein or wherewith to effect the Same, left to it;

and therefore it doth perform this only in itself. All is now internally transacted, as if it were outward; and so the Ungodly Soul is tormented by those Furies which are in his own Mind, and begotten upon himself by himself. For he is verily become his own Devil and Tormentor; and that by which he sinned here, when the Shadow of this World is passed away, abideth still with him in the Impression, and is made his Prison and his Hell. But this hellish Hunger and Thirst cannot be fully manifested in the Soul, till the Body which ministered to the Soul what it lusted after, and with which the Soul was so bewitched, as to dote thereupon, and pursue all its Cravings, be stripped off from it.

I perceive then, said Junius to his Master,  
that the Soul having played the Wanton with the Body in all Voluptuousness, and having served the Lusts thereof during this Life, retaineth still the very same Inclinations and Affections which it had before; so that when it hath no more Opportunity nor Capacity to satisfy them; and when it finds it cannot, then Hell will open in that Soul, which before had been shut up, by Means of the outward Life in the Body, and of the Light of this World. Do I rightly understand?

Theophorus said,  
It is very rightly understood by you. Go on.

On the other Hand, the Scholar went on,  
I clearly perceive by what I have heard, that Heaven cannot but be in a loving Soul, which is possessed of God, and hath subdued thereby the Body to the Obedience of the Spirit in all Things, and perfectly immersed itself into the Will and Love of God. And when the Body dieth, and this Soul is hence redeemed from the Earth, it is now evident to me, that the Life of God which was hidden in it, will display itself gloriously, and Heaven will consequently be then manifested. But notwithstanding, if there be not also a local Heaven besides, and a local Hell, I am still at a loss where to place no small Part of the Creation, if not the greatest. For where must all the intellectual Inhabitants abide?

In their own Principle, answered the Master,  
whether it be of Light or of Darkness. For every created intellectual Being remaineth in its Deeds and Essences, in its Wonders and Properties, in its Life and Image; and therein it beholdeth and feeleth God, as who is everywhere, whether it be in the Love, or in the Wrath.

If it be in the Love of God, then beholdeth it God accordingly, and feeleth him as he is Love. But if it hath captivated itself in the Wrath of God, then it cannot behold God otherwise than in the wrathful Nature, nor perceive him otherwise than as an incensed and vindictive Spirit. All Places are alike to it, if it be in God's Love; and if it be not there, every Place is Hell alike. What Place can bound a Thought? Or what needeth any understanding Spirit to be kept here or there, in order to its Happiness or Misery? Verily, wheresoever it is, it is in the abyssal World, where there is neither End nor Limit. And whither, I pray, should it go? Since though it should go a thousand Miles off, or a thousand Times ten thousand Miles, and this ten thousand Times over, beyond the Bounds of the Universe, and into the imaginary Spaces above the Stars, yet it were then still in the very same Point from whence it went out. For God is the Place of Spirit; if it may be lawful to attribute to him such a Name, to which the Body hath a Relation: And in God there is no Limit; both near and afar off is here all one; and be it in his Love, or be it in his Anger, the abyssal Will of the Spirit is altogether unconfined. It is swift as Thought, passing through all Things; it is magical, and nothing corporeal or from without can let or obstruct it; it dwelleth in its Wonders, and they are its House.

Thus it is with every Intellectual, whether of the Order of Angels, or of human Souls; and you need not fear but there will be Room enough for them all, be they ever so many; and such also as shall best suit them, even according to their Election and Determination; and which may thence very well be called his own Place.

At which, said the Scholar;  
I remember, indeed, that it is written concerning the great Traitor, that he went after Death to his own Place.

The Master here said:

The same is true of every Soul, when it departeth this mortal Life: And it is true in like Manner of every Angel, or Spirit whatsoever; which is necessarily determined by its own Choice. As God is everywhere, so also the Angels are everywhere; but each one in its own Principle, and in its own Property, or (if you had rather) in its own Place. The same Essence of God, which is as a Place to Spirits, is confessed to be everywhere; but the Appropriation, or Participation thereof is different to every one, according as each hath attracted magically in the Earnestness of the Will. The same Divine Essence which is with the Angels of God above, is with us also below: And the same Divine Nature which is with us, is likewise with them; but after different Manners and in different Degrees, communicated and participated.

And what I have said here of the Divine, is no less to be considered by you in the Participation of the Diabolical Essence and Nature, which is the Power of Darkness, as to the manifold Modes, Degrees, and Appropriations thereof in the false Will. In this World there is Strife between them: but when this World hath reached in any one the Limit, then the Principle catcheth that which is its own: and so the Soul receiveth Companions accordingly, that is, either Angels or Devils.

To whom the Scholar said again:

Heaven and Hell then being in us at Strife in the Time of this Life, and God himself being also thus near unto us, where can Angels and Devils dwell?

And the Master answered him thus:

Where thou dost not dwell as to thy Self-hood, and to thine own Will, there the holy Angels dwell with thee, and everywhere all over round about thee. Remember this well. On the contrary, where thou dwellest as to thyself, in Self-seeking, and Self-will, there to be sure the Devils will be with thee, and will take up their abode with thee, and dwell all over thee, and round about thee everywhere. Which God in his Mercy prevent.

I understand not this, said the Scholar,

so perfectly well as I could wish. Be pleased to make it a little more clear to me.

The Master then spoke:

Mark well what I am going to say. Where the Will of God in any Thing willeth, there is God manifested; and in this very manifestation of God, the Angels do dwell. But where God in any Creature willeth not with the Will of that Creature, there God is not manifested to it, neither can he be; but dwelleth in himself, without the Co-operation and Subjection of the Creature to him in Humility. There God is an unmanifested God to the Creature. So the Angels dwell not with such a one; for wherever they dwell, there is the Glory of God; and they make his Glory. What then dwelleth in such a Creature as this? God dwelleth not therein; the Angels dwell not therein; God willeth not therein, the Angels also will not therein. The case is evidently this, in that Soul or Creature its own Will is without God's Will, and there the Devil dwelleth; and with him all whatever is without God, and without Christ. This is the Truth; lay it to Heart.

The Scholar:

It is possible I may ask several impertinent Questions; but I beseech you, good Sir, to have Patience with me, and to pity my Ignorance, if I ask what may appear to you perhaps ridiculous, or may not seem fit for me to expect an Answer to. For I have several Questions still to propound to you; but I am ashamed of my own Thoughts in this Matter.

The Master:

Be plain with me, and propose whatever is upon your Mind; yea, be not ashamed even to appear ridiculous, so that by Querying you may but become wiser.

The Scholar thanked his Master for this Liberty, and said:



How far then are Heaven and Hell asunder?

To whom he answered thus:

As far as Day and Night; or as far as Something and Nothing. They are in one another, and yet they are at the greatest Distance one from the other. Nay, the one of them is as nothing to the other; and yet notwithstanding they cause Joy and Grief to one another. Heaven is throughout the whole World, and it is also without the World over all, even everywhere that is, or that can be but so much as imagined. It filleth all; It is within all; It is without all; It encompasseth all; without Division, without Place; working by a Divine Manifestation, and flowing forth universally, but not going in the least out of itself. For it worketh only in itself, and is revealed, being one, and undivided in all. It appeareth only through the Manifestation of God; and never but in itself only: And in that Being which cometh into it, or in that wherein it is manifested, there also it is that God is manifested. Because Heaven is nothing else but a Manifestation or Revelation of the Eternal One, wherein all the Working and Willing is in quiet Love.

So in like Manner Hell also is through the whole World, and dwelleth and worketh but in itself, and in that wherein the Foundation of Hell is manifested, namely, in Self-hood, and in the False Will. The visible World hath both in it; and there is no Place but what Heaven and Hell may be found or revealed in it. Now Man as to his temporal Life, is only of the visible World; and therefore during the Time of this Life, he seeth not the spiritual World. For the outward World with its Substance, is a Cover to the spiritual World, even as the Body is to the Soul. But when the outward Man dieth, then the spiritual World, as to the Soul, which hath now its Covering taken away, is manifested either in the Eternal Light with the holy Angels, or in the Eternal Darkness, with the Devils.

The Scholar further queried:

What is an Angel, or a human Soul, that they can be thus manifested either in God's Love or Anger, either in Light or Darkness?

To whom Theophorus answered:

They come from one and the self-same Original: They are little Branches of the Divine Wisdom, of the Divine Will, sprung from the Divine Word, and made Objects of the Divine Love. They are out of the Ground of Eternity, whence Light and Darkness do spring: Darkness, which consisteth in the receiving of Self-Desire; and Light, which consisteth in Willing the same Thing with God. For in the conformity of the Will with God's Will, is Heaven; and wheresoever there is this Willing with God, there the Love of God is undoubtedly in the Working, and his Light will not fail to manifest itself. But in the Self-Attraction of the Soul's Desire, or in the Reception of Self into the Willing of any Spirit, angelical or human, the Will of God worketh difficultly, and is to that Soul or Spirit nought but Darkness; out of which, notwithstanding, the Light may be manifested. And this Darkness is the Hell of that Spirit wherein it is. For Heaven and Hell are nought else but a Manifestation of the Divine Will either in Light or Darkness, according to the Properties of the Spiritual World. [From the Beginning of the Supersensual Life to the Reference of this Note, was found among the Papers of the late Editor, in the Hand Writing of the truly pious and learned Mr. Law, who has so enlarged and elucidated it (as the Reader may see by comparing it with the Original) that probably he intended it for a separate Publication.]

**What the Body of Man is; and why the Soul is capable of receiving Good and Evil.**

**Scholar.**

WHAT then is the Body of Man?

**Master.**

It is the visible World; an Image and Quintessence, or Compound of all that the World is; and the visible World is a Manifestation of the inward spiritual World, come out of the eternal Light, and out of the eternal Darkness, out of the spiritual Compaction or Connection; and it is also an Image or Figure of Eternity,

whereby Eternity hath made itself visible; where Self-Will and Resigned Will, viz. Evil and Good, work one with the other. Such a Substance is the outward Man. For God created Man of the outward World, and breathed into him the inward spiritual World for a Soul and intelligent Life; and therefore in the Things of the outward World, Man can receive and work Evil and Good.

**Of the Destruction of the World; of Man's Body, in and after the Resurrection; where Heaven and Hell shall be; of the the Last Judgement; and wherefore the Strife in the Creature must be.**

**Scholar.**

WHAT shall be after this World, when all Things perish and come to an End?

**Master.**

The material Substance only ceaseth; viz. the four Elements, the Sun, Moon, and Stars. And then the inward World will be wholly visible and manifest. But whatsoever hath been wrought by the Will or Spirit of a Man in this World's Time, whether evil or good shall not cease. I say, every such Work shall there separate itself in a spiritual Manner, either into the Eternal Light, or into the Eternal Darkness. For that which is born from each Man's Will shall penetrateth and passeth again into that which is like itself. And there the Darkness is called Hell, and is an eternal forgetting of all Good; and the Light is called the Kingdom of God, and is an eternal Joy in and to the Saints, who continually glorify and praise God, for having delivered them from the Torment of Evil.

The Last Judgement is but a Kindling of the Fire both of God's Love and Anger, in which the Matter of every Substance perisheth, and each Fire shall attract into itself its own, that is, the Substance that is like itself: Thus God's Fire of Love will draw into it whatsoever is born in the Love of God, or Love-Principle, in which also it shall burn after the Manner of Love, and yield itself into that Substance. But the Torment will draw into itself what is wrought in the Anger of God in Darkness, and consume the false Substance; and then there will remain only the painful aching Will in its own proper Nature, Image and Figure.

**Scholar.**

With what Matter and Form shall the human Body rise?

**Master.**

It is sown a natural gross and elementary Body, which in this Life-Time is like the outward Elements; yet in this gross Body there is a subtle Power and Virtue. As in the Earth also there is a subtle good Virtue, which is like the Sun, and is one and the same with the Sun; which also in the Beginning of Time did spring and proceed out of the Divine Power and Virtue, from whence all the good Virtue of the Body is likewise derived. This good Virtue of the mortal Body shall come again and live forever in a Kind of transparent crystalline material Property, in spiritual Flesh and Blood; as shall return also the good Virtue of the Earth, for the Earth likewise shall become crystalline, and the Divine Light shine in every Thing that hath a Being, Essence or Substance. And as the gross Earth shall perish and never return, so also the gross Flesh of Man shall perish and not live forever. But all Things must appear before the Judgement, and in the Judgement be separated by the Fire; yea, both the Earth, and also the Ashes of the human Body. For when God shall once move the spiritual World, every Spirit shall attract its spiritual Substance to itself. A good Spirit and Soul shall draw to itself its good Substance, and an evil one its evil Substance. But we must here understand by Substance, such a material Power and Virtue, the Essence of which is mere Virtue, like a material Tincture (such a Thing as hath all Figures, Colors, and Virtues in it, and is at the same Time transparent), the Grossness whereof shall have perished in all Things.

**Scholar.**

Shall we not rise again with our visible Bodies, and live in them forever?

**Master.**

When the visible World perisheth, then all that hath come out of it, and hath been external, shall perish with it. There shall remain of the World only the heavenly crystalline Nature and Form, and of Man also only the spiritual Earth; for Man shall be then wholly like the spiritual World, which as yet is hidden.

**Scholar.**

Shall there be Husband and Wife, or Children or Kindred, in the heavenly Life, or shall one associate with another, as they do in this Life?

**Master.**

Why art thou so fleshly-minded? There will be neither Husband nor Wife, but all will be like the Angels of God, viz. Masculine Virgins. There will be neither Son nor Daughter, Brother nor Sister, but all of one Stock and Kindred. For all are but One in Christ, as a Tree and its Branches are one, though distinct as Creatures; but God is All in All. Indeed, there will be spiritual Knowledge of what every one hath been, and done, but no Possessing or Enjoying, or Desire of Possessing earthly Things, or Enjoying fleshly Relations any more.

**Scholar.**

Shall they all have that Eternal Joy and Glorification alike?

**Master.**

The Scripture saith, Such as the People is, such is their God. And in another Place, With the holy thou art holy, and with the perverse thou art perverse. And St. Paul saith, In the Resurrection one shall differ from another in Glory, as do the Sun, Moon, and Stars. Therefore know, that the Blessed shall indeed all enjoy the Divine Working in and upon them; but their Virtue, and Illumination or Glory, shall be very different, according as they have been endued in this Life with different Measures and Degrees of Power and Virtue in their painful Working. For the painful Working of the Creature in this Lifetime is the opening and begetting of Divine Power, by which that Power is made movable and operative. Now those who have wrought with Christ in this Lifetime, and not in the Lust of the Flesh, shall have great Power and transcendent Glorification in and upon them. But others, who have only expected, and relied upon, an imputed Satisfaction, and in the meanwhile have served their Belly-God, and yet at last have turned, and obtained Grace; those, I say, shall not attain to so high a Degree of Power and Illumination. So that there will be as great a Difference of Degrees between them, as is between the Sun, Moon and Stars; or between the Flowers of the Field in their Varieties of Beauty, Power, and Virtue.

**Scholar.**

How shall the World be judged, and by whom?

**Master.**

Jesus Christ, that Word of God which became Man, shall by the Power of his Divine Stirring or Motion separate from himself all that belongeth not to him, and shall wholly manifest his Kingdom in the Place or Space where this World now is; for the separating Motion worketh all over the Universe, through all at once.

**Scholar.**

Whither shall the Devils and all the Damned be thrown, when the Place of this World is become the Kingdom of Christ, and such as shall be glorified? Shall they be cast out of the Place of this World? Or shall Christ have, and manifest his Dominion, out of the Sphere or Place of this World?

**Master.**

Hell shall remain in the Place or Sphere of this World everywhere, but hidden to the Kingdom of Heaven, as the Night is hidden in and to the Day. The Light shall shine forever in the Darkness, but the Darkness can never comprehend, or reach it. And the Light is the Kingdom of Christ; but the Darkness is Hell, wherein the Devils and the Wicked dwell; and thus they shall be suppressed by the Kingdom of Christ, and made his Footstool, viz. a Reproach.

**Scholar.**

How shall all People and Nations be brought to Judgement?

**Master.**

The Eternal Word of God, out of which every spiritual creaturely Life hath proceeded, will move itself at that Hour, according to Love and Anger, in every Life which is come out of the Eternity, and will draw every Creature before the Judgement of Christ, to be sentenced by this Motion of the World. The Life will then be manifested in all its Works, and every Soul shall see and feel its Judgement and Sentence in itself. For the Judgement is indeed immediately manifested in and to every Soul at the Departure of the Body; and the last Judgement is but a Return of the spiritual Body, and a Separation of the World, when the Evil shall be separated from the Good, in the substance of the World and of the human Body, and every Thing enters into its eternal Receptacle. And thus it is a Manifestation of the Mystery of God in every Substance and Life.

**Scholar.**

How will the Sentence be pronounced?

**Master.**

Here consider the Words of Christ. He will say to those on his Right-hand,

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World. For I was hungry, and ye gave me Meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me. I was sick, and ye visited me, in Prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall they answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, thirsty, a Stranger, naked, sick, or in Prison, and ministered thus unto thee?

Then shall the King answer and say unto them; Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me.

And unto the Wicked on his Left-hand he will say,

Depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

For I was hungry, thirsty, a Stranger, naked, sick, and in Prison, and ye ministered not unto me.

And they shall also answer him and say, When did we see thee thus, and ministered not unto thee?

And he will answer them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have not done it unto one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

And these shall depart into everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life Eternal.

**Scholar.**

Loving Master, pray tell me why Christ saith, What you have done to the least of these, you have done to me; and what you have not done to them, neither have you done it to me. And how doth a Man in his Working, doeth it to Christ himself?

**Master.**

Christ dwelleth really and essentially in the Faith of those that wholly yield up themselves to him, and he giveth them his Flesh for Food, and his Blood for Drink; and thus he possesseth the Ground of their Faith, according to the interior or inward Man. And a True Christian is called a Branch of the Vine Christ, and a

Christian, because Christ dwelleth spiritually in him; therefore whatsoever Good any shall do to such a Christian in his bodily Necessities, it is done to Christ himself, who dwelleth in him. For such a Christian is not his own, but is wholly resigned to Christ, and become his peculiar Possession, and consequently the good Deed is done to Christ himself.

Therefore also, whosoever shall withhold their Help from such a needy Christian, and forbear to serve him in his Necessity, they thrust Christ away from themselves, and despise him in his Members. When a poor Person that belongeth thus to Christ, asketh any Thing of thee, and thou deniest it him in his Necessity, thou deniest it to Christ himself. And whatsoever hurt any shall do to such a Christian, they do it to Christ himself. When any mock, scorn, revile, reject, or thrust away such a one, they do all that to Christ; but he that receiveth him, giveth him Meat and Drink, or Apparel, and assisteth him in his necessities, doth it likewise to Christ, and to a Fellow-Member of his own Body. Nay he even doth it to himself, if he be a True Christian; for we are all One in Christ, as a Tree and its Branches are.

**Scholar.**

How then will those subsist in the Day of that fierce Judgement, who afflict and vex the poor and distressed, and deprive them of their very Sweat; necessitating and constraining them by Force to submit to their Wills, and trampling upon them as their Footstools, only that they themselves may live in Pomp and Power, and spend the Fruits of this poor People's Sweat and Labour in Voluptuousness, Pride, and Vanity?

**Master.**

Christ suffereth in the Persecution of his Members. Therefore all the Wrong that such hard Exactors do to the poor Wretches under their Control, is done to Christ himself; and falleth under his severe Sentence and Judgement! And besides that, they help the Devil to augment his Kingdom; for by such Oppression of the Poor they draw them off from Christ, and make them seek unlawful Ways to fill their Bellies. Nay, they work for, and with the Devil himself, doing the very same Thing which he doth; who, without Intermission, opposeth the Kingdom of Christ, which consisteth only in Love. All these Oppressors, if they do not turn with their whole Hearts to Christ, and minister to, or serve him, must go into Hell-Fire, which is fed and kept alive by nothing else but such mere Self, as that which they have exercised over the Poor here.

**Scholar.**

But how will it fare with those, and how will they be able to stand that severe Trial, who in this Time do so fiercely contend about the Kingdom of Christ, and slander, revile, and persecute one another for their Religion, as they do?

**Master.**

All such have not yet known Christ; and they are but as a Type or Figure of Heaven and Hell, striving with each other for the Victory.

All rising, swelling Pride, which contendeth about Opinions, is an Image of Self. And whosoever hath not Faith and Humility, nor liveth in the Spirit of Christ, which is Love, is only armed with the Anger of God, and helpeth forward the Victory of the imaginary Self, that is, the Kingdom of Darkness, and the Anger of God. For at the Day of Judgement all Self shall be given to the Darkness, as shall also all the unprofitable Contentions of Men; in which they seek not after Love, but merely after their imaginary Self, that they may exalt themselves by exalting and establishing their Opinions; stirring up Princes to Wars for the Sake of the same, and by that Means occasioning the Desolation of whole Countries of People. All such Things belong to the Judgement, which will separate the false from the true; and then all Images or Opinions shall cease, and all the Children of God shall dwell forever in the Love of Christ, and that in them.

All whosoever in this Time of Strife, namely, from the Fall to the Resurrection, are not zealous in the Spirit of Christ, and desirous to promote Peace and Love, but seek and strive for themselves only, are of the Devil,

and belong to the Pit of Darkness, and must consequently be separated from Christ. For in Heaven all serve God their Creator in humble Love.

**Scholar.**

Wherefore then doth God suffer such Strife and Contention to be in this Time?

**Master.**

The Life itself standeth in Strife, that it may be made manifest, sensible, and palpable, and that the Wisdom may be made separable and known.

The Strife also constituteth the eternal Joy of the Victory. For there will arise great Praise and Thanksgiving in the Saints from the experimental Sense and Knowledge that Christ in them hath overcome Darkness, and all the Self of Nature, and that they are at length totally delivered from the Strife; at which they shall rejoice eternally, when they shall know how the Wicked are recompensed. And therefore God suffereth all Souls to stand in the Free-Will, that the Eternal Dominion both of Love and Anger, of Light and Darkness, may be made manifest and known; and that every Life might cause and find its own Sentence in itself. For that which is now a Strife and Pain to the Saints in their wretched Warfare here, shall in the End be turned into great Joy to them; and that which hath been a Joy and Pleasure to ungodly Persons in this World, shall afterwards be turned into eternal Torment and Shame to them. Therefore the Joy of the Saints must arise to them out of Death, as the Light ariseth out of a Candle by the Destruction and Consumption of it in its Fire; that so the Life may be freed from the Painfulness of Nature, and possess another World.

And as the Light hath quite another Property than the Fire hath, for it giveth and yieldeth itself forth; whereas the Fire draweth in and consumeth itself; so the holy Life of Meekness springeth forth through the Death of Self-Will, and then God's Will of Love only ruleth, and doth all in all. For thus the Eternal One hath attained Feeling and Separability, and brought itself forth again with the Feeling, through Death in great Joyfulness; that there might be an Eternal Delight in the Infinite Unity, and an Eternal Cause of Joy; and therefore that which was before Painfulness, must now be the Ground and Cause of this Motion or stirring to the Manifestation of all Things. And herein lieth the Mystery of the hidden Wisdom of God.

Every one that asketh receiveth, every one that seeketh findeth; and to every one that knocketh it shall be opened. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with us all. Amen.

**1631**

**John Donne (1572 - 1631): British Anglican preacher and poet**

**We Deny Not This Difference Of Degrees Of Glory In Heaven; But That Frame, & That Scale Of These Degrees, Which They Have Set Up In Roman Church, We Do Deny**

**The Works of John Donne**

(Published in London in 1839)

**Volume 3 Sermon 73 (extracts)**

This second part, you may also be pleased to remember, derives itself into two branches; first to inquire, whether this proposition assist that doctrine of disparity and degrees of glory in the saints in heaven; and then the right use which is to be made of the right sense of these words, *In domo patris*, In my Father's house there are many mansions. The occasion of the words will be the foundation of all; our Saviour Christ had said to his disciples in the chapter before, that he was to stay with them but a little while; that when he was gone, they should seek him, and not find him; and that whither he went, they could not follow: and when, upon that, Peter, who was always forwardest, and soonest scandalized, had pressed him with that question, Lord,

whither goest thou? and received that answer, Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but hereafter thou shalt follow me, lest the rest of the disciples, who were troubled with that which was formerly said, should be more affected with this, to hear that Peter should come, whither none of them might, to establish them all, as well as Peter, he says to them all, in the first verse of this chapter, Let not your hearts be troubled, for, (and here enters this proposition of our text, for their general establishment) in my Father's house are many mansions. So that, that these are words of consolation, is certain, but whether the consolation be placed in though disparity, and difference of degrees of glory in heaven, or no, is not so certain.

That there are degrees of glory in the saints in heaven, scarce any ever denied. Heaven is a kingdom, and Christ a king, and a popular parity agrees not with that state, with a monarchy. Heaven is a church, and Christ a high-priest, and such a parity agrees as ill with the Triumphant, as with the Militant church. In the Primitive church Joviuan denied this difference, and degrees of glory; and St. Hierome (Jerome) was so incensed, so inflamed for this, as if foundations had been shaken, and the common cause endangered. Indeed it was thus far the common cause, that all the fathers followed this chase, (if we may use that metaphor) and were never at a default: no one of the fathers, whom I have observed to touch upon this point, did ever deny this difference of degrees of glory. And therefore, as in the Primitive church, when that one man Jovinian, came to deny it, St. Hierome was vehement upon him, so when in the Reformation, one man (for I never found more than that one, one Schoufeldius) denies it too, I wonder the less, that another "(of the Reformation also) grows somewhat sharp towards him.

We deny not then this difference of degrees of glory in heaven; but that frame, and that scale of these degrees, which they have set up in the Roman church, we do deny. We must continue, and return often to that complaint against them, That they shake and endanger things near foundations, by their enormous superedifications, by their incommodious upper-buildings: that many things, which might be well enough accepted, and would be agreed by all, become justly suspicious, and really dangerous to the church, by their manifold consequences which they super-induce upon them: that many things, which in the sincerity of their beginning, and institution, were pious, and conduced to the exaltation of devotion, by their additions are become impious, and destroy devotion so far, as to divert it upon a wrong object. In this point which we have in hand, it is so; in these degrees of glory in heaven, that church, which treads all sovereign crowns in this world, under her feet, pretends to impart, and distribute crowns in heaven also of her own making: We find coronam auream, a crown of gold upon the head of that Son of man, who is also the Son of God, Christ Jesus, in the Revelation. And we find coronas aureas, particular crowns of gold, upon the heads of all the saints that stand about the throne, in the same book". And these crowns upon the saints are the emanations, and effluences of that crown which is upon Christ; the glory of the saints is the communication of his glory. But then, because in their translation, in the Vulgate edition of the Roman church, they find in Exodus that word aureolam, Facies coronam aureolam, Thou shalt make a lesser crown of gold; out of this diminutive, and mistaken word, they have established a doctrine, that besides those coronce entrece, those crowns of gold, which are communicated to all the saints from the crown of Christ, some saints have made to themselves, and produced out of their own extraordinary merits certain aureolas, certain lesser crowns of their own, whereas indeed the word in the original in that place of Exodus is zer zehab, which is a crown of gold, without any intimation of any such lesser crowns growing out of themselves. This then is their new alchymy; that whereas old alchymists pretend to make gold of coarser metals, these will make it of nothing; out of a suppositions word, which is not in the text, they have hammered and beat out these aureolas, these lesser crowns. And these aureolas they ascribe only to three sorts of persons, to virgins, to martyrs, to doctors.

Are then all the other saints without crowns? They must make shift with that beam which they have from the crown of Christ; for, for these additional crowns proceeding from themselves, they have none. And yet, say they, there are saints which have some additions growing out of themselves, though not aureolas, little crowns, and those they call fructus, peculiar fruits growing out of themselves; and for these fruits they distraint upon that place of Matthew, where Christ saith, That some brought forth fruit a hundred fold, some sixty, and some thirty; and the greater measure they ascribe to virgins, the sixty to widows, and the thirty to

married persons, but only such married persons, as have lived continently in marriage. So then, to make this riddle of theirs as plain as the matter will admit, they place salvation itself, blessedness itself, (if a man will be content with that) in that union with God, which is common to all the saints: but then they conceive certain Dotes, as they call them, certain dispositions in this life, by which some have made themselves fitter to be united to God, in a nearer distance than an ordinary saint; and these dotes, these endowments, and dispositions here, produce those aureolas, and those fructus, those lesser crowns, and those measures of fruits, which are a particular joy, not that they are united to God, (for so every saint is) but that they had those dotes, those dispositions to take that particular way of being united to God, the way of virginity, the way of martyrdom, and the way of up reaching; for by this, they become Sancti Major es, as they call them, saints in favour, saints in office, and fitter to receive our petitions, and mediate between God and us, than those whom they call Mediocres, and Inferiores, saints of a middle form, or of an inferior rank. Yet these are so far provided for, by them too, that we must pray also to these inferior saints, either because I may have had a more particular interest in this life in that saint, than in a greater, and so the readiness, and the assiduity of that saint may recompense his want of power, or else, ad tollendum fastidium, lest a great saint should grow weary of me, if I trouble him every day, and for every trifle in heaven; and some other such reasons, it pleases them to assign, why though some saints have more power with God than others, yet we are bound to pray to all.

And thus they play with divinity, as though after they had troubled all states with political divinity, with their bulls, and breeves of rebus sic stantibus, that as long as things stood thus, this should be Catholic doctrine, and otherwise, when otherwise, and in this political divinity, Machiavel is their pope; and after they had perplexed understandings with philosophical divinity in the school, and in that divinity, Aristotle is their pope; they thought themselves in courtesy, or conscience bound, to recreate the world with poetical divinity, with such a heaven, and such a hell as would stand in their verses, and in this divinity, Virgil is their pope. And so, as Melancthon said, when he furthered the edition of the Alcoran, that he would have it printed, Ut vidtamus quale poema sit, That the world might see what a piece of poetry the Alcoran was; so I have stopped upon this point, that you might see what a piece of poetry they have made of this problematical point of divinity, the disparity, and degrees of glory in the saints in Heaven.

Be this then thus settled; in the matter, the difference of degrees of glory, we will not differ; in the manner, we would not differ so, as to induce a schism, if they would handle such points problematically, and no farther.

But when upon matter of fact they will induce matter of faith, when they will extend problematic divinity to dogmatical, when they will argue and conclude thus. It may be thus, therefore it must be thus, a man may be saved, though he believes this, therefore he cannot be saved except he believe this, when (in this point in hand) out of our acknowledgment of these degrees of glory in the saints they will establish the doctrine of merits, and of invocation of saints, then we must necessarily call them to the rule of all doctrines, the Scriptures. When they tell us historically, and upon historical obligation, and for a historical certitude, that Peter was at Rome, and that he was bishop of Rome, we are not so froward as to deny them that: but when upon his historical and personal being at Rome, they will build that mother article, of an universal supremacy over all the church, then we must necessarily call them to the rule, to the Scriptures, and to require them to prove both his being there, and his being bishop there, by the Scriptures, and either of these would trouble them; as it would trouble them, in our present case, to assign evident places of Scripture, for these degrees of glory in the saints of Heaven. For though we be far from denying the consentaneum est, that it is reasonable it should be, and likely it is so, and far from denying the pie creditur, that it may advance devotion, and exalt industry to believe that it is so, though we acknowledge a possibility, a probability, a very similitude, a very truth, and thus far a necessary truth, that our endeavours may flag and slacken, except we do embrace that help, that there are degrees of glory in Heaven, yet if we shall press for places of Scriptures, so evident, as must constitute an article of faith, there are perchance none to be found, to which very learned, and very reverend expositors have not given convenient interpretations, without inducing any such necessity.



At least, however other places of Scripture may seem to contribute more, this proposition of our text, In my Father's house are many mansions (though it have been applied to the proof of that) hath no inclination, no inclinableness that way. For in this text, our Saviour applies himself to his disciples, in that wherein they needed comfort, that Christ would go away, that they might not go too, that Peter had got a non-obstante, he might, and they might not, and Christ gives them that comfort, that all might, In my Fathers house are many mansions. When the apostle presents a great part of our Christian religion together, so as that he calls it a mystery, and a great mystery, yet he calls it a mystery without controversy; Without controversy great is the mystery of God manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, preached to the Gentiles, believed in the world, received into glory". When he presents matter of consolation, he would have it without controversy; to establish a disconsolate soul, there is always divinity enough, that was never drawn into controversy. I would pray? I find the spirit of God to dispose my heart, and my tongue, and mine eyes, and hands, and knees to pray? do I doubt to whom I should pray I To God, or to the saints? That prayer to God alone was sufficient, was never drawn into controversy. I would have something to rely and settle and establish my assurance upon; do I doubt whether upon Christ, or mine own, or other's merits? That to rely upon Christ alone was sufficient, was never drawn into controversy. At this time, Christ disposed himself to comfort his disciples in that wherein they needed comfort; now their discomfort, and their fear lay not in this, whether there were different degrees of glory in heaven, but their fear was, that Christ being gone, and having taken Peter, and none but him, there should be no room for them, and thereupon Christ says, Let not that trouble you, for, in my Fathers house are many mansions. And so we have done with the former branch of this last part, that it is piously done to believe these degrees of glory in heaven; that they have inconsiderately extended this problem in the Roman church; that no Scriptures are so evident as to induce a necessity in it; that this Scripture conduces not at all to it; and therefore we pass to our last consideration, the right use of the right sense of these words.

First then, Christ proposes in these words consolation; a work, than which none is more divine, nor more proper to God, nor to those instruments, whom he sends to work upon the souls and consciences of others. Who but myself can conceive the sweetness of that salutation, when the spirit of God says to me in a morning, Go forth to-day and preach, and preach consolation, preach peace, preach mercy, and spare my people, spare that people whom I have redeemed with my precious blood, and be not angry with them for ever; do not wound them, do not grind them, do not astonish them with the bitterness, with the heaviness, with the sharpness, with the consternation of my judgments. David proposes to himself, that he would sing of mercy, and of judgment; but it is of mercy first; and not of judgment at all, otherwise than it will come into a song, as joy and consolation is compatible with it. It hath fallen into disputation, and admitted argument, whether ever God inflicted punishment by his good angel; but that the good angels, the ministerial angels of the church, are properly his instruments, for conveying mercy, peace, consolation, never fell into question, never admitted opposition.

How heartily God seems to utter, and how delightfully to insist upon that, which he says in Isaiah, Gonsolamini, conso- lamini populum meum, Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, and Loquimini ad cor, Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and tell her, thine iniquities are pardoned? How glad Christ seems that he had it for him, when he gives the sick man that comfort, Fill confide, my son be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee? What a coronation is our taking of orders, by which God makes us a royal priesthood? And what an enthronization is the coming up into a pulpit, where God invests his servants with his ordinance, as with a cloud, and then presses that cloud with a Voe si non, woe be unto thee, if thou do not preach, and then enables him to preach peace, mercy, consolation, to the whole congregation. That God should appear in a cloud, upon the mercy seat, as he promises Moses he will do", that from so poor a man as stands here, wrapped up in clouds of infirmity, and in clouds of iniquity, God should drop rain, pour down his that dew with his honey, and crust that honied dew into manna, and multiply that manna into gomers, and fill those gomers every day, and give every particular man his gomer, give every soul in the congregation, consolation by me; that when I call to God for grace here, God should give me grace for grace, grace in a power to derive grace upon others, and that this oil, this balsamum, should flow to the hem of the garment, even upon them that stand under me; that when mine eyes look up to heaven," Psalm ci. 1. Isaiah XL. 1. 1? Levit. xvi. 2. the

eyes of all should look up upon me, and God should open my mouth, to give them meat in due season; that I should not only be able to say, as Christ said to that poor soul, *Confide fili*, my son be of good comfort, but *fratres et patres mei*, my brethren, and my fathers, *nay domini mei*, and *rex meus*, my lords, and my king be of good comfort, your sins are forgiven you; that God should seal to me that patent, *Itē predicatē omni creaturā*, go and preach the gospel to every creature, be that creature what he will, that if God lead me into a congregation, as into his ark, where there are but eight souls, but a few disposed to a sense of his mercies, and all the rest (as in the ark) ignobler creatures, and of brutal natures and affections, that if I find a licentious goat, a supplanting fox, an usurious wolf; an ambitious lion, yet to that creature, to every creature I should preach the gospel of peace and consolation, and offer these creatures a metamorphosis, a transformation, a new creation in Christ Jesus, and thereby make my goat, and my fox, and my wolf, and my lion, to become *semen Dei*, the seed of God, and *filium Dei*, the child of God, and *participem divinitus naturae*, partaker of the divine nature itself; this is that which Christ is essentially in himself, this is that which ministerially and instrumentally he hath committed to me, to shed his consolation upon you, upon you all; not as his almoner to drop his consolation upon one soul, nor as his treasurer to issue his consolation to a whole congregation, but as his Ophir, as his Indies, to derive his gold, his precious consolation upon the king himself.

What would a good judge, a good-natured judge give in his circuit, what would you, in whose breasts the judgments of the Star-chamber, or other criminal courts are, give, that you had a warrant from the king, to change the sentence of blood into a pardon, where you found a delinquent penitent? How ruefully do we hear the prophets groan under that *onus visionis*, which they repeat so often, O the burden of my vision upon Judah, or upon Moab, or Damascus, or Babylon, or any place! Which is not only that that judgment would be a heavy burden upon that place, but that it was a heavy burden to them to denounce that judgment, even upon God's enemies. Our errand, our joy, our crown is consolation: for, if we consider the three Persons of the holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, and their working upon us, a third part of their work (if we may so speak) is consolation; the Father is power, the Son wisdom, and the Holy Ghost consolation: for the Holy Ghost is not in a vulture, that hovers over armies, and infected cities, and feeds upon carcasses, but the Holy Ghost is in a dove, that would not make a congregation a slaughter-house, but feeds upon corn, corn that hath in nature a disposition to a reviviscence, and a repullulation, and would imprint in you all, the consolation and sense of a possibility of returning to a new, and better life. God found me nothing, and of that nothing made me; Adam left me worse than God found me, worse than nothing, the child of wrath, corrupted with the leaven of original sin; Christ Jesus found me worse than Adam left me, not only soured with original, but spotted, and gangrened, and dead, and buried, and putrified in actual and habitual sins, and yet in that state redeemed me; and I make myself worse than Christ found me, and in an inordinate dejection of spirit, conceive a jealousy and suspicion, that his merit concerns not me, that his blood extends not to my sin; and in this last and worst state, the Holy Ghost finds me, the spirit of consolation, and he sends a Barnabas, a son of consolation unto me, a Barnabas to my sick bed side, a physician that comforts with hopes, and means of health, a Barnabas to my broken fortune, a potent and a loving friend, that assists the reparation, and the establishing of my state, a Barnabas into the pulpit, that restores and rectifies my conscience, and scatters, and dispels all those clouds that invested it, and infested it before. That unimaginable work of the creation were not ready for a Sabbath, though I be a creature, and a man, I could have no Sabbath, no rest, no peace of conscience; that unexpressible work of the redemption were not ready for that seal, which our Saviour set to it upon the cross, in the *conswmationem eius*; all were not finished that concerned me, if the Holy Ghost were not ready to deliver that which Christ sealed, and to witness that which were so delivered, that that spirit might ever testify to my spirit, that all that Christ Jesus said, and did, and suffered, was said, and done, and suffered for my soul. Consolation is not all, if we consider God, but if I consider myself, and my state, consolation is all.

Christ's meaning then in this place, was to establish in his disciples this consolation; but thus, *Si quo minus*, If it were not thus, I would tell you; if this were not true consolation, I would not delude you, I would not entertain you with false: for he is *Deus omnium miseracionum*, The God of all mercies, and yet he will not show mercy to them, who sin upon presumption; so he is *Deus omnium consolationum*, The God of all comforts, and yet will not comfort them, who rely upon the false, and miserable comforts of this world. How

many, how very many of us do otherwise! Otherwise to others, otherwise to our own consciences! Delude all with false comforts! They would not suffer Christ himself to sleep upon a pillow in a storm, but they waked him with that, Master, carest not thou, though we perish? When will we wake any master, any upon whom we depend, and say, Master, carest not thou, though thou perish? We suffer others, whom we should instruct, and we suffer ourselves to pass on to the last gasp, and we never rebuke our consciences, till our consciences rebuke us at last, alas, it is otherwise, and you never told us.

Christ comforts then, he disputes not, that is not his way; he ministers true comfort, he flatters not, that is not his way; and in this true comfort, the first beam is, that that state which he promises them is a house, In my Father's house, &c. God hath a progress house, a removing house here upon earth, his house of prayer; at this hour, God enters into as many of these houses, as are opened for his service at this hour: but his standing house, his house of glory, is that in heaven, and that he promises them. God himself dwelt in tents in this world, and he gives them a house in heaven. A house, in the design and survey whereof, the Holy Ghost himself is figurative, the fathers wanton, and the schoolmen wild. The Holy Ghost, in describing this house, fills our contemplation with foundations, and walls, and gates, of gold, of precious stones, and all materials, that we can call precious". The Holy Ghost is figurative; and the fathers are wanton in their spiritual elegancies, such as that of St. Augustines, (if that book be his) *Hiems horreus, jEstas torrens, and Virent prata, vernant sata*, and such other harmonious, and melodious, and mellifluous cadences of these waters of life. But the schoolmen are wild; for as one author, who is afraid of admitting too great a hollowness in the earth, lest then the earth might not be said to be solid, pronounces that hell cannot possibly be above three thousand miles in compass, (and then one of the torments of hell will be the throng, for their 'bodies must be there, in their dimensions, as well as their souls) so when the schoolmen come to measure this house in heaven, (as they will measure it, and the master, God, and all his attributes, and tell us how almighty, and how infinite he is) they pronounce, that every soul in that house shall have more room to itself, than all this world is. We know not that; nor see we that the consolation lies in that; we rest in this, that it is a house, it hath a foundation, no earthquake shall shake it, it hath walls, no artillery shall batter it, it hath a roof, no tempest shall pierce it, it is a house that affords security, and that is one beam; and it is *Domus Patris*, His Father's house, a house in which he hath interest, and that is another beam of his consolation.

It was his Father's, and so his; and his, and so ours; for we are not joint purchasers of heaven with the saints, but we are co-heirs with Christ Jesus. We have not a place there, because they have done more than enough for themselves, but because he hath done enough for them and us too. By death we are gathered to our fathers in nature; and by death, through his mercy, gathered to his Father also. Where we shall have a full satisfaction, in that wherein St. Philip placed all satisfaction, *Ostende nobis patrem*, Lord, show us thy Father, and it is enough. We shall see his Father, and see him made ours in him.

And then a third beam of this consolation is, that in this house of his Father's, thus by him made ours, there are mansions; in which word, the consolation is not placed, (I do not say, that there is not truth in it) but the consolation is not placed in this, that some of these mansions are below, some above stairs, some better seated, better lighted, better vaulted, better fretted, better furnished than others; but only in this, that they are mansions; which word, in the original, and Latin, and our language, signifies a remaining, and denotes the perpetuity, the everlastingness of that state. A state but of one day, because no night shall overtake, or determine it, but such a day, as is not of a thousand years, which is the longest measure in the Scriptures, but of a thousand millions of millions of generations: *Qui nee preceditur hesternis, nee excluditur crastino*", A day that hath no pridie, nor postridie, yesterday doth not usher it in, nor tomorrow shall not drive it out. Methusalem, with all his hundreds of years, was but a mushroom of a night's growth, to this day, and all the four monarchies, with all their thousands of years, and all the powerful kings, and all the beautiful queens of this world, were but as a bed of flowers, some gathered at six, some at seven, some at eight, all in one morning, in respect of this day. In all the two -thousand years of nature, before the law given by Moses, and the two thousand years of law, before the Gospel given by Christ, and the two thousand of grace, which are running now, (of which last hour we have heard three quarters strike, more than fifteen hundred of this last two thousand spent) in all this six thousand, and in all those, which God may be pleased to add, in domo

patris, in this house of his Father's, there was never heard quarter clock to strike, never seen minute glass to turn. So time less than itself would serve to express this time, which is intended in this word mansions; which is also exalted with another beam, that they are Multa, In my Father's house there are many mansions.

In this circumstance, an essential, a substantial circumstance, we would consider the joy of our society, and conversation in heaven, since society and conversation is one great element and ingredient into the joy, which we have in this world. We shall have an association with Christ himself; for what he is, it is his promise, that we also shall be. We shall have an association with the angels, and such a one, as we shall be such as they. We shall have an association with the saints, and not only so, to be such as they, but to be they: and with all who come from the East, and from the West, and from the North, and from the South-, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. Where we shall be so far from being enemies to one another, as that we shall not be strangers to one another: and so far from envying one another, as that all that every one hath, shall be every other's possession: where all souls shall be so entirely knit together, as if all were but one soul, and God so entirely knit to every soul, as if there were as many Gods as souls.

Be comforted then, says Christ to them, for this, which is a house, and not a ship, not subject to storms by the way, nor wrecks in the end, My Father's house, not a stranger's, in whom I had no interest, a house of mansions, a dwelling, not a sojourning, and of many mansions, not an abridgment, a model of a house, not a monastery of many cells, but an extension of many houses, into the city of the living God, This house shall be yours, though I depart from you. Christ is nearer us, when we behold him with the eyes of faith in heaven, than when we seek him in a piece of bread, or in a sacramental box here. Drive him not away from thee, by wrangling and disputing how he is present with thee; unnecessary doubts of his presence may induce fearful assurances of his absence: the best determination of the real presence is to be sure, that thou be really present with him, by an ascending faith: make sure thine own real presence, and doubt not of his: thou art not the farther from him, by his being gone thither before thee. No, nor though Peter be gone thither before thee neither, which was the other point, in which the apostles needed consolation; they were troubled that Christ would go, and none of them, and troubled that Peter might go, and none but he. What men soever God take into heaven before thee, though thy father that should give thee thy education, though thy pastor that should give thee thy instruction, though these men may be such in the state, and such in the church, as thou mayest think the church and state cannot subsist without them, discourage not thyself, neither admit a jealousy or suspicion of the providence and good purpose of God; for, as God hath his panier full of manna, and of quails, and can pour out tomorrow, though he have poured them out plentifully upon his friends before; so God hath his quiver full of arrows, and can shoot as powerfully, as heretofore, upon his enemies. I forbid them not St. Paul's wish, cupio dissolvi, to desire to be dissolved, therefore, that thou mayest be with Christ; I forbid thee not David's sigh, Hei mihi, Woe is me that I must dwell so long with them that love not peace! I only enjoin thee thy Saviour's Veruntamen, Yet not mine, but thy will, O Father, be done; that all thy wishes may have relation to his purposes, and all thy prayers may be inanimated with that, Lord manifest thy will unto me, and conform my will unto thine. So shalt thou not be affrighted, as though God aimed at thee, when he shoots about the mark, and thou seest a thousand fall at thy right hand, and ten thousand at thy left; nor discouraged as though God had left out thee, when thou seest him take others into garrison, and leave thee in the field, assume others to triumph, and leave thee in the battle still. For as Christ Jesus would have come down from heaven, to have died for thee, though there had been no soul to have been saved but thine; so is he gone up to heaven, to prepare a place for thee, though all the souls in this world were to be saved as well as thine. Trouble not thyself with dignity, and priority, and precedency in heaven, for consolation and devotion consist not in that, and thou wilt be the less troubled with dignity and priority, and precedency in this world, for rest and quietness consist not in that.

**1632 (Latin)**

**John Cameron (1529-1623): Scottish Calvinist Theologian**

## **Fifteen Arguments In Favour Of Heavenly Degrees Of Glory, Each Of Which Carefully Refuted, & Twelve Arguments Against, Which He Defends, Concluding That Elect In Heaven Are Equal In Glory**

### **Praelectiones**

**(summarized in Disley, Degrees of Glory)**

The most detailed refutation of the concept of degrees of heavenly reward came from the pen of John Cameron, the influential Glaswegian Professor of Divinity at the University of Saumur. In his *Praelectiones*, of 1632, he sets out, at some length, fifteen arguments in favour of heavenly degrees of glory, each of which he carefully refutes, and twelve arguments against, which he defends, concluding that the elect in heaven are equal in glory. These are worth summarizing for the purposes of this article:

He dismisses as specious a number of scripturally based arguments which he sees as attributing to heaven a fallacious diversity of rewards among the saints, whereas the scriptural references, he argues, maintain rather the division between the saved and the damned: Thus, the contrast implied in the statement, 'God returns to each according to their works', based on Rom. 2: 6 (cf. 2 Cor. 5: 10), does not exist within the assembly of the pious themselves, but distinguishes the pious in heaven from the impious without.

Likewise, he dismisses the notion that the 144,000 virgin followers of the Lamb of Rev. 14: 1-4 imply that there are others who are not of this number and must therefore have less glory: the 144,000 comprise all the elect of God, and the rest are damned; the idea that 2 Cor. 9: 6—'He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully— implies varying rewards is dismissed in favour of an interpretation which differentiates not between greater and lesser heavenly rewards, but between a reward in heaven and an empty reward in hell; and the idea that punishment is imposed according to merit in hell does not affect the fact that reward for the pious is free (*gratuita*), for nothing stops punishments being unequal, since not all are equally impious, whereas the same rules of merit do not apply to heaven, since the pious do not earn their reward.

Such an idea will not have the unfortunate practical effect of diminishing enthusiasm for good works, since, Cameron believes, those who are not deterred from evil by the love of God or the horrors of hell will not be allured by the hope of differing rewards within heaven. Cameron rejects a number of scripturally based arguments which appear to indicate varying degrees of reward in heaven by arguing that such passages pertain to this life, rather than to the next. Into this category falls the parable of the Word of God as the seed which produces in some thirtyfold, in some sixtyfold, and in some a hundredfold. Cameron insists that this parable refers to the efficacy of the Word in this life; similarly, the idea contained in Luke 9: 47, that he who makes himself most like a child will be '*maximus in regno coelorum*', is refuted, since Cameron argues that the Apostles understood hereby not heaven '*quale est in coelis*', but '*regnum coelorum, quale est in terris*'; likewise, the Lord's promise that the Apostles would sit in judgement over the twelve tribes of Israel, is referred by Cameron to the Apostles' position within the constitution of the Church, rather than to heavenly status.

With Calvin, Veron, Cartwright, and his colleague Amyraut, Cameron refers 1 Cor. 15:41 to the difference between our earthly bodies and those with which we shall be furnished at the general resurrection, rather than to differences between those resurrected bodies. He refuses to admit any qualitative distinction between the brightness of the stars and the brightness of the firmament of Dan. 12: 3; that there are 'many mansions' in God's house does not prove a distinction of inheritance, but indicates rather the wealth and size of eternal life; he reminds his readers that Matthew's version of the parable of the Talents (Matt. 25: 14—30) tells of an equal reward given to each servant; he counters several arguments which are based upon the necessity of order and hierarchy; we will be similar to the angels, but we, as the limbs of Christ, shall not resemble them in their different ranks; the distinctions which exist among the pious in this life result either from their sins (which will not exist in heaven) or from their varying styles of daily living, which will not pertain to their

heavenly existence; those who are equal in love will be endowed with the same dignity in body. (John Cameron, Praelectiones, ii, 325-34) (Disley, Degrees of Glory, 11-13)

**1650**

**Yves de Paris (French Capuchin theologian, humanist and spiritual writer; 1588 – 1678)**

**Degrees of Glory in La Theologie Naturelle**

[Link on Google Book](#) Starting on Page 490

*Troisiesme Partie - De la Justice de Dieu*

*Chapitre IV - De l'Inégalité des Grâces Divines*

C'est une condition commune à toutes les choses créées, de ne pouvoir estre dans la multitude, qu'elles ne soient dans la diversité, quoy que les grands rapports de leur physionomie & de leurs actions, tâchent de nous persuader qu'elles sont semblables. Les différences spécifiques ou individuelles qui les distinguent le plus les unes des autres, se tiennent cachées dans l'intérieur de l'astre qu'elles constituent néantmoins si nos yeux & nostre raison concertent pour juger parce qui paroist à l'extérieur, nous verrons nettement cette vérité, que le monde n'a point deux choses d'une égale perfection. Les Astres sont aussi différées en leurs grandeurs & en leurs lumières, qu'en leur vertu, les pierreries en leur éclat les oyseaux en leurs plumages en l'air & aux tons de leur musique ; les fleurs & leurs coloris, en leurs grandeurs, en leurs figures, en leurs parfums Tous les animaux qui nous paroissent semblables, à cause qu'ils sont de mesme espece, ont neantmoins de grandes diversités, par lesquelles ils se distinguent, & contractent leurs amours par sympathie.

Il nous suffit de sçavoir que cette diversité est une des Loix de la Nature, pour juger qu'elle est très-équitable: Aussi comme elle est le fondement de l'ordre & de la beauté, sans en rechercher la cause, & quand il ne seroit pas possible de la justifier, nous l'aimons par inclination. Que si âpres avoir veu par la police du monde, qu'il estoit absolument nécessaire que les perfections fussent inégales, la curiosité demande encore pourquoy certaines parties sont plus ou moins avantagées que les autres? Pourquoi estant dans la masse des choses possibles, & n'ayant aucun droict à l'estre par une égale négation, quelques-unes en ont esté tirées avec des préférences, & enrichies de plus précieuses qualitez? C'est où faute de raison nous sommes contraints de recourir à la volonté de Dieu, qui est la souveraine raison} & dire qu'il luy a plu en disposer de la sorte par une toute-puissante & très-juste liberté qui ne prend soy que d'elle-mesme. Si l'on demande pourquoy de plusieurs pierres d'égale bonté, & tirées de mesme carrière, quelques-unes sont employées aux murs d'un cabinet, aux portiques, aux manteaux de cheminées, les autres aux fondemens & aux offices d'un grand Palais; Pourquoi d'une mesme masse d'argent ou ferre en fait des vases, les uns qui sont à servir sur la table, les autres sous le lit, il en faut venir à la volonté des ouvriers, qui ont pu disposer à discrétion de ces matières, & qui en effet devoient nécessairement faire tomber l'inégalité sur quelques-unes, pour accomplir tout ce qui estoit de leur art. Supposé que les hommes dont on veut composer une République, ayent les messines habilitéz, le Législateur ne laissera pas d'en faire des Juges, des Soldats, des Marchands, & employer une mesme capacité en divers offices. De là, nous pouvons juger qu'il estoit fort convenable, mesme nécessaire, que Dieu départist une diversité de grâces aux hommes, pour faire un ordre dans le monde intellectuel, qui répondist à celui du monde inférieur, & qui eust du rapport avec ses Hiérarchies célestes dont les perfections sont différentes, comme nous l'avons vu au précédent Livre.

Ces personnes d'un mérite égal, qui ne seroient pas en mesme charge, auroient quelque sujets de plainte d'une inégalité, qui ne se pourroit excuser que par la nécessité de l'ordre, & par la considération d'un bien public. Mais représentez-vous que les hommes devant leur création n'avoient aucun droict à l'existence, ny par conséquent aucun mérite pour prétendre à un plus sublime degré de grâces. Dieu leur a donc fait une assez grande faveur de leur donner un estre si noble, & il dépcndoit purement de la libéralité, de leur départir des

grâces à proportion de ce qu'il en vouloit faire réussir pour sa gloire, mais toujours suffisantes pour leur salut. Les Loix donnent la liberté à celui qui est maistre d'une chose, d'en disposer selon qu'il luy plaise. Un Prince ne seroit pas souverain, s'il ne pouvoit élever quelque favory, accorder des privilèges, des honneurs, des immunités. Dieu donc qui est une cause souverainement libre, ayant donné l'estre aux âmes raisonnables, sans aucun précédent mérite de leur part, les peut élever au degré de grâce qu'il luy plaist, dont le moindre leur est une très-grande faveur, puis qu'elles n'y avoient aucun droit.

Il ne faut point inférer de là, comme font les libertins, que sa Majesté Divine ayant fait naistre quelques-uns sous l'influence de Vénus, ou de Mars, ou de Saturne, que c'est leur bien de suivre les inclinations de leurs Planètes, comme s'ils gardoient en cela l'ordre de la vie qu'elle leur a prescrit les mettant au monde. Il est vray que c'est un bien pour cet homme d'avoir un tempérament qui l'incline aux voluptez, à la colère, ou à la mélancolie, non pas pour le suivre, mais pour le vaincre, & s'en faire des occasions de gloire, par le secours des grâces suffisantes qui luy sont données. Il se peut mesme servir de ces inclinations naturelles pour de bonnes fins, & en tirer de grands avantages pour la vertu quand elles sont bien conduites. Une humeur sanguine rend la personne plus disposée à concevoir les flâmes, & à ressentir les extases de l' divin, à s'acquitter des devoirs de la charité & à gagner les cœurs par une douceur qui se fait aimer, & qui donne beaucoup d'efficace aux bons exemples pour persuader le bien. La bile peut donner un zèle & un courage invincible dans les occasions où il faut rendre quelques combats. La mélancolie retire des conversations, d'où l'on ne sort ordinairement que plus pauvre de quelque vertu; elle persuade la solitude qui est l'élément de l'innocence, le lieu Saint où Dieu se communique plus familièrement à l'âme, le port qui nous défend du naufrage, le Ciel qui nous fait gouter les véritables félicités de cette vie. Si les hommes employent mal des forces que la vertu peut gagner à son party, c'est leur faute, & ils doivent en cela se plaindre de leur lâcheté, & non pas de la miséricorde de Dieu. Le veux que ces mouvemens sensitifs échappent quelquefois à la raison, & que leur impétuosité n'attende pas toujours ses ordres & neantmoins nous avons vu au Livre de l'Immortalité de l'Ame, qu'il est en n'est le pouvoir de contracter des habitudes qui surmontent ces inclinations, & qu'au reste ces surprises ne sont que des allarmes qui mettent la raison en défense devant qu'elle soit tombée dans le crime. Et puis nous demeurons sans excuse, si l'on considère les grâces que Dieu nous donne, plus fortes quand nous avons de plus grands besoins comme un bon père de famille fait servir des viandes de plus grand prix à un serviteur malade, qu'à son propre fils qui se porte bien.

Que si ces grâces ne montent pas jusques à ce point auquel par effet elles gagnent ce cœur endurcy, c'est que Dieu a vu dès l'éternité des prophanations que cette âme ingrate feroit de ses bienfaits, & qu'après lui avoir donné beaucoup plus qu'il ne luy falloit pour se convertir, elle a voulu se jeter dans le précipice, malgré tous les obstacles qui la retenoient. C'est une terre infertile, sur qui il ne falloit pas perdre plus de façons; un arbre sans fruit qui mérite d'être abandonné, après des soins qui dévoient le rendre meilleur; & la justice Divine ne s'exerceroit pas en cette vie, si elle ne punissoit les hommes déterminez au mal, par la soustraction de ses grâces extraordinaires, afin que cette perte spirituelle fuit du rapport à la qualité de leur délit; comme les pères châtient la désobéissance de leurs enfants par l'abdication; comme les Loix ôtent les charges publiques à ceux qui en abusent, comme elles privent ceux qui Veulent frauder une hérédité, de tout le droit qu'il sy pouvoient légitimement prétendre; comme elles punissent les calomnieux, d'infamie; comme elles condamnent les faux témoins à ne porter jamais aucun témoignage; comme elles chassent des Temples ceux qui en ont prophané les mystères.

Ces justes indignations du Ciel abandonnent les âmes ingrates à leurs appétits, & les laissent périr sous un vent qui le fit paroître favorable; c'est pourquoy nous les devons craindre incomparablement plus que le défaut de ces grâces, qui ont un grand éclat à l'extérieur, comme sont la beauté, l'éloquence, la subtilité de l'esprit, le don de faire des miracles, & autres semblables qui gagnent l'admiration des hommes. En effet il n'y a point d'esprit si peu raisonnable qui ne se sente pressé de rendre de grands respects à ces personnes qui paroissent entre nous, comme si elles estoient d'une condition céleste, & comme si elles avoient la Lieutenance de Dieu dans le monde. Qui ne s'étonnera de voir un homme qui parle des choses futures comme si elles luy estoient prescrites; qui appaise les orages d'un signe de main; qui calme les mers par une parole qui par un seul attouchement guérit des infirmités incurables à la Médecine; qui ressuscite à les morts &

enseigne à la Philosophie que Dieu peut accorder un retour de cette privation, un rapel de cet exil, contre les Loix ordinaires de la Nature? Les hommes le rendent encore recommandables par la science, qui est dans les esprits cc qu'est la beauté sur les visages & ces deux rares qualitez donnent une telle éminence aux personnes qui les possèdent, qu'il semble que toutes les autres soient nées pour leur rendre des respects & des services. Neantmoins ces faveurs ne font pas celles que nous devons le plus estimer, parce qu'elles ne supposent pas nécessairement l'amitié de Dieu: d'ordinaire elles nous sont accordées pour les employer au service de nostre prochain, elles nous rendent comptables & criminels, si au lieu d'en estre bons dispensateurs, nous en tirons des sentimens de vanité. La vraye grâce est celle qui nous donne de grandes aversions du vice, & assez de force pour nous en délivrer ; elle assujettit toutes les puissances de l'âme aux volontez de Dieu, & les tient prestes en tout temps & en toutes occasions à luy obéir. Quoy que les Loix ne permettent pas de tirer un interest de l'interest, neantmoins la bonté de Dieu donne cours á une sainte avance, quand il nous fait expérimenter qu'une grâce qu'il nous accorde pour récompense de quelque bonne oeuvre, estant bien ménagée, nous en peut mériter une autre, ainsi de suite, par un progresz qui ne prend fin que par le défaut de nostre volonté, & qui peut toujours croistre pour l'acquisition d'une gloire qui est infinie.

### ***CHAPITRE V - De la Récompense des Bonnes Actions en l'Autre Vie, & de la Vision de Dieu***

Cette prodigieuse diversité d'appétits qui partagent les œuvres des hommes, se rapporte à un souhait gênerai, d'estre dans une condition affranchie de toute misère, & bienheureuse par la jouissance de toute la félicité possible ; mais l'effet de ces sublimes prétentions ne nous est pas permis durant cette vie, où nous n'avons point de douceurs qui ne soient méfiées de ciel & où l'amour, l'ambition, l'avarice, ne donnent que des contentemens imaginaires, des peines & des inquiétudes véritables où les faveurs qui semblent nous élever, sont des fardeaux qui accablent où les passions se poussent & s'entrechoquent comme des flots de la mer, sans se donner d'autre repos que celui qui procède de l'impuissance. Enfin nous sommes icy dans un pais de désirs, il y en a donc un autre qui en réserve les satisfactions, & où ces grandes aviditez de nostre cœur doivent rencontrer un bien capable de les apaiser d'autant que ces souhaits de félicité commune á toute nostre espece, ne doivent pas estre inutiles, autrement l'homme qui est le plus noble, seroit la plus misérable des créatures, en ce que si la pierre ne tombe pas á l'infiny sans trouver un centre où elle s'arreste, si les plantes & les animaux obtiennent leurs fins, & si le monde leur fournit pleinement les objets de leurs appétits, il n'est pas à croire que nous eussions les pensées & les souhaits d'une parfaite félicité, si la jouissance nous en estoit impossible. Mille raisons que j'ay déduites au précédent Livre, nous persuadent que nostre âme n'est pas seulement créée pour donner la vie á un corps où ses bienfaits luy sont préjudiciables, & qui luy est une prison si obscure, qu'elle est contrainte d'en sortir autant qu'il luy est possible par les abstractions, pour avoir quelque connoissance de la vérité. J'ay fait voir que la vertu ne rencontre icy que des périls, des fatigues & des combats au lieu de triomphes, qu'elle s'impose des peines au lieu de se servir de récompense, qu'elle souffre tant de calamitez sous les persécutions de l'envie, & par une permission particulière du Ciel, qu'elle est l'objet ordinaire de nos compassions. D'où il faut nécessairement conclure que Dieu ne seroit pas juste, ny souverainement bon s'il ne lui donnoit un estât de gloire qui comprenne en abrégé, toute qu'il y a de bien & ses libéralisez ne seroient pas assez magnifiques, elles n'accomplissoient nos désirs en surmontant mesme nos espérances.

Il ne nous est pas possible d'avoir une parfaite idée de ce bienheureux estât, que nous n'avons pas expérimenté ; neantmoins entre les ignorances de nostre nature, nous pouvons connoistre que nostre intellect recherche une première vérité, & que nostre volonté soupire pour un souverain bien, de sorte que la gloire que nous espérons au Ciel, consiste en un parfait acquiescement de ces deux puissances en la vision de Dieu ; c'est à dire que nous jouirons de cette lumière primitive, de la première vérité, du Souverain estre intelligible qui se possède proprement par l'Intellect. Ce souverain Bonté pénétrera très-intimement l'essence de nos âmes, & s'y unissant par soy-mesme, sans l'entremise d'aucunes espèces, elle les comblera par cette étroite union, de joyes & de délices inconcevables. Sans ces discours, & sans ces longueurs qui accompagnent nos raisonnemens, une grande lumière nous montrera d'une vue toutes les verir & dans leurs principes. Une affluence de gloire nous fera jouir de tous les biens imaginables dans celui qui les comprend tous. Si au monde les plus belles choses deviennent fades quand elles sont ordinaires, & si l'amour y trouve plus de



délices en la recherche qu'en la jouissance, c'est que l'âme s'abuse, & prend les premières impulsions de l'appétit, comme si elles avançaient au souverain bien; mais depuis qu'elle ne rencontre que des perfections finies dans son objet, elle prend le change, & cherche dans la diversité les satisfactions qu'une seule chose ne luy peut donner ; mais les bienheureux jouiront d'une félicité éternelle, sans que la continue leur puisse jamais donner de dégoût, parce que l'objet en est infiny ; & comme il comprend toutes les perfections possibles, avec une éminence qui ne s'y rencontreroit pas si elles estoient divisées en plusieurs sujets, il donne un acquiescement â tous nos désirs, & les tient attachez à soy avec une plus amoureuse nécessité, & plus de repos, que les choses matérielles n'en trouvent en leurs centres. Si l'on dit que la forme des Cieux est si parfaite, & qu'elle contente si fort les appétits g de la matière , qu'elle luy ose ses inclinations naturelles au changement ; Nous avons sujet de conclure que Dieu s'unissant aux âmes bienheureuses, les affranchira des inconstances qui leur estoient familières au monde, qu'il préviendra tous leurs souhaits par une surabondante satisfaction, qui ne leur laissera point lieu d'en concevoir de nouveaux, que les éclairant de sa lumière, il les rendra participans de *Visa* mutabilité de sa nature ; il ne remplira pas seulement, mais il étendra leurs puissances, & outre la proportion qu'elles ont avec luy, comme avec leur dernière fin, & l'une que objet de leur béatitude, il les fortifiera & leur donnera encore une plus grande capacité par les lumières de gloire.

Tous les Bienheureux posséderont ce souverain bien, mais différemment ; & comme les yeux qui voyent un mesme Soleil en supportent les lumières plus ou moins à proportion de leurs forces. Cette inégalité de gloire vient de l'inégalité du mérite , & ne faut point douter que la Justice Divine ne donne de plus belles palmes aux actions plus généreuses ; qu'elle ne réserve des récompenses particulières à la Force qui aura tenu contre tous les accidens de la Fortune ; à la Tempérance , qui surmonte les passions plus rebelles & plus insolentes contre la raison ; à la Charité qui expose courageusement ses interests pour soulager les nécessitez du prochain. Il y a donc divers ordres de Bienheureux aussi bien que d'Ange ; & cette équité qui donne la préséance aux plus grands mérites dans le gouvernement de l'Univers & de nos Estats, & se voit tres-entiere dans ce monde spirituel. Cependant ces saintes âmes entrent si fort dans les sentimens de la Justice divine, que quand il n'y auroit point de décret qui leur assignât leurs rangs, elles les prendroient d'elles-mesmes comme tres-justes & tres-convenables á leur portée & sans se piquer de jalousie contre les ordres supérieurs, comme un homme de médiocre taille ne souhaitera pas d'avoir l'habit d'un géant. Sedans l'économie de nos corps, le pied n'a pas l'ambition de se métamorphoser en teste mais au contraire elles se montrent intéressées dans la gloire des plus éminentes, elles y prennent part, & comme elles connoissent que Dieu mérite infiniment plus de gloire qu'elles ne luy en peuvent rendre, & qu'elles voyent des créatures qui s'acquittent plus parfaitement qu'elles de ce devoir, elles en conçoivent la mesme joye que nous, de rencontrer un excellent Peintre qui représente au naturel le visage, & un bon Orateur qui dresse les Eloges d'un Prince que nous aimons. Tellement que les Bienheureux jouissent, & de la gloire qui leur est propre, & de celle qui leur revient par complaisance : Ainsi rien ne manque à leur félicité, en ce que toutes les inégalitez semblent couvertes par ces reflexions de lumières, & par leur commun objet qui est infiny. Quelles consolations de se souvenir lors des pauvretes, des traverses, des maladies, qui nous auront esté des sujets pour mériter cette gloire ! Le temps des souffrances qui paroissoit long à nos sentimens durant cette vie, ne semblera qu'un moment en comparaison d'une éternité qui ne finira jamais si nous verrons lors ce que nous ignorons á cette heure, que les maladies de nos ames devoient estre secouées par ces remèdes ; qu'il ne nous faloit pas de moindres combats, pour tenir nos courages en exercice, que ces inspirations, ces lumières, ces saints mouvemens nous ont esté donnez à propos, comme des grâces aux criminels & qu'elles ont esté les vrais moyens que Dieu devoit employer pour nous sauver, sans contraindre nostre liberté, Justice admirable, qui ne laisse pas le moindre mérite de nostre vie, le moindre bon mouvement de nos coeurs sans récompense ; qui âpres nous avoir mis les armes en main pour combattre & âpres nous avoir donné des secours pour vaincre, nous conduit dans un estât de gloire, qui surpasse & nos espérances & nos mérites.

## ***CHAPITRE VI - La Bonté Infinie de Dieu n'Empesche pas qu'Il ne Punisse les Péchez comme Il Récompense les Vertus***

Voicy la seconde partie de la Justice distributive de Dieu, dont la plus-part des hommes ne voudroit point ouïr parler, comme d'une créance importune qui trouble les contentemens de cette vie par les appréhensions de l'autre -y ils voudroient qu'il leur fut permis de s'abandonner aux plaisirs des sens, de jouir l'impétuosité de leurs passions & de violer les Loix divines & humaines, sans estre coupables, ou qu'ils obtinssent par leurs dissolutions la mesme gloire que méritent les plus sublimes vertus. Je ne m'étonne pas si l'amour propre cherche ses avantages & l'abolition de ses crimes par des voyes injustes. Un bras pourry de gangrène résulte donc qu'il peut le fer qui le doit couper. Les debtors de mauvaise fby voudroient qu'il n'y eust aucunes actions en jugement ; point de saisies ny de geôles qui les contraignissent à payer leurs debtes. Le désir des criminels seroit qu'il n'y eust ny luges pour les condamner, ny peines aucunes qu'ils eussent souffrir. Ainsi ces ames engagées dans le poché, taschent à se défaire du sentiment de la Justice divine ; mais par un effort autant plus inutile qu'il leur est préjudiciable, puisque par ces fausses imaginations, ils perdent la crainte qui est la plus puissante machine pour les retirer du mal, & neantmoins ils n'évitent pas les peines deuës à leurs démérites, selon l'ordre établey de Dieu. Sa Providence qui a marqué l'écliptique pour le chemin du Soleil, & les deferens aux autres Planètes ; qui a voulu que des qualitez particulières servirent de dispositions aux formes, que la beauté résultat d'une certaine disposition des parties, a prescrit aux hommes des Loix, qui estant bien observées avec le secours de ses ' grâces, leur feroient mériter la béatitude. Ce n'est pas merveille si ceux qui prennent des chemins directement opposez, arrivent à un estât qui luy est contraire. Si l'on ne garde les règles propres á chacun des Arts, il est impossible d'obtenir la fin qu'ils promettent. Si l'on fait une course de bague, c'est á condition que ceux qui ne remporteront pas, seront exclus de l'honneur & du prix qui s'y propose. La Musique ne se forme que du concert des voix, qui suivent exactement les nottes de leur partie. Un vaisseau n'arrivera pas au port s'il s'expose aux vents qui l'en écartent. La Nature mesme qui aspire à la perfection, permet les Monstres dans les espèces les plus accomplies, lors que la matière se trouve indisposée pour de plus nobles effets. Ainsi Dieu veut le salut de tous les hommes, il propose la béatitude pour récompense de leurs vertus ; mais il veut qu'ils les pratiquent ; que pour estre heureux ils soient fidelles à l'observation de ses Loix : Il leur donne le secours général & particulier de ses grâces, s'ils en abusent, il n'y auroit non plus de justice à les sauver, qu'à donner les mesmes récompenses aux soldats qui ont pris la fuite faute de ecurr, qu'à ceux qui ont esté courageusement à l'attaque, & forcé la résistance de l'ennemy.

On dit contre cette vérité, qu'il n'y a point en Dieu ny de Justice commutative, parce qu'il n'y a point de proportion entre la gloire d'une éternité, & nos actions, dont la durée & le mérite sont de si peu d'étendue, ny aussi de Justice distributive, n'y ayant point de Loix qui l'obligent, comme les Magistrats, à la distribution des peines & des recompenses. Cette difficulté me semble si peu considérable, & si lcgere, qu'elle ne mérite point de réponse ; car qui ne sçait que le Prince n'est pas au moins juste, quand il décerne des couronnes à la vertu, encore qu'elles ne soient point taxées, & qu'il soit au-dessus des Loix qui en déterminent le prix? La Justice est une certaine proportion de la peine, ou de la récompense, avec les actions, qui est originaiement dans la nature des choses, & dans l'idée raisonnable du Législateur, dont la Loy n'est qu'une morte représentation. Or Dieu est une Justice vivante & primitive, c'est pourquoy il ne punit pas à cause qu'il y a une Loy qui le commande, mais parce qu'il veut punir par une volonté, qui n'est autre chose que la Justice mesme, dont le sentiment est gravé dedans nos cœurs, & que chacun reconnoist, quand il juge raisonnable que les crimes soient chastiez de quelques peines. Il est yray qu'il n'y a point d'égalité entre sa gloire & nos actions, á cause que tout le mérite qu'elles ont pour cette fin surnaturelle, dépend de ses grâces. Mais si ce n'est pas proprement une Justice distributive à l'égard des récompenses, au moins elle l'est à l'égard des peines, en ce que de nous-mesmes nous sommes capables de démériter. Nos ingratitudez contre un si grand bien-faicteur; nos rebellions contre nostre Souverain, nos désobéissancez à nostre Père céleste, nos sacrilèges contre sa divine Majesté, sont dignes de punition, & ont de soy du rapport aux supplices dont ils doivent estre chastiez en l'autre vie. De sorte que comme un esclave ne peut demander récompense des services qu'il rend selon le devoir de sa condition, & mérite neantmoins d'estre puny, s'il ne s'en acquitte pas. Ainsi les hommes peuvent justement estre punis de Dieu pour leurs péchez, encore qu'ils n'ayent aucun droict de demander la récompense de leurs bonnes œuvres, qui luy estant deuës par beaucoup de titres, n'acquièrent aucune obligation dessus luy.

Comme la Nature tire un bien du mal, quand elle fait servir les corruptions à de nouvelles naissances- le mouvement des Cieux, les éclipses, les exils, les rétrogradations des planètes, pour nous en tempérer les influences, qui seroient trop forces, si elles estoient arrestées. Ainsi Dieu tourne le mal de coulpe en un bien, & fait un ordre des déreglemens de l'esprit de l'homme, quand il les chastie, en ce qu'il abaisse cette volonté qui s'estoit insolemment soulevée contre lui, il la réduit au rang qu'elle doit tenir, il fait qu'elle souffre des peines qu'elle n'aime pas à cause qu'elle a méprisé ce qu'elle devoit aimer, & qu'elle perde dans ces supplices la liberté dont die ne s'estoit pas bien servie pour l'acquisition de la gloire. Cette Justice est un bien, comme nous le pouvons connoistre par nos propres inclinations naturelles, qui nous donnent une secrette complaisance quand on fait Persécution des parricides, des traistres à la ' Patrie, des boutefeux de l'Estat, & qui nous portent á confirmer les Arrests qui les ont condamnez. Si c'est un bien, elle doit estre en Dieu, veu principalement que son contraire choque nostre raison, qui ne peut approuver l'impunité des grands maléfices: Aussi tous les anciens Philosophes qui ont crû l'immortalité de l'ame, soustiennent un animement qu'il y a certains lieux de peine où sont précipitez celles qui n'ont pas expié leurs fautes durant cette vie, & quand les Poètes disent qu'elles sont jugées dans les Enfers, par Minos, AEacus, Râdamanthus, qui furent autrefois des Princes tres-justes, c'est pour exprimer plus sensiblement les Arrests inflexibles & formidables de la Justice de Dieu. Les punitions ne sont donc pas seulement bonnes, en considération de ce qu'elles épouvantent le vice, & en donnent de la crainte par leur exemple, mais principalement à cause qu'elles sont une des deux parties de la Justice, qu'elles occupent un des costez de sa balance, & que si le mérite élevé les bons à sa gloire, les crimes importans doivent abaisser ceux qui les ont commis dans la damnation. Cette Justice Oste, comme j'ay dit, elle établit une égalité, qui est une image de l'Unité divine: Aussi Boëce soutient que les meschans sont moins heureux dans la continue, que dans la punition de leurs crimes, parce que d'un mal elle en fait un bien.

L'amour propre nous flate par trop, quand en comparaison de ses tendresses il nous fait concevoir les Arrests de la Justice Divine, comme une espece de cruauté, il nous représente que nous sommes quelque chose de grand; & parce que nous nous aimons avec nos crimes, il voudroit engager Dieu dans les mesmes sentimens, le rendre aussi indulgent que nous, de nos fautes, c'est à dire qu'il n'eust point d'yeux pour les voir, de volonté, ny de puissance pour les punir. Je m'imagine que si les mouches & les puces avoient quelque ombre de raison, elles formeroient les mesmes plaintes de nous, & nous accuseroient de cruauté, de ce que pour nous venger d'une petite piqueur, nous leur osons une vie qui leur est si chère, & qui n'est plus réparable : neantmoins qui est l'homme de si foible esprit, qui pense commettre une injustice en ces actions, & qui ne les mette entre les indifférentes, parce que l'extrême inégalité qui est entre luy & ces bestioles, luy donne un droict sur leur vie, sans qu'elles en puissent demander raison, principalement lors qu'elles luy sont importunes? Hélas; nous sommes moins en comparaison de Dieu, que ne le sont les plus imparfaits de tous les insectes à nostre égard. Nous avons du rapport avec les vers & les moucherons, en ce qu'ils se réduisent sous le genre généralissime de Pestre catégorique : ils sont composez des mesmes elemens, ils digèrent, ils croissent, ils sentent aussi bien que nous ; ils ont des artifices que nous ne pouvons égaler ; enfin ce font des animaux, & le titre qu'on leur donne d'imparfaits, signifie si l'on l'examine bien, plus de pureté, de promptitude, de faveur des causes universelles en leur naissance.

Cette pensée nous doit tenir dans une abysine d'humilité, sans nous plaindre de la Justice de Dieu, & avec de profondes altérations de ses infinies miséricordes, Il destine tout le monde à nos usages, il nous donne un empire sur les animaux, il éclaire nostre raison de ses lumières, il échauffe nostre cœur de ses saintes flammes ; sa main est toujours preste á nous secourir, ses Anges à nous assister de leurs conseils; & cependant nous sommes ingrats jusques à nous rendre rebelles contre sa divine Majesté, & à preferer le désordre de nos appétits à l'accomplissement de ses volontez. N'est-ce pas un nouveau crime de luy vouloir donner d'autres sentimens que les siens, & de l'appeller injuste, parce qu'il punit des parricides & des sacrilèges ; avuons qu'il est nostre Créateur, nos ames tiennent immédiatement l'estre de sa main \$ mais les mépris que les hommes font de cette faveur, les rend plus coupables, & la qualité de Père ne signifie pas moins la puissance & la Justice à punir, que l'amour pour obliger. Le Philosophe Aristippus fit une solennelle abdication d'un fils qui avait de mauvaises mœurs, & qui le rendit incorrigible à ses avis sur ce que quelques-uns qui ménageoient l'accommodement de cette affaire, luy représentèrent qu'il agissoit par cette rigueur

contre une partie de lui-mesme : Ne crachons-nous pas, leur dit-il, les excréments qui viennent de nous? & ne seroit-ce pas une cruauté d'empescher un homme de se défaire des vermines incommodes au corps qui les a produit ? C'est pourquoy les anciennes Loix de Rome donnèrent aux Pères la puissance de vie & de mort sur leurs enfans, sans craindre qu'ils en abusassent, & avec cette créance, que l'amour qu'ils ont pour leur bien, est un juste contrepoids à la colère, qui les pourroit emporter au chastiment : Aussi quoy qu'elles ne permettent pas au mary de tuer sa femme surprise en adultère, parce que la jalousie aussi furieuse en ses entreprises, qu'elle est aveugle avec tous ses yeux d'Argus, peut prendre les moindres soupçons pour de légitimes sujets d'exercer sa rage: Mais, dit la Loy, la piété paternelle consulte pour le bien de ses enfans, elle arrête les précipitations des mouvemens sensitifs, de forte que son procédé demeure toujours dans les termes de la Justice. L'on noye & l'on étouffe les Monstres, parce qu'ils sont les péchez de la Nature contre les loix d'une espece ; & personne ne condamne les mères de cruauté, quand elles consentent qu'on délivre le monde de ces malheureuses productions. Les ames abandonnées dans le vice, sont des monstres qui n'ont rien de ressemblant à leur principe ; & s'il nous estoit permis de voir leur intérieur, nous jugerions que la Nature n'a point d'extravagances qui égalent leurs deformitez. Il ne faut donc point alléguer icy la bonté infinie de Dieu, comme si elle devoit servir d'excuse à ces péchez, puis qu'au contraire sa considération en augmente les démérites, & fait que les chastimens en sont tres-justes. Ingrates & malheureuses créatures, qui n'ont pas le sentiment de cette bonté quand elles l'offensent, & qui ne l'avouent de bouche, que quand on leur parle d'en estre punis, adjoûtant ainsi la mocquerie à leurs sacrilèges. Digne, certes, de souffrir comme un luge sévère, celui qu'elles n'ont pas voulu reconnoistre comme un Père plein de miséricorde.

La chaleur naturelle qui ne travaille que pour la vie, cause neantmoins des fièvres qui donnent la mort, quand elle trouve une plénitude de matière disposée à l'inflammation. Un mesme rayon de Soleil, sans rien changer de ses favorables vivifiantes qualitez qui ont fait naître la rose, la sèche, quand l'humidité vient à luy défaillir. Je pourrois dire de mesme, que la bonté de Dieu qui donne la gloire aux bonnes ames, condamne les Criminelles aux supplices, parce qu'elle doit produire des effets contraires sur des sujets opposez, demeurant toujours égale en soy, puisque Cette partie de Justice qui punit est un bien qui ne doit pas manquer à une bonté infinie, quand l'occasion le demande : Neantmoins ces comparaisons ne sont pas bien justes à cause que ces puissances naturelles agissent positivement en la corruption des sujets, c'est en effet le Soleil qui sèche la rose, & la chaleur naturelle qui cause l'incendie de la fièvre, mais ce n'est pas Dieu qui fait le péché, ny les peines qui le punissent. Il vous montre le chemin de la gloire, il vous donne des instructions qui Vous le persuadent, & des secours pour y avancer: que si vostre liberté prend des resolutions, & des routes toutes contraires, c'est elle-mesme, & non pas Dieu qui vous perte.

Si vous ne jouissez pas des lumières qui font la gloire des Bienheureux, c'est que vous vous estes volontairement précipitez dans une région de ténèbres, Les Anciens nous signifièrent cette vérité, quand ils dirent que les Cyclopes, qui habitoient les antres de la terre, forgeoient les foudres de Jupiter ; c'est à dire que les hommes esclaves des plaisirs du monde, arment eux-mesmes la main de Dieu, & font les auteurs des peines qu'ils souffrent. Ils tenoient encore que les foudres envoyez de Jupiter sont de bon augure, & ne causent point de mal. Ceci se vérifie par expérience, en ce qui est de l'air qui se montre couvert de nuages blancs, quelquefois avec de petits tonnerres qui réveillent la Nature fort à propos, quand le Planète Jupiter est maistre du Ciel, mais cela est encore plus vray par rapport dans l'ordre de la Justice Diurne, qui ne nous envoie des afflictions que pour nostre gloire, & pour tenir nos courages en exercice ; & quant aux peines que les damnez souffrent, ils en font les premières causes, & ce sont leurs mauvaises qualitez, semblables à celles des infortunes, d'où précèdent les foudres qui les écrasent.

Les Princes se portent à vanger les crimes par un double motif, & pour satisfaire aux devoirs de la Justice qui demande cette égalité, & pour réparer les injures qui ont esté faites : Aussi les Loix Romaines qui estoient exactes en la formalité des actions, en permettoient deux contre le larron ; l'une pour vendiquer ce qui avoit esté mal pris, & celle-là passoit jusques sur les héritiers ; & l'autre estoit personnelle; & consistoit en la peine devë à la gravité du crime. Ainsi les amendes, les confiscations, les punitions corporelles qui sont les plus rigoureuses, ne tendent pas à satisfaire aux parties intéressées, mais à punir un crime dont l'exercés devoit estre réduit par le chastiment, à l'égalité de la Justice ; d'où il faut conclure, qu'il est tres-équitable que

Dieu punisse les crimes pour satisfaire à cette équité, quoy qu'ils ne portent aucun dommage à sa grandeur, & qu'il en puisse estre moins touché que le Ciel des flèches que nos foibles bras tirent contre luy. Au reste, la volonté qui s'est mise en devoir de l'exécution doit estre punie comme dans les crimes de leze Majesté ; qui doute que les pécheurs ne méritent tout ce qui se peut imaginer de peines, pour avoir attenté contre Dieu, & luy avoir ravy autant qu'ils pouvoient la gloire & les droits de son Empire?

Sa souveraine Sagesse a voulu donner aux hommes des Loix, avec des moyens proportionnez à leur nature, & qui fassent de fortes persuasions à Une liberté qui ne devoit pas estre violentée : Or comme nous sommes tres-sensibles à la douleur, & que la crainte fait prendre des résolutions extrêmes, qui ne fussent jamais entrées dans un esprit dégagé de ce sentiment, Dieu s'en est servy, & a joint les menaces de la damnation aux promesses de la Béatitude, pour gagner plus facilement nos coeurs ; c'est une digue contre les débordemens du péché, c'est un Fort dont les vertus se servent contre les attaques, & n'estait pas vray que dans les inclinations naturelles qu'ont les hommes de suivre le party des sens, il seroit inutile d'en publier les deffenses, s'il n'y avoit point de peines pour la transgression ? Le monde ne laisse pas de commettre ces grands désordres qui sont tous les jours gémir l'innocence & la pieté, quoy que les peines éternelles préparées aux crimes soient épouvantables : Que seroit-ce donc? Quelles calamitez, quels ravages, quelles désolations ne verrions-nous point entre les hommes, s'ils n'estoient un peu retenus par la crainte? Appellez-vous cette justice mauvaise, parce qu'elle ne favorise pas les meschans ? qu'elle leur assigne un estât conforme à leur démérite ? qu'elle sépare les ténèbres de la lumière, le vil du précieux? Qu'elle ne donne pas aux perfides & aux sacrilèges les couronnes de L'obéissance & de la Religion ? Qu'elle ne rend pas Dieu prévaricateur de la vérité, réfractaire à son jugement, lâche jusques á n'oser condamner ce qu'il condamne ? enfin qu'elle ne permet pas cet avantage aux pécheurs, d'usurper sa gloire, âpres avoir transgressé ses Loix ? Quoy que les âmes criminelles réclament icy, il est vray que la Justice *de* Dieu n'est pas seulement une espece, mais une protection de sa bonté, d'autant qu'elle ne se pourroit exercer, & ne seroit pas complete à nostre égard, comme j'ay dit, sans les effets de cette Justice. C'est elle qui nous le représente comme nostre Père, avec des soins charitables, qui demandent tous les amours de nostre cœur, & comme nostre Souverain, qui nous gouvernant avec ses Loix, doit estre respecté de nous avec toutes les humilitez possibles, aussi tous les préceptes de pieté se rapportent aux scntimens de l'amour & de la crainte de Dieu.

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**Baxter, Richard (1615-1691), English Puritan Pastor and Theologian**

**The Necessity Of Diligently Seeking The Saints' Rest**

**The Saints' Everlasting Rest**

**Chapter VII**

**The Necessity Of Diligently Seeking The Saints' Rest**

The saints' rest surprisingly neglected. The author mourns the neglect, and excites the reader to diligence, by considering, 1. The ends we aim at, the work we have to do, the shortness and uncertainty of our time, and the diligence of our enemies; 2. Our talents, mercies, relations to God, and our afflictions; 3. What assistance we have, what principles we profess, and our certainty never to do enough; 4. That every grace tends to diligence, and to trifle is lost labor; that much time is misspent and that our recompense and labor will be proportionable; 5. That striving is the divine appointment; all men do or will approve it; the best Christians, at death, lament their want of it; heaven is often lost for want of it, but never obtained without it; 6. God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are in earnest; God is so in hearing and answering prayer; ministers in their instructions and exhortations; all the creatures in serving us; sinners in serving the devil, as we were once, and now are, in worldly things, and in heaven and hell all are in earnest.

If there be so certain and glorious a rest for the saints, why is there no more earnest seeking after it? One would think, if a man did but once hear of such unspeakable glory to be obtained, and believed what he heard, he would be transported with the vehemency of his desire after it, and would almost forget to eat and

drink, and would care for nothing else, and speak of and inquire after nothing else, but how to get this treasure. And yet people who hear of it daily, and profess to believe it as a fundamental article of their faith, as little mind it, or labor for it, as if they had never heard of any such thing, or did not believe one word they hear. This reproof is applicable to the worldly-minded, to the profane multitude, to formal professors, and even to the godly themselves.

The worldly-minded are so taken up in seeking the things below, that they have neither heart nor time to seek this rest. O foolish sinners, “who hath bewitched you?” The world bewitches men into brute beasts, and draws them even to madness. See what riding and running, what scrambling and catching for a thing of nought, while eternal rest lies neglected! What contriving and caring to get a step higher in the world than their brethren, while they neglect the kingly dignity of the saints! What insatiable pursuit of fleshly pleasures, while they regard the praises of God, the joy of angels, as a tiresome burden! What unwearied diligence in raising their posterity, enlarging their possessions, (perhaps for a poor living from hand to mouth,) while judgment is drawing near! but how it shall go with them then, never brings them to one hour’s consideration! What rising early and sitting up late, and laboring from year to year, to maintain themselves and children in credit till they die! but what shall follow after they never think! Yet these men cry, “May we not be saved without so much ado?” How early do they rouse up their servants to their labor! but how seldom do they call them to prayer, or reading the Scriptures! What hath this world done for its lovers and friends, that it is so eagerly followed and painfully sought after, while Christ and heaven are neglected? or what will the world do for them for the time to come? The common entrance into it is through anguish and sorrow. The passage through it is with continual care and labor. The passage out of it is the sharpest of all. O unreasonable, deluded men! will mirth and pleasure stay by you? will gold and worldly glory prove fast friends to you in the time of your greatest need? Will they hear your cries in the day of your calamity? At the hour of your death will they either answer or relieve you? Will they go along with you to the other world, and bribe the Judge and bring you off clear, or purchase you a place among the blessed? Why then did the rich man want “a drop of water to cool his tongue?” Or are the sweet morsels of present delight and honor of more worth than eternal rest? And will they recompense the loss of that enduring treasure? Can there be the least hope of any of these? Ah, vile, deceitful world! how oft have we heard thy most faithful servants at last complaining, “O, the world hath deceived me, and undone me! It flattered me in my prosperity, but now it turns me off in my necessity. If I had as faithfully served Christ as I have served it, he would not have left me thus comfortless and hopeless.” Thus they complain; and yet succeeding sinners will take no warning.

As for the profane multitude, they will not be persuaded to be at so much pains for salvation as to perform the common outward duties of religion. If they have the Gospel preached in the town where they dwell, it may be they will give the hearing to it one part of the day, and stay at home the other; or if the master come to the congregation, yet part of his family must stay at home. If they have not the plain and powerful preaching of the Gospel, how few are there in a whole town who will travel a mile or two to hear abroad though they will go many miles to the market for provisions for their bodies! They know the Scripture is the law of God, by which they must be acquitted or condemned in the judgment; and that “the man is blessed who delights in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth meditate day and night;” yet will they not be at the pains to read a chapter once a day. If they carry a Bible to church, and neglect it all the week, this is the most use they make of it. Though they are commanded to pray without ceasing, and to pray always, yet they will neither pray constantly in their families nor in secret. Though Daniel would rather be cast to the lions than forbear praying three times a day in his house, where his enemies might hear him; yet these men will rather venture to be an eternal prey to Satan, the roaring lion, than thus seek their own safety. Or their cold and heartless prayers invite God to a denial: for among men it is taken for granted, that he who asks but slightly and seldom, cares not much for what he asks. They judge themselves unworthy of heaven, who think it not worth their more constant and earnest requests. If every door was marked where families do not, morning and evening, earnestly seek the Lord in prayer, and his wrath were poured out upon such prayerless families, our towns would be as places overthrown by the plague, the people being dead within, and the mark of judgment without: I fear, where one house would escape, ten would be marked out for death; and the very doors, as it were, cry, “Lord, have mercy upon us,” because the people would not pray themselves. But

especially if we could see what men do in their secret chambers, how few would you find in a whole town that spend one quarter of an hour, morning and night, in earnest supplication to God for their souls! O how little do these men value eternal rest! Thus do they slothfully neglect all endeavors for their own welfare, except some public duty in the congregation, to which custom or credit engages them. Persuade them to read good books, learn the grounds of religion in their catechism, and sanctify the Lord's day in prayer, and meditation, and hearing the word, forbearing all worldly thoughts and speeches, and what a tedious life do they take this to be! as if they thought heaven were not worth doing so much for.

Another class are formal professors, who will be brought to any outward duty, but to the inward work of religion they will never be persuaded. They will preach, or hear, or read, or talk of heaven, or pray in their families, and take part with the persons or causes that are good, and desire to be esteemed among the godly; but you can never bring them to the more spiritual duties,—as to be constant and fervent in secret prayer and meditation; conscientious in self-examination; heavenly-minded; to watch over their hearts, words and ways; to mortify the flesh, and not make provision to fulfil its lusts; to love and heartily forgive an enemy, and prefer their brethren before themselves; to lay all they have, or do, at the feet of Christ, and prize his service and favor before all, to prepare to die and willingly leave all to go to Christ. Hypocrites will never be persuaded to any of these. If any hypocrite entertains the Gospel with joy, it is only in the surface of his soul; he never gives the seed any depth of earth: it changes his opinions, but never melts and new moulds his heart, nor sets up Christ there in full power and authority. As his religion lies most in opinion, so does his chief business and conversation. He is usually an ignorant, bold, conceited dealer in controversies, rather than an humble embracer of known truth with love and obedience. By his slighting the judgments and persons of others, and seldom talking with seriousness and humility of the great things of Christ, he shows his religion dwells in his brain, and not in his heart. The wind of temptation carries him away as a feather, because his heart is not established with Christ and grace. He never, in private conversation, humbly bewails his soul's imperfections, or tenderly acknowledges his unkindness to Christ; but gathers his greatest comfort from his being of such a persuasion or party. The like may be said of the worldly hypocrite, who chokes the Gospel with the thorns of worldly cares and desires. He is convinced that he must be religious, or he cannot be saved; and therefore he reads, and hears, and prays, and forsakes his former company and courses but he resolves to keep his hold of present things. His judgment may say, God is the chief good; but his heart and affections never said so. The world has more of his affections than God, and therefore it is his god. Though he does not run after opinions and novelties, like the world, yet he will be of that opinion which will best serve his worldly advantage. And as one whose spirits are enfeebled by some pestilential disease, so this man's spirits being possessed by the plague of a worldly disposition, how feeble is he in secret prayer! how superficial in examination and meditation! how poor in heart-watchings! how nothing at all in loving and walking with God, rejoicing in him, or desiring him! So that both these and many other sorts of hypocrites, though they will go with you in the easy outside of religion, yet will never be at the pains of inward and spiritual duties.

And even the godly themselves are too lazy seekers of their everlasting rest. Alas! what a disproportion is there between our light and heat, our profession and prosecution! Who makes such haste as if it were for heaven? How still we stand! how idly we work! how we talk, and jest, and trifle away our time! how deceitfully we perform the work of God! how we hear, as if we heard not! and pray, as if we prayed not! and examine, and meditate, and reprove sin, as if we did it not! and enjoy Christ, as if we enjoyed him not! as if we had learned to use the things of heaven as the apostle teacheth us to "use the things of the world!" What a frozen stupidity has benumbed us! We are dying, and we know it, and yet we stir not; we are at the door of eternal happiness or misery, and yet we perceive it not; death knocks, and we hear it not; God and Christ call and cry to us, "Today, if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts; work while it is day, for the night cometh, when none can work." Now ply your business, labor for your lives, lay out all your strength and time now or never! and yet we stir no more than if we were half asleep. What haste do death and judgment make! how fast do they come on! they are almost upon us, and yet what little haste we make! Lord, what a senseless, earthly, hellish thing is a hard head! Where is the man that is in earnest a Christian? Methinks men every where make but a trifle of their eternal state. They look after it but a little by the by; they do not make

it the business of their lives. If I were not sick myself of the same disease, with what tears should I mix this ink! with what groans should I express these complaints! and with what heart-grief should I mourn over this universal deadness!

Do magistrates among us seriously perform their work? Are they zealous for God? Do they build up his house? Are they tender of his honor? Do they second the word and oppose sin and sinners, as the disturbers of our peace and the only cause of all our miseries? Do they improve all their power, wealth, and honor, and all their influence, for the greatest advantage to the kingdom of Christ, as men that must shortly give an account of their stewardship?

How few are the ministers who are serious in their work! Nay, how grievously do the very best fail in this! Do we cry out of men's disobedience to the Gospel "in the demonstration of the Spirit," and deal with sin as the destroying fire in our towns, and by force pull men out of it? Do we persuade our people as those should that "know the terrors of the Lord?" Do we press Christ, and regeneration, and faith, and holiness upon men, believing that, without these, they can never have life? Do our bowels yearn over the ignorant, careless, obstinate multitude? When we look them in the face, do our hearts melt over them, lest we should never see their faces in rest? Do we, as Paul, "tell them, weeping," of their fleshly and earthly disposition; "and teach them publicly, and from house to house, at all seasons, and with many tears?" And do we entreat them, as for their soul's salvation? Or rather, do we not study to gain the approbation of critical hearers; as if a minister's business were of no more weight but to tell a smooth tale for an hour, and look no more after the people till the next sermon? Does not carnal prudence control our fervor, and make our discourses lifeless on subjects the most piercing? How gently do we handle those sins which will so cruelly handle our people's souls! In a word, our want of seriousness about the things of heaven, charms the souls of men into formality, and brings them to this customary careless hearing, which undoes them. May the Lord pardon the great sin of the ministry in this thing and, in particular, my own!

And are the people more serious than magistrates or ministers? How can it be expected? Reader, look but to thyself and resolve the question. Ask conscience, and suffer it to tell thee truly. Hast thou set thy eternal rest before thine eyes, as the great business thou hast to do in this world? Hast thou watched and labored with all thy might, "that no man take thy crown?" Hast thou made haste, lest thou shouldst come too late, and die before thy work be done? Hast thou pressed on, through crowds of opposition, "toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," till "reaching forth unto those things which are before?" Can conscience witness your secret cries, and groans, and tears? Can your family witness that you taught them the fear of the Lord, and warned them not to "go to that place of torment?" Can your minister witness that he has heard you cry out, "What shall I do to be saved?" and that you have followed him with complaints against your corruptions, and with earnest inquiries after the Lord? Can your neighbors about you witness that you reprove the ungodly, and take pains to save the souls of your brethren? Let all these witnesses judge this day between God and you, whether you are in earnest about eternal rest. You can tell by his work whether your servant has loitered, though you did not see him; so you may, by looking at your own work. Are your love to Christ, your faith, your zeal, and other graces, strong or weak? What are your joys? What is your assurance? Is all in order with you? Are you ready to die, if this should be the day? Do the souls among whom you have conversed bless you? Judge by this, and it will quickly appear whether you have been laborers or loiterers.

O blessed rest, how unworthily art thou neglected! O glorious kingdom, how art thou undervalued! Little know the careless sons of men what a state they so neglect. If they once knew it, they would surely be of another mind. I hope thou, reader, art sensible what a desperate thing it is to trifle about eternal rest, and how deeply thou hast been guilty of this thyself. And I hope, also, thou wilt not suffer this conviction to die. Should the physician tell thee, "If you will observe but one thing, I doubt not to cure your disease," wouldst thou not observe it? So I tell thee, if thou wilt observe but this one thing for thy soul, I make no doubt of thy salvation; shake off thy sloth, and put to all thy strength, and be a Christian indeed: I know not then what can hinder thy happiness. As far as thou art gone from God, seek him with all thy heart, and no doubt thou shalt



find him. As unkind as thou hast been to Jesus Christ, seek him heartily, obey him unreservedly, and thy salvation is as sure as if thou hadst it already. But, full as Christ's satisfaction is, free as the promise is, large as the mercy of God is, if thou only talk of these when thou shouldst eagerly entertain them, thou wilt be never the better for them: and if thou loiter when thou shouldst labor, thou wilt lose the crown. Fall to work, then, speedily and seriously, and bless God that thou hast yet time to do it.

To show that I urge thee not without cause, I will here add a variety of animating considerations. Rouse up thy spirit, and, as Moses said to Israel, "set thy heart unto all the words which I testify unto thee this day; for it is not a vain thing, because it is your life." May the Lord open thy heart, and fasten his counsel effectually upon thee!

1. Consider how reasonable it is that our diligence should be answerable to the ends we aim at, to the work we have to do, to the shortness and uncertainty of our time, and to the contrary diligence of our enemies.

The ends of a Christian's desire and endeavors are so great that no human understanding can comprehend them. What is so excellent, so important, or so necessary as the glorifying of God, the salvation of our own and other men's souls, by escaping the torments of hell, and possessing the glory of heaven? And can a man be too much affected with things of such moment? Can he desire them too earnestly, or love them too strongly, or labor for them too diligently? Do not we know, that if our prayers prevail not, and our labor succeeds not, we are undone for ever?

The work of a Christian here is very great and various. The soul must be renewed; corruptions must be mortified; customs, temptations, and worldly interests must be conquered; flesh must be subdued; life, friends, and credit must be slighted; conscience, on good grounds, be quieted and assurance of pardon and salvation attained. Though God must give us these without our merit, yet he will not give them without our earnest seeking and labor. Besides, there is much knowledge to be acquired, many ordinances to be used and duties to be performed; every age, year and day, every place we come to, every person we deal with, every change of our condition, still require the renewing of our labor; wives, children, servants, neighbors, friends, enemies, all of them call for duty from us. Judge, then, whether men that have so much business lying upon their hands, should not exert themselves; and whether it be their wisdom either to delay or loiter.

Time passeth on. Yet a few days, and we shall be here no more. Many diseases are ready to assault us. We, that are now preaching, and hearing, and talking, and walking, must very shortly be carried and laid in the dust, and there left to the worms, in darkness and corruption; we are almost there already; we know not whether we shall have another sermon, or Sabbath, or hour. How active should they be who know they have so short a space for so great a work! And we have enemies that are always plotting and laboring for our destruction. How diligent is Satan in all kinds of temptations! Therefore "be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith." How diligent are all the "ministers of Satan! false teachers, scoffers, persecutors," and our inbred corruptions, the most busy and diligent of all! Will a feeble resistance serve our turn? Should not we be more active for our own preservation than our enemies are for our ruin?

2. It should excite us to diligence, when we consider our talents and our mercies, our relation to God, and the afflictions he lays upon us.

The talents which we have received are many and great. What people breathing on earth have had plainer instructions, or more forcible persuasions, or more constant admonitions, in season and out of season? sermons, till we have been weary of them, and Sabbaths, till we have profaned them; excellent books in such plenty that we knew not which to read? What people have had God so near them? or have seen so much of Christ crucified before their eyes? or have had heaven and hell so open unto them? What speed should such a people make for heaven! how should they fly that are thus winged! and how swiftly should they sail that

have wind and tide to help them! A small measure of grace becomes not such a people, nor will an ordinary diligence in the work of God excuse them.

All our lives have been filled with mercies. God hath mercifully poured out upon us the riches of sea and land, of heaven and earth. We are fed and clothed with mercy. We have mercies within and without. To number them, is to count the stars or the sands of the sea-shore. If there be any difference betwixt hell and earth, yea, or heaven and earth, then certainly we have received mercy. If the blood of the Son of God be mercy, then we are engaged to God by mercy. Shall God think nothing too much nor too good for us; and shall we think all too much that we do for him? When I compare my slow and unprofitable life with the frequent and wonderful mercies received, it shames me, it silences me, and leaves me inexcusable.

Besides our talents and mercies, our relations to God are most endearing. Are we his children, and do we not owe him our most tender affections and dutiful obedience? Are we “the spouse of Christ,” and should we not obey and love him? “If he be a Father, where is his honor? and if he be a Master where is his fear? We call him Master, and Lord, and we say well;” but if our industry be not answerable to our relations, we condemn ourselves in saying we are his children or his servants. How will the hard labor and daily toil which servants undergo to please their masters, judge and condemn those who will not labor so hard for their great Master? Surely there is no master like him; nor can any servants expect such fruit of their labors as his servants. And if we wander out of God’s way, or loiter in it, how is every creature ready to be his rod to bring us back or urge us on! Our sweetest mercies will become our sorrows. Rather than want a rod, the Lord will make us a scourge to ourselves; our diseased bodies shall make us groan; our perplexed minds shall make us restless; our conscience shall be as a scorpion in our bosom. And is it not easier to endure the labor than the spur? Had we rather be still afflicted, than be up and doing? And though they that do most, meet also with afflictions; yet surely, according to their peace of conscience and faithfulness to Christ, the bitterness of their cup is abated.

3. To quicken our diligence in our work, we should also consider what assistance we have, what principles we profess, and our certainty that we can never do too much.

For our assistance in the service of God, all the world are our servants. The sun, moon, and stars attend us with their light and influence. The earth, with all its furniture of plants and flowers, fruits, birds, and beasts; the sea, with its inhabitants; the air, the wind, the frost and snow, the heat and fire, the clouds and rain, all wait upon us while we do our work. Yea, “the angels are all our ministering spirits.” Nay more, the patience of God doth wait upon us; the Lord Jesus Christ waiteth in the offers of his blood; the Holy Spirit waiteth, by striving with our backward hearts; besides the ministers of the Gospel, who study and wait, preach and wait, pray and wait upon careless sinners. And is it not an intolerable crime for us to trifle, while angels and men, yea, the Lord himself, stand by and look on, and, as it were, hold us the candle while we do nothing? I beseech you, Christians, whenever you are praying, or reproving transgressors, or upon any duty, remember what assistance you have for your work, and then judge how you ought to perform it.

The principles we profess are, that God is the chief good; that all our happiness consists in his love, and therefore it should be valued and sought above all things; that he is our only Lord, and therefore chiefly to be served; that we must love him with all our heart, and soul, and strength; that our great business in the world is to glorify God and obtain salvation. Are these doctrines seen in our practice? or rather, do not our works deny what our words confess?

But, however our assistance and principles excite us to our work, we are sure we can never do too much. Could we “do all, we are unprofitable servants;” much more when we are sure to fail in all. No man can obey or serve God too much. Though all superstition, or service of our own devising, may be called a “being righteous over much;” yet, as long as we keep to the rule of the world, we can never be righteous too much. The world are mad with malice when they think that faithful diligence in the service of Christ is foolish singularity. The time is near, when they will easily confess that God could not be loved or served too much,

and that no man can be too earnest to save his soul. We may easily do too much for the world, but we cannot for God.

4. Let us further consider that it is the nature of every grace to promote diligence, that trifling in the way to heaven is lost labor, that much precious time is already misspent, and that in proportion to our labor will be our recompense.

See the nature and tendency of every grace. If you loved God, you would think nothing too much that you could possibly do to serve him and please him. Love is quick and impatient, active and observant. If you loved Christ, you would keep his commandments, nor accuse them of too much strictness. If you had faith, it would quicken and encourage you. If you had the hope of glory, it would, as the spring in the watch, set all the wheels of your souls a-going. If you had the fear of God, it would rouse you out of your slothfulness. If you had zeal, it would inflame, and "eat you up." In what degree soever thou art sanctified, in the same degree thou wilt be serious and laborious in the work of God.

They that trifle lose their labor. Many, who, like Agrippa, are but almost Christians, will find, in the end, they shall be but almost saved. If two be running in a race, he that runs slowest loses both prize and labor. A man that is lifting at a weight, if he put not sufficient strength to it, had as good put none at all. How many duties have Christians lost for want of doing them thoroughly! "Many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able," who, if they had striven, might have been able. Therefore, put a little more diligence and strength, that all you have done already be not in vain.

Besides, is not much precious time already lost? With some of us, childhood and youth are gone; with some, their middle age also; and the time before us is very uncertain. What time have we slept, talked, and played away, or spent in worldly thoughts and cares! How little of our work is done! The time we have lost cannot be recalled; should we not, then, redeem and improve the little which remains? If a traveller sleep or trifle most of the day, he must travel so much faster in the evening, or fall short of his journey's end.

Doubt not but the recompense will be according to your labor. The seed which is buried and dead will bring forth a plentiful harvest. Whatever you do or suffer, everlasting rest will pay for all. There is no relenting of labors or sufferings in heaven. There no one says, "Would I had spared my pains, and prayed less, or been less strict, and done as the rest of my neighbors!" On the contrary, it will be their joy to look back upon their labors and tribulations, and to consider how the mighty power of God brought them through all. We may all say, as Paul, "I reckon that the sufferings" and labors "of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." We labor but for a moment; we shall rest for ever. Who would not put forth all his strength for one hour, when, for that hour's work, he may be a prince while he lives? "God is not unrighteous to forget our work and labor of love." Will not "all our tears be wiped away," and all the sorrow of our duties be then forgotten?

5. Nor does it less deserve to be considered, that striving is the divinely appointed way of salvation; that all men either do, or will approve it; that the best Christians, at death, lament their negligence; and that heaven itself is often lost for want of striving, but is never had on easier terms.

The sovereign wisdom of God has made striving necessary to salvation. Who knows the way to heaven better than the God of heaven? When men tell us we are too strict, whom do they accuse, God or us? If it were a fault, it would lie in him that commands, and not in us who obey. These are the men that ask us, whether we are wiser than all the world beside and yet they will pretend to be wiser than God. How can they reconcile their language with the laws of God? "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure. If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner

appear?" Let them bring all the seeming reasons they can against the holy violence of the saints; this sufficeth me to confute them all, that God is of another mind, and he hath commanded me to do much more than I do; and though I could see no other reason for it, his will is reason enough. Who should make laws for us, but he that made us? and who should point out the way to heaven, but he that must bring us thither? and who should fix the terms of salvation, but he that bestows the gift of salvation? So that, let the world, the flesh, or the devil speak against a holy, laborious life, this is my answer, God hath commanded it. Nay, there never was, nor ever will be, a man but will approve such a life, and will one day justify the diligence of the saints. And who would not go that way which every man shall finally applaud? True, it is now "a way every where spoken against." But let me tell you, most that speak against it, in their judgments approve of it; and those that are now against it, will shortly be of another mind. If they come to heaven, their mind must be changed before they come there. If they go to hell, their judgment will then be altered whether they will or not. Remember this, you that love the opinion and way of the multitude. Why, then, will you not be of the opinion that all will be of? Why will you be of a judgment which you are sure, all of you, shortly to change? O that you were but as wise in this as those in hell!

Even the best of Christians, when they come to die, exceedingly lament their negligence. They then wish, "O that I had been a thousand times more holy, more heavenly, more laborious for my soul! The world accuses me for doing too much, but my own conscience accuses me for doing too little. It is far easier bearing the scoffs of the world than the lashes of conscience. I had rather be reproached by the devil for seeking salvation, than reproved of God for neglecting it." How do their failings thus wound and disquiet those who have been the wonder of the world for their heavenly conversation!

It is for want of diligence that heaven itself is lost. When they that have "heard the word, and anon with joy received it, and have done many things, and heard" the ministers of Christ gladly, shall yet perish, should not this rouse us out of our security? How far hath many a man followed Christ, and yet forsaken him when all worldly interests and hopes were to be renounced! God hath resolve that heaven shall not be had on easier terms. Rest must always follow labor. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Seriousness is the very thing wherein consists our sincerity. If thou art not serious, thou art not a Christian. It is not only a high degree in Christianity, but the very life and essence of it. As fencers upon a stage differ from soldiers fighting for their lives, so hypocrites differ from serious Christians. If men could be saved without this serious diligence, they would never regard it; all the excellencies of God's ways would never entice them. But when God hath resolved, that, without serious diligence here, we shall not rest hereafter, is it not wisdom to exert ourselves to the uttermost?

6. But to persuade thee, if possible, reader, to be serious in thy endeavors for heaven, let me add more considerations: as, for instance, consider—

God is in earnest with you; and why should you not be so with him? In his commands, his threatenings, his promises, he means as he speaks. In his judgments he is serious. Was he not so when he drowned the world, when he consumed Sodom and Gomorrah, and when he scattered the Jews? Is it time, then, to trifle with God? Jesus Christ was serious in purchasing our redemption. In teaching, he neglected his meat and drink: in prayer, he continued all night: in doing good, his friends thought him beside himself: in suffering, he fasted forty days, was tempted, betrayed, spit upon, buffeted, crowned with thorns, sweat drops of blood, was crucified, pierced, died. There was no jesting in all this. And should we not be serious in seeking our own salvation?

The Holy Spirit is serious in soliciting us to be happy. His motions are frequent, pressing, and importunate. "He striveth with us." He is grieved when we resist him; and should we not be serious then, in obeying and yielding to his motions? God is serious in hearing our prayers, and bestowing his mercies. He is afflicted with us. He "regardeth every groan and sigh, and puts every tear into his bottle." The next time thou art in trouble thou wilt beg for a serious regard of thy prayers. And shall we expect real mercies when we are slight and superficial in the work of God?

The ministers of Christ are serious in exhorting and instructing you. They beg of God, and of you; and long more for the salvation of your souls than for any worldly good. If they kill themselves by their labor, or suffer martyrdom for preaching the Gospel, they think their lives are well bestowed, so that they prevail for the saving of your souls. And shall other men be so careful and self-denying for your salvation, and you be so careless and negligent of your own?

How diligent and serious are all the creatures in serving you! What haste makes the sun to compass the world! The fountains are always flowing for thy use; the rivers still running; spring and harvest keep their times. How hard does thy ox labor for thee from day to day! How speedily does thy horse travel with thee! And shalt thou only be negligent? Shall all these be so serious in serving thee, and thou so careless in thy service to God?

The servants of the world and the devil are serious and diligent. They work as if they could never do enough: they make haste, as if afraid of coming to hell too late: they bear down ministers, sermons, and all before them. And shall they be more diligent for damnation than thou for salvation? Hast thou not a better Master, sweeter employment, greater encouragements, and a better reward? Time was when thou wast serious thyself in serving Satan and the flesh, if it be not so yet. How eagerly didst thou follow thy sports, thy evil company, and sinful delights! And wilt thou not now be as earnest and violent for God? You are to this day in earnest about the things of this life. If you are sick or in pain, what serious complaints do you utter! If you are poor, how hard do you labor for a livelihood! And is not the business of your salvation of far greater moment?

There is no jesting in heaven or hell. The saints have a real happiness, and the damned a real misery. There are no remiss or sleepy praises in heaven, nor such lamentations in hell. All there are in earnest. When thou, reader, shalt come to death and judgment, O what deep, heart-piercing thoughts wilt thou have of eternity! Methinks I foresee thee already astonished to think how thou couldst possibly make so light of these things. Methinks I even hear thee crying out of thy stupidity and madness.

And now, reader, having laid down these undeniable arguments, I do, in the name of God, demand thy resolution: wilt thou yield obedience or not? I am confident thy conscience is convinced of thy duty. Darest thou now go on in thy common, careless course, against the plain evidence of reason and commands of God, and against the light of thy own conscience? Darest thou live as loosely, sin as boldly, and pray as seldom as before? Darest thou profane the Sabbath, slight the service of God, and think of thine everlasting state as carelessly as before? Or dost thou not rather resolve to “gird up the loins of thy mind,” and set thyself wholly to the work of thy salvation, and break through the oppositions, and slight the scoffs and persecutions of the world, and “lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset thee, and run with patience the race that is before thee?” I hope these are thy full resolutions. Yet, because I know the obstinacy of the heart of man, and because I am solicitous that thy soul should live, I once more entreat thy attention to the following questions and I command thee from God, that thou stifle not thy conscience, nor resist conviction but answer them faithfully, and obey accordingly.

If; by being diligent in godliness, you could grow rich, get honor, or preferment in the world, be recovered from sickness, or live for ever in prosperity on earth, what lives would you lead, and what pains would you take in the service of God? And is not the saints’ rest a more excellent happiness than all this? If it were felony to break the Sabbath, neglect secret or family worship, or be loose in your lives, what manner of persons would you then be? And is not eternal death more terrible than temporal? If God usually punished with some present judgment every act of sin, as he did the lie of Ananias and Sapphira, what kind of lives would you lead? And is not eternal wrath far more terrible? If one of your acquaintance should come from the dead and tell you that he suffered the torments of hell for those sins you are guilty of, what manner of persons would you be afterwards? How much more should the warnings of God affright you? If you knew that this were the last day you had to live in the world, how would you spend it? And you know not but it may be your last, and are sure your last is near. If you had seen the general dissolution of the world, and all

the pomp and glory of it consumed to ashes, what would such a sight persuade you to do? Such a sight you shall certainly see. If you had seen the judgment-seat, and the books opened, and the wicked stand trembling on the left hand of the Judge, and the godly rejoicing on the right hand, and their different sentences pronounced, what persons would you have been after such a sight! This sight you shall one day surely see. If you had seen hell open, and all the damned there in their endless torments; also heaven opened, as Stephen did, and all the saints there triumphing in glory; what a life would you lead after such sights! These you will see before it be long. If you had lain in hell but one year, or one day, or hour, and there felt the torments you now hear of; how seriously would you then speak of hell, and pray against it! And will you not take God's word for the truth of this, except you feel it? Or, if you had possessed the glory of heaven but one year, what pains would you take rather than be deprived of such incomparable glory!

Thus I have said enough, if not to stir up the sinner to a serious working out his salvation, yet at least to silence him, and leave him inexcusable at the judgment of God. Only as we do by our friends when they are dead, and our words and actions can do them no good, yet to testify our affection for them we weep and mourn, so will I also do for these unhappy souls. It makes my heart tremble to think how they will stand before the Lord, confounded and speechless! When he shall say, "Was the world, or Satan, a better friend to you than I? or had they done for you more than I had done? Try now whether they will save you, or recompense you for the loss of heaven, or be as good to you as I would have been"—what will the wretched sinner answer to any of this? But though man will not hear, we may hope in speaking to God:

"O thou that didst weep and groan in spirit over a dead Lazarus, pity these dead and senseless souls, till they are able to weep and groan in pity to themselves! As thou hast bid thy servants speak, so speak now thyself. They will hear thy voice speaking to their hearts, who will not hear mine speaking to their ears. Lord, thou hast long knocked at these hearts in vain; now break the doors and enter in."

To show the godly why they, above all men, should be laborious for heaven, I desire to ask them, What manner of persons should those be whom God hath chosen to be vessels of mercy? who have felt the smart of their negligence in their new birth, in their troubles of conscience, in their doubts and fears, and in other sharp afflictions? who have often confessed their sins of negligence to God in prayer? who have bound themselves to God by so many covenants? What manner of persons should they be who are near to God, as the children of his family; who have tasted such sweetness in diligent obedience; who are many of them so uncertain what shall everlastingly become of their souls? What manner of persons should they be in holiness, whose sanctification is so imperfect; whose lives and duties are so important to the saving or destroying a multitude of souls; and on whom the glory of the great God so much depends? Since these things are so, I charge thee, Christian, in thy Master's name, to consider and resolve the question, "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" And let thy life answer the question as well as thy tongue.

**1651 (French); 1810 (26<sup>th</sup> English Edition)**

**Charles Drelincourt (1595-1665), French Protestant Leader**

**Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ Ne Dit Pas Qu'il Y A Plusieurs Étages Ou Plusieurs Appartemens, Dont Les Uns Sont Plus Beaux Et Plus Riches Que Les Autres, Mais Simplement Qu'il Y A Plusieurs Demeures Dans La Maison De Son Père  
Les Consolations De L'âme Fidèle Contre Les Frayeurs De La Mort**

This is text of the 1819 French Edition

Other French Editions in 1659, 1660, 1695, 1699, 1792

**See English Editions below**

Les uns croient qu'il n'y aura dans le paradis qu'une même gloire et qu'une même félicité, qui sera égale et uniforme en tous ceux qui la posséderont. Leurs raisons principales sont: premièrement, que nous n'aurons point de gloire ni de félicité, qui ne nous ait été méritée parla mort et passion de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ; et que, ce glorieux Sauveur l'ayant acquise également pour tous les élus, ils la posséderont tous au souverain degré. Secondement, que la sainteté de tous les bienheureux sera parfaite, et par conséquent qu'étant tous parfaitement saints, ils seront tous parfaitement et souverainement heureux. En troisième lieu, que notre Seigneur dit formellement et sans exception qu'ils reluiront au royaume de leur père comme le soleil ( Matt. i3. ), qui est le roi des astres et le plus lumineux de tous les corps célestes. En quatrième lieu, qu'ils sont représentés dans le ciel comme des rois, et comme ayant sur leurs têtes des couronnes d'or, et qu'il n'y a point d'inégalité entre tes rois, chacun d'eux possédant une gloire souveraine et une autorité indépendante. En cinquième lieu, que Jésus-Christ représente ce qui se fera à la fin du monde sous la parabole du père de famille, qui, au bout de la journée, donne un salaire égal à tous ceux qui ont travaillé en sa vigne. En sixième lieu, qu'il est dit en général ( i. Cor. t 3) que nous verrons face à face, et que nous le verrons tel qu'il est, et que c'est dans cette vision que consiste le souverain bien de l'homme. Enfin (2. Cor.i5), qu'après la résurrection Dieu sera tout en tous; et que c'est le comble de toute la gloire et de toutes les félicités imaginables.

D'autres estiment, au contraire, qu'il y aura dans le paradis une inégalité de gloire, et divers degrés de béatitude. Ils se fondent principalement sur deux passages de l'écriture sainte. L'un est au quatorzième de saint Jean, on notre Seigneur dit à ses apôtres: il y a plusieurs demeures dans la maison de mon père; et l'autre est au quinzième de la première aux Corinthiens, où Saint Paul, discourant de la béatitude des saints après la résurrection, dit: autre est la gloire du soleil, et autre la gloire de là lune, et autre la gloire des étoiles: car une étoile est différente d'une autre étoile en gloire, Il en sera de même de la résurrection des morts.

Il y en a qui ne se contentent pas de poser une inégalité de gloire et de béatitude, mais qui entreprennent d'en discourir avec autant de hardiesse, que si Dieu les avait admis dans le conseil de ses secrets éternels, et qu'il leur eût découvert les merveilles de la Jérusalem céleste, plus clairement qu'il ne fit autrefois à son disciple bien-aimé. Us ne disent pas seulement qu'il y aura divers degrés de gloire et de félicité, mais ils déterminent qui seront ceux qui obtiendront un tel ou un tel degrés et décident magistralement quelle sera la gloire des vierges, quelle sera celle des confesseurs et quelle sera celle des martyrs. Enfin, il se trouve des gens tellement enflés de la bonne opinion d'eux-mêmes, qu'ils font profession ou verte d'être du nombre de ceux qui aspirent aux plus hauts degrés de gloire et de béatitude.

Mais, quant à nous, nous estimons que la vérité se rencontre au milieu de ces extrêmes. Sans imposer de loi à la conscience de qui que ce soit, en un point dont la décision n'est pas nécessaire à salut, d'un côté, nous posons qu'il y aura dans le paradis divers degrés de gloire et de béatitude; mais, d'autre côté, nous nous garderons bien d'entreprendre de les décrire, et beaucoup plus encore d'en faire l'application et de déterminer qui possédera un tel ou un tel degré de gloire. Ce serait mettre notre couche au ciel, et avancer la main sur le fruit défendu. Au lieu de servir aux autres, nous nous perdrons nous-mêmes de gaieté de cœur. Car ceux qui, par une témérité audacieuse, veulent sonder la majesté, sont engloutis par gloire.

Et même, bien; que nous admettions ces divers degrés de gloire, nous dirons, sans offenser personne, qu'on ne saurait les prouver solidement par les passages qu'on allègue; et qu'il semble qu'ils ne concluent point du tout. Car, pour le i4.e de Saint Jean, notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ ne dit pas qu'il y a plusieurs étages ou plusieurs appartemens, dont es uns sont plus beaux et plus riches que les autres, mais simplement qu'il y a plusieurs demeures dans la maison de son père. L'intention de ce divin Sauveur est claire comme le jour. Il veut relever le courage abattu de ses apôtres et les consoler de son absence; et, pour cet effet, il les assure qu'il va loger dans une maison où il n'y a pas seulement de lieu pour lui, mais aussi pour eux et pour tous ceux qui viendront à croire en lui par leur ministère. Il s'en explique clairement au dix-septième chapitre du même évangile, où il parle à Dieu en Ces mots: père, mon désir est que là où je suis, ceux que tu mas donnés soient aussi avec moi, afin qu'ils contemplent ma gloire. Et, quant à ce qu'on allègue de la première aux Corinthiens, âmes dévotes, prenez la peine de lire le passage de l'Apôtre et de considérer avec une attention

religieuse ce qui précède et ce qui suit. Vous trouverez qu'il n'est pas là question de comparer les saints glorifiés les uns avec les autres, mais de faire voir la différence qu'il y a entre nos corps, tels qu'ils sont en cette vie corruptible et mortelle, et ces mêmes corps après qu'ils auront revêtu l'incorruption et l'immortalité. Et, en effet, ayant dit: autre est la gloire du soleil, et autre la gloire de la lune et autre la gloire des étoiles; car une étoile est différente d'une autre étoile en gloire; il n'ajoute pas; ainsi, autre est la gloire d'une personne béatifiée, et autre est la gloire de l'autre; mais il dit: il en sera aussi de même en la résurrection des morts. Le corps est semé incorruption, il ressuscitera incorruptible: il est semé en déshonneur, il ressuscitera en gloire: il est semé en faiblesse, il ressuscitera en force: il est semé corps sensuel, U ressuscitera corps spirituel.

Qu'est-ce donc qui nous porte à croire ces divers degrés de gloire et de béatitude? C'est, premièrement, la considération des divers supplices des damnés. Car, comme il y a dans les enfers une diversité de peines et divers degrés de tourmens, il est bien vraisemblable qu'il y a dans le paradis une diversité de béatitude et divers degrés de gloire.

Secondement, Dieu, pour faire paraître sa sagesse, qui est diverse en toutes sortes, dispense tous se» biens et toutes ses richesses avec une, merveilleuse diversité et avec un ordre admirable et divin. Ainsi, voyez que dans la nature il a pris plaisir à répandre divers dons et diverses beautés. Par exemple, autre est l'odeur et la beauté de la rose, et autre celle du lys: autre est la splendeur des rubis et des diamans, autre est celle du soleil, de la lune et des étoiles. De même, il semble que, par dessus tous les cieux, il y doive avoir divers degrés de lumière et de gloire.

Il y a entre les anges des prérogatives d'honneur et de dignité. Et de là vient qu'il est parlé d'archanges, de trônes, de dominations, de principautés et de puissances (i. Thes. 4) Comme donc il y a entre les anges une diversité de gloire, il est bien vraisemblable qu'elle sera aussi entre les saints. De plus, comme, dans l'église militante, les grâces de Dieu sont fort diverses, et que les âmes des fidèles ne sont pas revêtues des mêmes qualités et n'ont pas un pareil ornement, et même, qu'il y a divers degrés de lumière, de connaissance, de foi, d'espérance, de charité et de sanctification; ainsi, il semble que, selon l'analogie de la foi, il doive y avoir dans l'église triomphante divers degrés de gloire et de béatitude, vu que la gloire n'est autre chose que la consommation et la perfection de la grâce. Cet argument est d'autant plus fort que, dans la parabole des talens, Jésus-Christ donne à ses serviteurs une gloire proportionnée aux richesses de sa grâce. Et que personne ne s'imagine qu'il est là question des faveurs que Dieu fait ici-bas à ceux qui le servent fidèlement; car. notre Seigneur parle de ce qu'il fera lorsqu'il viendra des cieux pour juger le monde; et il s'agit du temps auquel il dira à celui qui a fait profiter les talens de sa grâce (Matt. 8.): cela va bien, bon et fidèle serviteur; entre en la joie de ton Seigneur; et auquel il fera jeter le serviteur inutile dans les ténèbres de dehors, là où il y aura des pleurs et des grincemens de dents. J'ajoute à cela que l'apôtre Saint Paul, au troisième chapitre de sa première épître aux Corinthiens, représentant les ministres de l'évangile sous la comparaison de gens qui bâtissent sur le fondement de l'église, qui est notre Seigneur Jésus Christ, dit, que les uns y mettent du bois, du foin et du chaume, et que les autres y mettent de l'or, de l'argent, et des pierres précieuses. Il assure qu'ils seront sauvés les uns et les autres, parce qu'ils ont tous retenu le vrai et l'unique fondement: mais que d'ailleurs il y aura entre eux une grande diversité. Que ceux qui ont bâti du bois, du foin et du chaume, seront sauvés, toutefois comme par feu, c'est-à-dire, avec peine et avec difficulté. Et que, quant à ceux qui ont bâti de l'or, de l'argent et des pierres précieuses, non seulement ils seront sauvés comme les autres, mais que leur ouvrage subsistera, et, qui plus est, ils en recevront de la louange et de la récompense. D'où l'on peut conclure, à mou avis, que dans le ciel les récompenses seront fort diverses, et, par conséquent, qu'il y a une diversité de gloire.

Je ne dois pas omettre, sur ce sujet, ce que nous lisons en la deuxième aux Corinthiens, chapitre 9.: Celui qui sème chichement recueillera chichement; et celui qui sème libéralement, moissonnera aussi libéralement. Ce sont les paroles mêmes de l'apôtre Saint Paul, qui semblent prouver bien clairement l'inégalité de la gloire et des félicités qui se moissonnent dans le paradis. Mais ce qui est bien digne de considération est que la félicité du paradis nous est représentée sous la similitude d'un festin, où tous mangent d'une même viande, mais où les uns sont assis dans un lieu plus honorable que les autres. C'est ce qui me semble se pouvoir recueillir de



ce que notre Seigneur dit ( Matt. 8. ) que plu- sieurs viendront d'orient et d'occident, et seront à table au royaume des cieus avec Abraham, Isaaq et Jacob; et de ce que l'âme de Lazare est portée par les anges au sein d'Abraham.

Enfin, pour établir cette opinion des divers degrés de gloire dans le paradis, je me fonde sur les paroles de Daniel, au douzième de ses révélations. Ce Saint Prophète, après avoir parlé en général de la félicité de tous les. fidèles qui ressusciteront en vie éternelle, pense à la gloire de ceux à qui Dieu a communiqué [ici-bas plus de lumière, et du ministère desquels il s'est servi pour amener plusieurs âmes au salut; et, entre ceux-là même, il semble poser divers degrés de gloire. Ceux, dit-il, qui auront été intelligens, luiront comme la splendeur de l'étendue; et ceux qui en auront amené plusieurs à justice, luiront comme les étoiles pour toujours et à perpétuité. De là, il semble que l'on veut tirer cette conséquence, que, comme autre est a lumière du firmament, et autre celle des étoiles qui y luisent; que même entre les étoiles il y a divers degrés de lumière: ainsi il y doit avoir divers degrés de gloire entre les bienheureux.

Quant à ce qu'on allègue contre ce sentiment, Que Jésus-Christ nous a mérité la gloire et la félicité du paradis, et que de là on infère que petto gloire et cette félicité doit être égale, j'avoue que ce raisonnement est fort considérable et qu'il est de grand poids. Et même je ne prétends pas le réfuter absolument; mais je me contente de proposer diverses choses à méditer aux ames religieuses et crétiennes qui liront cet écrit. La première est, que bien que le paradis nous ait été acquis par le sang de Jésus Christ,, et que nous ne puissions le mériter par nos meilleures œuvres, ni par nos plus douloureux martyres, puisque, quand nous aurions fait toutes les choses qui nous sont commandées, notre Seigneur vent que nous disions (Luc. i7): nous sommes des serviteurs inutiles, parce que, ce que nous étions obligés de faire, nous F avons fait; et que son saint apôtre nous assure (Rom. 8) que, tout bien compté, les souffrances du temps présent ne sont point à balancer contre la gloire qui doit être révélée en nous; néanmoins Dieu est si bon, si miséricordieux et si libéral, qu'il supporte nos défauts, et qu'il récompense comme père, et d'une récompense gratuite, toutes les bonnes œuvres de ses encans, et particulièrement celles de la charité; jusque-là que Jésus-Christ dit à ses apôtres, et en leurs personnes à tous les fidèles ( Marc. 9): quiconque vous donnera un verre d'eau à boire, parce que vous êtes à Christ, en vérité je vous dis qu'il ne perdra point son salaire. Et, parce que dans les pays orientaux on chauffe le breuvage et que la moindre assistance est dé donner à boire de l'eau froide, notre Seigneur dit aussi (Matt i0.): quiconque aura donné à boire un verre d'eau froide Seulement à un de ces petits, en qualité de disciple, en vérité je vous dis qu'il ne perdra point son salaire. Si celui qui donne un verre d'eau froide, pour l'amour de Dieu, en est récompensé dans le ciel, que ne doivent point espérer ceux qui, par un pur mouvement de charité, sont libéraux en aumônes?

C'est pourquoi, l'apôtre nous a dit ci-dessus (i. Cor. 9) que celui qui sème chichement, moissonnera aussi chichement, et que celui qui sème libéralement, moissonnera aussi libéralement. Et nous venons d'entendre le Prophète, qui nous assure que tous ceux qui, par la lumière de leur bonne doctrine et de leur sainteté de vie, conduisent plusieurs âmes au salut, luiront éternellement dans le ciel, comme autant d'astre brillans. Que si notre Seigneur récompensé avec ses grandes miséricordes ceux qui donnent de l'eau à ses enfans, de quelle gloire ne couronnera-t-il point ceux qui répandent leur sang pour sa querellé, et qui scellent par leur mort l'évangile de sa grâce? Cette parole est certaine, que si nous mourons avec Jésus-Christ, nous vivrons aussi avec lui; si nous souffrons avec lui, nous régnerons aussi avec lui. Mais ce qui me semble encore plus fort et plus concluant, c'est que toutes les grâces, que nous recevons en cette vie, sont des effets du Saint-Esprit, qui nous a été mérité parla croix <de notre Seigneur et acquis par son sang; et toutefois ces grâces-là sont fort diverses Si donc il y a divers degrés dans la grâce, pourquoi n'y en pourra-t-il pas avoir dans la gloire? Vu que l'une et l'autre nous a été acquise et méritée par un même prix, et que nous en devons toute a louange à la,mort et passion de notre Sauveur? Quant à l'argument que l'on tire,de la sainteté des bienheureux, j'avoue qu'il est aussi fort considérable, mais je ne le tiens pas invincible; car divers diamans peuvent être parfaits en leur espèce, parce que l'œuille plus plair-voyant n'y saurait remarquer aucun défaut; et néanmoins être différens de poids et de prix. Toutes les étoiles ont leur, pureté et leur lumière; et cependant une étoile est différente d'une autre étoile en gloire. Tous les anges du ciel sont parfaitement saints; néanmoins ils sont

inégaux en gloire et en dignité, Ainsi, encore que tous les bienheureux soient saints d'une sainteté parfaite. cela, à mon avis, n'empêche pas ces divers degrés de gloire et cette béatitude.

Je confesse aussi que l'objection prise de ce qui est dit (Matt. i3) que les justes reluiront comme le soleil au royaume de leur père, a, beaucoup de force: mais je ne le trouve, pas convaincante, car si vous taillez en perfection des globes de cristal de diverses grosseurs, et que vous les exposez aux rayons du soleil, ils seront tous éclairés de toutes parts: chacun d'eux représentera, l'image de ce beau soleil qui les regarde; et il se pourra fort bien dire qu'ils reluisent tous comme le soleil. Mais cela n'empêchera pas que, selon leur diverses grosseurs, ils ne reçoivent plus ou moins de lumière, et que le soleil ne paraisse dans l'un de ces globes plus grand qu'en l'autre.

Quant à ce qu'on objecte, que la qualité de rois est donnée à tous les saints qu'il triomphent dans le ciel, je réponds que cela ne se doit pas prendre à la lettre; non plus que ce qu'ils sont représentés avec des couronnes d'or. Et même, en demeurant dans les termes de la comparaison, je puis dire que comme tous les rois, proprement ainsi nommés, ont une majesté souveraine, et qu'ils ne relèvent que de Dieu seul, mais que cependant les uns ont plus de pouvoir et plus de richesses que les autres: de même, tous les saints glorifiés ont une félicité souveraine, qui ne dépend que de Dieu seul, duquel ils la reçoivent immédiatement, mais cela n'empêche pas que les uns ne soient différents des autres dans la gloire.

Quant à l'argument que l'on tire de la parabole du père de famille, qui à la fin du jour récompense également tous ceux qui ont travaillé dans sa vigne, leur donnant à chacun un denier, je réponds qu'il en est des paraboles comme des tableaux, auxquels, outre, le dessein principal, il y a quantité de choses qui ne servent que pour la grâce et pour l'ornement, que s'il faut presser à la rigueur toutes les parties de cette parabole, il s'ensuivra qu'entre ceux qui seront sauvés il y en aura qui murmureront contre Dieu et qui porteront envie aux autres. Ce qui est ridicule seulement à penser. Le but de notre Seigneur n'est pas de parler de la gloire céleste, mais seulement de faire voir que ceux que Dieu appelle les premiers ne doivent pas mépriser les autres, parce que Dieu, qui fait de son bien ce que bon lui semble, peut les rendre égaux à eux, et même leur donner davantage. Enfin, je dis que, comme tous ceux que le père de famille envoie dans sa vigne, à quelque heure du jour que ce soit, reçoivent un denier; aussi, tous ceux que l'on appelle dans son église, d'une vocation efficace, en quelque temps qu'il les appelle, fût-ce même à l'heure de la mort, obtiendront de sa libéralité le denier mystique, c'est-à-dire, la vie éternelle avec le bon larron. Mais il ne s'ensuit pas de là, que dans cette vie bienheureuse il n'y ait divers degrés de béatitude et de gloire.

La plus grande difficulté, à mon avis, est en ce qu'on allègue que nous verrons Dieu face à face, et que Dieu sera toutes choses en tous (i. Cor. i5). Et toutefois, il se peut dire que, comme tous ceux qui seront en enfer seront à jamais privés de la vision de Dieu, mais que cela n'empêche pas qu'il n'y ait divers degrés de peines et de tourmens: ainsi tous ceux qui seront en paradis verront Dieu; mais cela n'empêche pas les divers degrés de gloire et de béatitude. Comme nous regardons tous le même soleil, mais nous en recevons les rayons diversement; de même, nous contemplerons tous un même Dieu, mais l'irradiation de sa face se recevra diversement, et elle produira divers effets. Il se peut dire aussi que, comme une infinité de vaisseaux, entrant dans une même mer, s'y remplissent de telle sorte, qu'en quelque façon il est vrai que la mer est toute en tous; et que cependant cela n'empêche pas qu'ils ne reçoivent plus ou moins de cette riche abondance: de même tous les saints entreront dans cette adorable mer de la divinité, et ils seront tous remplis de sa présence glorieuse, de sorte que Dieu sera tout en tous; mais cela n'empêchera pas qu'ils ne reçoivent une diverse mesure de ces eaux saillantes en vie éternelle. En un mot, comme Dieu jettera tous les réprouvés dans un même étang de souffre et de feu, mais cela n'empêchera pas les divers degrés de leurs peines; ainsi, Dieu abreuvera éternellement tous les fidèles à un même fleuve de délices, mais cela n'empêchera pas les divers degrés de leur félicité. Joint que ce passage: Dieu sera toutes choses en tous, peut être interprété: Dieu sera toutes choses à tous, c'est-à-dire, qu'il nous sera à tous, richesses, gloire, lumière, viande, breuvage, volupté, etc.; mais il ne s'ensuit pas, à mon avis, qu'il le doive être à tous également.

Que, si quelqu'un a d'autres pensées et d'autres raisonnements, je n'ai garde de le condamner, ni d'en entreprendre la réfutation: car j'estime que, lorsqu'il s'agit de la gloire et de la félicité de la vie éternelle, que Dieu a comme couvertes d'une nuée pour arrêter notre curiosité, nous n'en saurions parler avec trop de retenue et de modestie. Seulement j'ai à faire encore une remarque pour la consolation des bonnes et saintes âmes, qui ne soupirent qu'après le ciel et les joies du paradis. C'est qu'en posant les divers degrés de gloire, tels que nous les concevons, cela ne préjudicie en aucune façon à la parfaite béatitude de tous les bienheureux. Car, s'il m'est permis de me servir «encore une fois de la comparaison des rayons du soleil et des eaux de la mer, parce que je n'en sais point de plus propre, comme tous les yeux sains qui regardent le soleil sans nuage et sans voile, bien qu'ils reçoivent ses rayons diversement, en reçoivent tous assez pour se conduire, qu'ils ont tous de quoi se réjouir dans cette belle lumière qui les éclaire; et que, si quelques-uns en reçoivent une plus grande abondance, cela n'empêche pas les autres d'en être suffisamment éclairés: ainsi, toutes les âmes glorifiées contempleront, à face découverte, Dieu, qui est le père des lumières et le vrai soleil qui luit éternellement sur tous les cieux. Et si quelques-unes en reçoivent plus ou moins de lumière, cela n'importe point à leur souverain bonheur, vu qu'elles en recevront toutes autant qu'il leur en faut pour fendre leur joie accomplie et leur béatitude parfaite. Et comme, si vous plongez dans la mer des vaisseaux de diverse capacité, les uns recevront plus d'eau; et les autres; en recevront moins, mais ils en recevront tous assez pour se remplir, de telle sorte qu'il ne leur demeure rien de vide; et si le plus petit vaisseau avait de la connaissance et qu'il peut parler, l'auront grand tort de se plaindre de ce que les plus grands vaisseaux contiennent plus d'eau que ici, puisque en a tout ce qu'il en peut avoir et qu'il en saurait désirer; ainsi, les saints étant plongés dans cette inépuisable mer de gloire et de béatitude, en seront entièrement remplis, de sorte qu'ils n'auront plus rien à souhaiter, et ils seront tous, chacun selon sa portée, souverainement et parfaitement heureux. O âme chrétienne, si tu as autant de contentement et de plaisir que tu es capable d'en avoir, bien que d'autres en aient encore au-delà, tu n'en es pas moins heureuse. Il n'y a que Dieu seul, qui, comme il est infini en son essence, ait aussi la gloire et la félicité sans mesure. Mais cette source inépuisable de gloire et de félicité découlera éternellement sur toutes les âmes et sur tous les corps de tous les bienheureux, et les rassasiera à jamais de ses délices.

**1651 (French); 1810 (26<sup>th</sup> English Edition)**

**Charles Drelincourt (1595-1665), French Protestant Leader**

**As Light Of Firmament Differs Much From That Of Bright Stars; & As Among Stars There Is Diversity Of Light; In Like Manner There Shall Be Divers & Different Degrees Of Glory Amongst Blessed In Heaven**

**The Christian's Defense Against the Fears of Death**

(Originally in French as "Consolations de l'âme fidèle contre les frayeurs de la mort", in 1651)

(26<sup>th</sup> Published English edition in Liverpool in 1810)

**Some there are that inquire whether in paradise there shall be an equality, or an inequality, in glories and happinesses?**

This question is more curious than necessary. For we need not inquire whether there shall be any more or less happy than ourselves. It should suffice us for our comfort, to know, that if We be true believers, and truly penitent; if we fear God as we ought, if we serve him with a religious mind until the last gasp; then in such a case we shall attain to the glory of the children of God, and possess them with a perfect and eternal happiness. Nevertheless, that we may seem to omit nothing which might give satisfaction to every believing soul, I shall examine this particular; but it shall be without advancing any new thing, which I have not seen in the gospel, nor learned from the true Doctor of our souls. I shall declare the opinion of the most learned upon this excellent subject. Afterwards I shall add my own, which I submit, as the rest of this treatise, to the judgment of the wiser and more learned persons, who are better acquainted than I am with the spiritual and heavenly enjoyments.

Some believe, that in paradise there shall be every where the same glory and happiness, equal and uniform in every person that shall enjoy it. Their principal reasons are,

First, That we can have no glory nor happiness, but that which hath been purchased for us by the death and passion of our Lord; and that as this glorious Saviour hath purchased this glory and happiness for all the elect equally, they shall all enjoy it in the highest degree and perfection.

Secondly, That the holiness of all the blessed shall be perfect; therefore, as they shall be all perfectly holy, they shall be all likewise perfectly happy in the same degree.

Thirdly, That our Saviour saith expressly, without any exception, "That the saints shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," Matt.xxiii. Now the sun is the king of the stars, and the brightest of all the heavenly bodies-

Fourthly, That the elect are represented in heaven as so many kings, having upon their heads crowns of gold, Rev. i. 4, 5. Now there is no inequality between kings; for each of them is in possession of sovereignty, and an independent and supreme authority.

Fifthly, That Jesus Christ represents to us the last transactions of the world, by the parable of a father of a family, who at the end of the day bestows the same salary upon every one that hath laboured in his vineyard, Matt. xx.

Sixthly, That it is said in general terms, "That we shall see God face to face; and that we shall see him as he is," 1 Cor. xiii. 1 John iii. And that in this blessed vision shall consist the chief happiness of man.

Lastly, That after the resurrection, "God shall be unto us all in all;" which expression declares the highest and most complete happiness, and glory.

Others think the contrary, that in heaven there shall be an Inequality of glory, and several degrees of happiness. This their opinion they strengthen chiefly with two passages of holy scripture \ the one in John xiv. where Christ saith to his apostles, "In my Father's house there are many mansions." The other is in 1 Cor. xv. where St. Paul, discoursing at large of the happiness of the saints after the resurrection, saith,

There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory: so also is the resurrection of the dead.

There are some that are not content to believe an inequality of glory and happiness, but undertake farther to discourse of this matter, with as much confidence, as if God had admitted them to the knowledge of his eternal secrets, as if he had discovered to them all the wonders of the heavenly Jerusalem, more plainly than to his beloved disciple. They tell us, that there shall be not only divers degrees of glory and happiness; but they affirm who they are that shall obtain such and such degrees. They determine absolutely, and prescribe what glory shall belong to virgins, what shall be that of confessors, and what shall be that of martyrs. In a word, some are so puffed up with an high conceit of themselves, and of their meritorious acts, that they make an open profession of being of the number of such as shall obtain the highest degrees of glory and happiness.

But my opinion is, that the truth is to be found between these two extremes.

I shall not prescribe a law to the consciences of any, in a matter whereof the decision is not absolutely necessary to salvation. Yet we may say, that in heaven there shall be divers degrees of glory and happiness, but we dare not describe them, nor venture to apply them to any person, or to tell who of us shall possess such and such degrees. This were a bold presumption against heaven, and an attempt upon the forbidden

fruit. Instead of being serviceable to others, we should willfully lose ourselves. For such as are so audacious to search into the Divine Majesty, shall be swallowed up in his glory,

And though we verily believe degrees of glory, yet we may say, without offence to any person, that this belief is not to be established upon the forementioned passages, from whence we cannot make any such conclusion; for in St. John xiv. our Saviour saith not, that there are divers degrees of divine mansions, whereof some are richer and more glorious than others, but only, that in his Father's house there are many mansions. The meaning of our divine Saviour is. clear as the day; he had an intent to raise up the drooping courage of his holy apostles, and to comfort them in his absence; for that purpose he assures them, that he was going to lodge in an house, where there was not only room for himself, but also for them, and for all that shall believe in him through their teaching.

He expounds his words plainly in the xviith chapter of the same Gospel, where he speaks to God in this manner, "I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me."

For the other text in 1 Cor. xv. I beseech you, devout souls, read over the apostle's words and consider, with a religious observation, what goes before, and what follows after. You shall find, that the apostle designs not to compare the saints the one with the other, but only to discover the difference which is between our bodies as they are in this corruptible and mortal life, and as they shall be when they shall have put on incorruption and immortality. Therefore, when he hath said, "There is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, another of the stars, for one star differeth from another star In glory;" he doth not say likewise, So shall be the glory of one blessed person differing from another; but he saith, "So shall be the resurrection from the dead -, the body is sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

What is it therefore that may incline us to believe these divers degrees of glory and happiness? — I- answer,

First, The divers and different pains and punishments of the damned. For as in hell there shall be divers degrees of torments; likewise it is very probable, that in heaven there shall be divers degrees of happiness, and several degrees of glory.

Secondly, God, to declare his divine wisdom, which is various in all things, bestows at present all his blessings and riches with a wonderful variety, and admirable order. Thus you may see in nature, that God hath scattered up and down the world divers gifts and excellencies. For example, the smell and beauty of the rose is different from that of the lily; the brightness of the diamond is not like that of the ruby; the light of the sun differs from that of the moon and stars. It is very probable, that above all the heavens, there shall be divers degrees of light and glory. Among the holy angels, there are distinctions of honour, and some dignities are named, Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers. As therefore amongst the angels there are divers degrees of glory, it is also very probable, that the same order shall be observed amongst the glorified in heaven. Besides, as in the church militant the graces of God differ very much, so the souls of the faithful are not the same in all respects; they have different qualities and excellencies; there are in them divers degrees of light, of knowledge, of faith, hope, charity, and holiness. Likewise, according to the analogy of faith, there shall be also, in the church glorified, divers degrees of glory and happiness; and the rather, because glory is nothing else but the completion and perfection of grace.

The reason is so much the stronger, because of the parable of the talents. Jesus Christ bestows upon his servants a glory proportionable to the former riches of his grace. None can imagine to the former riches of his grace. None can imagine, that the words relate to God's favours distributed to his children on earth; for our Lord speaks of that which he intends to do for them, when he shall come down from heaven to judge the world. The words relate to the time when he shall say to such as have well employed the talents of his mercy, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of thy Lord." They relate also to the time when he

shall cause the unprofitable servant" to be cast into utter darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." I ought not to forget what we read on this subject, 2 Cor. ix. "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." They are St. Paul's words, which expressly declare an inequality of glory and happiness to be expected amongst the rewards in heaven.

It may be also worthy of our observation, that the felicities of heaven are represented to us by a feast, where all partake of the same meats, but some are advanced to a more honourable room than others. This, as I conceive, may be gathered from our Saviour's words, "Many shall come from the east, and from the west, and shall sit at table in the kingdom of heaven, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." It may also be understood from that other passage, where Lazarus is carried by the holy angels into Abraham's bosom.

Lastly, I ground my opinion upon the xiith chapter of Daniel, where this blessed prophet, when he had spoken in general terms of the future happiness of the faithful, who shall rise to eternal life, he offers to mention some, on whom God hath bestowed more light upon earth, and whose ministry he hath made use of, to bring many souls to salvation; among these he seems to put divers degrees of glory: "They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that bring many to righteousness, as the stars for ever." From this text one may apparently conclude, that as the light of the firmament differs much from that of the bright stars; and as among the stars there is a diversity of light; in like manner there shall be divers and different degrees of glory amongst the blessed in heaven.

Now, in answer to that argument, That Jesus Christ hath purchased for us the glory and happiness of heaven, that therefore this glory and happiness should be equal, I confess this reason is weighty. I intend not absolutely to deny it; but I shall offer several things to the consideration of the pious and devout souls, who shall peruse this treatise.

First, That although the blood of Jesus Christ hath purchased for us heaven; and that we are not able to claim it by our most regenerate actions, or merit it by our most painful sufferings and martyrdom, because that when we have performed all that is commanded, our Saviour requires us to say, "We are unprofitable servants, because we have done nothing but what we are bound to do," Luke xvii. and because his holy apostle assures us, that "when all things are reckoned up, the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us," Rom. viii. Nevertheless, God is so good, merciful, and bountiful, that he bears with our imperfections, and he rewards as a Father, with a free reward, all the good works of his servants, chiefly the works of charity.

Therefore Jesus Christ tells his apostles, and generally all the faithful, "Whosoever shall give unto you to drink a cup of water, because you are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." And because it is the custom of the eastern people to warm their drink, therefore to give a cup of cold water may be reckoned the smallest assistance, our Saviour saith, "Whosoever shall give unto one of these little ones to drink a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward," Matt. x. If such as bestow a cup of cold water for God's sake, are rewarded in heaven, what may not those bountiful souls expect there, who now spend their estates in charitable deeds?

Besides, we have heard a prophet tell us, that all such as by the light of their doctrines, and the holiness of their lives, lead many so-, Is to their salvation, shall shine for ever in heaven, as so many bright stars. It stands with reason; for if our Saviour will in his infinite mercy reward such a small kindness, as the gift of a draught of water to one of his children, they shall excel in glory, who spend for his sake, in his quarrel, every drop of their blood, and by their deaths confirm his holy gospel. This is a faithful saying, "If we die with Jesus Christ, we shall also live with him; if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." But that which seems to me yet stronger, which makes for this purpose, is, that all these spiritual graces which are bestowed upon us in this life, proceed from the Holy Ghost, purchased for us by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by his precious blood. Now these graces are different and various: therefore as there are divers degrees in

grace, why should not there be also divers degrees of glory, since both have been purchased for us with the same price, by the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The other argument, drawn from the happiness and perfection of the glorified, is rational, but not infallible. For several diamonds may be perfect in their kind, so that the clearest eye cannot take notice of any default; nevertheless they may differ in weight and price. All the stars have their perfection and light; nevertheless, one star differs from any other star in glory. All the angels of heaven are perfectly happy and holy; and yet there is a great inequality amongst them in glory and dignity. Likewise, although all the blessed shall attain to a perfect holiness, in my judgment, that cannot hinder the diversity of degrees of glory and happiness.

I acknowledge also, that the other objection, drawn from these words, "The just shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," is not to be despised, but it concludes nothing to the purpose. For if you should cut out excellently well some orbs of crystal, of different sizes, some greater, some less, and should put them all in the sun, they would be all full of light in every part, everyone would represent the beautiful image of that sun that looks upon them; so that it may be very well said of them all, that they shine as the sun. Nevertheless, according to their brightness and size, they receive more light, and the sun seems greater in the one than the other. To the other objection, That all the glorified in heaven are named kings; I answer, that it is not to be understood in a literal sense, no more than when it is said, that they had on their heads crowns of gold. That I may continue in the same comparison, I may say, That all kings have a sovereign majesty, which acknowledges none above it hut God, from whom it proceeds; and nevertheless some have a greater power and riches than others. Likewise all the glorified saints shall enjoy a sovereign and perfect happiness, and receive it immediately from God, but this cannot hinder them from differing from one another in glory. I answer next,

The other argument, taken out of the parable of the father of the family, who at the evening of the day rewarded equally nil his labourers, that had been employed in his vineyard, giving to every one of them a penny. That parables are as pictures, in which, besides the thing intended to be drawn, there are many particulars, which serve but as flourishes to adorn tie pieces. If we should consider every particular of this parable, we might conclude from hence, that, amongst such as shall be saved, there shall be some murmuring against God, who shall envy their companions; which is a gross absurdity to imagine. The design of our Saviour is not to speak of the equality of the glorified saints; but his intent is to shew, that those whom God calls first, should not despise the others; because God, who doth with his own what he pleaseth, is able to make them equal, and to bestow upon them the same advantages.

Lastly, As every one whom the good man of he shall be to us all riches, glory, light, meat, drink, pleasure, &c. In my judgment, we cannot conclude from hence, that he is to be in all equally.

If any have other thoughts, or is of another opinion, I shall not offer to condemn him, nor undertake to contradict him: For I conceive, that since Almighty God hath hid the glories 2nd happiness of heaven, and covered them over with a thick cloud, on purpose to limit our too curious inquiry, we cannot mention them with too much modesty and respect. Only I must make another remark for the comfort of devout souls, whose thoughts and minds are in heaven; that when we affirm, that there shall be different degrees of glory in paradise, we must not fancy that this shall be any prejudice to the perfect happiness of the glorified. For if I may once again make use of the comparison of the sun-beams, and of the waters of the sea, I cannot find any more proper for the purpose. As all eyes that look upon the clear sun, without cloud or mist, receive its rays in a different manner; yet they have all light enough to see to guide themselves, and to rejoice in this beautiful light that enlightens them; if some take in a greater measure of that light, this hinders not the rest from enjoying also a sufficiency: so shall it be with all the glorified souls, when they shall behold God the Father of lights, the true Sun that shall shine for ever and ever. If any of them shall have more or less of light, that shall not concern or prejudice their sovereign happiness, for every one of them shall enjoy as much as they shall be able to contain, or shall be necessary to complete their joy, and perfect their happiness. And a? when we cast into the sea many empty vessels, some greater, some less, the greater contains more water, and

the lesser not so much; yet they all receive enough to be filled up to the brim. If the least of these vessels had the knowledge to speak, they would not complain of the greater, for containing more than they, Because they have all as much as they can either desire or expect; likewise when the saints shall be admitted into the bottomless sea of glory and happiness, they shall be filled all up to the brim, so that they shall not be able to desire any more. They shall be all, according to their different capacities, perfectly and entirely happy.

Consider therefore, Christian soul, that if thou enjoyest so much satisfaction and delight as thou art capable of, although others may have something more, thou art no less happy for their overplus. There is none but God alone, who, according to the infiniteness of his Being, possesseth an unmeasurable and infinite glory and happiness. This bottomless source of glory and bliss shall for ever and ever overflow all the glorified in heaven, and satisfy their souls with unspeakable delights.

You may ask, Christians, In what part of the great world shall God cause us to enjoy so many rare pleasures, and heavenly contentments? Where shall he discover so much glory and splendour? In what part doth he intend to shew so many divine marks of his gracious presence? — Answer, That this place is above the elemental world, above all the heavens, that appear before our eyes, and that roll about us. If we will understand this, we must remember that the holy scripture makes mention of three heavens. The first is the large extent of the air, distinguished by the Jearned into three regions. In this sense it is to be understood when it speaks of the birds of the air. The second heaven comprehends the heavenly spheres, the globes that are between the moon and the firmament, where are all the fixed stars, (and if beyond this there be any other sphere,) whereof the motion is so powerful and swift as to carry with it the inferior globes, and to cause them to roll round in the space of four-and- twenty hours. Of this heaven David speaks in Psalm xix. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work; he hath put in them a tabernacle for the sun." Now, above all these heavenly spheres mentioned by the astronomers (some reckon up nine or ten, others more,) there is yet a third heaven spoken of by St. Paul, 2 Cor. TM. "I know, (saith he,) a man in Christ, which was taken up into the third heaven; I know that he was taken up into paradise, and heard words which cannot be spoken, which are not possible for man to utter." The holy apostle leaves no manner of difficulty; for the third heave he names paradise, where he heard unspeakable words, which are not possible to be uttered.

The celestial globes roll about continually, but this third heaven, for its excellency, is styled, the heaven; and is fixed in an eternal settlement. And as much as these beautiful orbs have a greater light and glory than the air, and the inferior bodies; so much the more doth this third heaven excel them.

It is my judgment that Solomon means this third heaven situate above all the rest, which exceeds them so much in beauty and glory, when he speaks to God "of the heavens, and of the heaven of heavens," 1 Kings viii. that is to say, the most excellent, the highest, and the most glorious of all the heavens, are not able to contain thee; and God himself declares by his holy prophets, "the heavens are my throne, and the earth is my footstool," Isa. Ixvi. For in this high heaven God hath placed his throne, where he discovers his glory, and the brightness of his luminous countenance. There the seraphims fly, and thousand thousands worship him, and ten thousand millions stand continually before him, Isa. vi. Dan. vii. Here the blessed soul of our Saviour Christ ascended as soon as it had left the body, according to what he promised the crucified thief, "Verily I say unto thee, this day shall thou be with me in paradise," Luke xxiii. Into this place our glorious Saviour entered, both in soul and body, after his resurrection; and here it was that St. Stephen saw him, when he cried out, "I see the heavens open, and Jesus Christ sitting at the right band of God," Acts vii. And to this place the souls of all such as die in his favour are carried up. Therefore such as die in his favour are carried up.

Therefore St. Paul to the Hebrews mentions, immediately after the thousands of angels, "the spirits of just men made perfect; and the church and congregation of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven." In short, it is the glorious seat, where we hope that God will receive us both in soul and body, at that day when we shall be taken up into the air, above the clouds of heaven, to be for ever with the Lord Jesus.



1657

**Moïse Amyraut (1596-1664) French Calvinist Protestant theologian and metaphysician**  
**De Forte Que Nous Parviendrons A La Gloire Comme Celuy Qui Court En Lice, Qui Void Le**  
**But Où Il Tend; Au Lieu Que Nous Parviendrons A Ses Plus Hauts Degrés Comme Les**  
**Rameurs, Qui Tournent Toujours Le Dos Au Port Auquel En Fin Pourtant Ils Arrive**  
**Discours De L'estat Des Fidèles Après La Mort**

**Troisieme discourse, pp. 252-262.**

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Seigneur mesme s'accommodant à ces inclinations & à cette portée de nos esprits, nous promis, comme il a cite dit cy-dessus, que nous y serons assis à table avec les anciens Patriarches. Mais neantmoins il y a grande apparence que comme quand Saint Pierre vit la transfiguration de Jésus Christ, il fut tellement englouti dans l'admiration de ces objets, qu'il en oublia tous ceux qu'il connoissoit ailleurs, & dit, Il est bon que nous soyons ici: ainsi lors que nous aurons l'âme remplie de cette chanté & de cette ioye que la Présence du Rédempteur & la vision de Dieu mesme doivent engendrer en nous, il ne nous souviendra plus guerres de toutes ces tendresses d'affections que nous expérimentons en la vie présente.

Je ne laisseray pourtant pas de remarquer icy deux choses qui font à cette matière.

La première est que l'Apostre écrivant aux Thessaloniens, & les voulant exhorter efficacement à quelque chose d'importance, leur parle de cet sorte:

Frères, nous vous prions par l'avènement de nostre Seigneur Jésus Christ, & par nostre recueil en luy.

C'est à dire, sans doute qu'il les conjure par Ce qu'il y peut avoir de plus glorieux & de plus souhaitable pour eux en l'advenement de nostre Sauveur, & par tout ce qu'il y doit avoir quelque jour de plus doux & de plus consolatoire en nostre sainte communion, lors que nous nous retrouverons ensemble, & que de toutes nos dispersions nous ferons ramassés à l'entour de luy. Ce qui semble signifier qu'il s'attend de jouir du contentement de leur présence, comme ils jouiront de la sienne, en la venue de nostre Seigneur. Or est-il malaisé de concevoir que cela se puis faire, s'il n'y a quelque reconnoissance des uns aux autres. J'estime donc, s'il est permis de dire ses sentimens en des choses dont nous avons peu d'éclaircissement en la Parole de Dieu, que cette mémoire intellectuelle laquelle est en nous, retenant la souvenance des choses générales qui luy ont esté commises, ni l'Apostre Saint Paul n'aura pas oublié qu'il a preeché l'Evangile aux Thessaloniens, ni les Thessaloniens n'auront pas oublié non plus que c'est par le ministère de Saint Paul qu'ils ont esté appelés à la communion de l'Evangile. Si donc Saint Paul a pour lors quelque chose de signalé, qui le fasse reconnoitre entre les Ministres de Christ, (& nous verrons tantost ce qui s'en peut dire) la souvenance pourra bien réveiller dans les Thessaloniens leurs anciennes affections, afin de s'approcher de Saint Paul, & luy donner, & recevoir de luy, autant que la gloire de leur condition le leur permettra, des témoignages réciproques de leur bienveillance. Et pource que nostre félicité ne sera pas pour cette journée là seulement, mais pour toute une éternité, & que cette éternité ne se passera pas en solitude, mais en une tres-douce & très agréable communication, qui doute qu'en une si longue suite de fidèles il ne se présente une infinité de rencontres, qui réveilleront en nous ces souvenances générales qui nous seront demeurées de ce

que nous avons veu icy bas, & qui re-animeront par ce moyen nos affections envers les personnes que nous avons chéries tendrement en cette vie? Mais comme un pere qui aime également ses enfans, sente cette sienne dilection plus vive pour quelque temps envers celuy d'entr'eux qui revient de pays lointain après une bien longue absence, qu'envers ceux qui ont toujours esté prés de luy; puis quand le temps a appaisé cette extraordinaire émotion, il retourne à cette égalité d'affections dont il les embrasse: Ainsi cette joye que Saint Paul & les Thessaloniens auront de se trouver ensemble en l'apparition de Christ, n'empeschera pas qu'incontinent leur charité ne retourne à se partager également à tous les fidèles qu'ils verront avoir avec eux communion à la gloire du Sauveur du monde.

L'autre chose est qu'il semble que ce Saint Apostre ne veut pas que nous doutions qu'il n'ait quelque chose de signalé à l'advenement de Christ, qui le rende reconnoissable à ceux à qui il a annoncé l'Evangile du salut. Vous estes, dit-il aux Philippiens, ma joye & ma couronne au jour de Christ, & choses semblables. Façons de parler qui ont donné occasion à quelques uns de penser, qu'on en pouvoir prouver que la gloire sera inégalement partagée entre les fidèles au jour de Christ, pour ce qu'il ne peut pas convenir à tous de tenir de tels propos, & que l'Apostre a voulu designer par là qu'il y a quelque prérogative d'honneur réservée pour luy en cette journée. Certainement si les fidèles seront inegalemet partagés en la jouissance due la félicité de là haut, c'est chose qui pourroit mériter une considération bien attendue. Et la diversité des opinions des grands personnages sur ce sujet, monstre bien que les preuves qu'on allègue de part & d'autre, ne sont pas d'abord extrêmement évidentes. Quelle que soit l'ediface des raisons de ceux qui tiennent l'inégalité de la gloire des cieux, il et-ce qu'il n'y a aucun de nous que l'humilité n'oblige d'avoir ce sentiment bien avant imprimé en l'entendement, qu'il ne sera pas du nombre de ceux qui doivent estre ainsi avantagés par dessus leurs frères. Car l'éminence de la gloire est presupposée devoir estre la récompense de l'éminence des vertus, à l'occasion desquelles il ne nous est pas permis de nous estimer plus excellens que les autres. Or si ce sentiment est véritable, & confirmé par l'evenement en chacun de nous, il est difficile de comprendre en qui se trouvera vérifiée cette opinion, qu'il y en doit avoir quelques uns qui doivent avoir de grands précipus en cet héritage. Et si quelques uns y doivent estre plus avantageusement partagés, il faut qu'il y ait quelque notable variété en la dispensation de la volonté de Dieu touchant la gloire & ses degrés. Car pour obtenir la gloire mesme, Dieu nous ordonne expressément de croire que nous l'aurons, & plus nous le croirons fermement, & plus est-il certain qu'elle nous sera donnée. Au lieu que pour en obtenir les plus hauts degrés, il luy est plus agréable que nous ne les espérons pas, & pource que l'humilité qui nous empêche de les espérer une des plus excellentes vertus, moins nous croirons de les obtenir, plus sèra-t-il certain que nostre humilité en sera récompensée. Et dereches pour nous exciter a tendre àu souverain point des vertus, l'Escriture nous met le prix de la gloire devant les yeux; au lieu que pour parvenir à ses plus hauts degrés, il faut que nous en détournions nos esprits, l'humilité, qui est celle qui nous y fera monter plus haut, ne nous permettant pas d'y attacher nostre pensée. De forte que nous parviendrons à la gloire comme celuy qui court en lice, qui void le but où il tend; au lieu que nous parviendrons à ses plus hauts degrés comme les rameurs, qui tournent toujours le dos au port auquel en fin pourtant ils arrive.

Quoy qu'il en soit, car ce n'est pas encore icy proprement le lieu de parler de la gloire des cieux, mais de celle de la bien-heureuse journée du Sauveur du monde, je dis qu'il est certain que Dieu mettra quelque différence au témoignage qu'il rendra à ses serviteurs en cette journée-là, & que ceux qui outre tant de travaux qu'ils ont supportés, & tant de courses qu'ils ont faites pour l'avancement du règne de Jésus Christ, ont encore, comme S. Paul, passé par tant de calomnies icy-bas, recevront ce témoignage de la bouche de leur bon maistre, qu'ils ont esté serviteurs fideles & loyaux, & qu'ils ont mérité toute autre chose que les calomnies qu'ils ont éprouvées. Ce qui les fera reconnoistre alors, & je ne doute pas que les Apostres y soient particulièrement signalés entre les autres. Et s'il y a quel-cun maintenant, non qui soit à égalier aux Apostres en dons & en autorité, (car il n'y en a point eu, & n'y en aura point depuis eux), mais qui en passant par des épreuves aucunement semblables à celles qui les ont exercés, imite en ces combats l'exemple de leur piété, de leur zèle & de leur constance, j'estime qu'il ne fait pas mal de se consoler par cette espérance, que nostre Seigneur mettra toutes choses en évidence à son advenement. Tellement que si Athanase, & Basile, & Chrysostome entre les anciens, si Jean Hus, & Ierosme de Prague, & Vicles, & Luther, & Calvin, & tant d'autres bons serviteurs de Dieu, qui peuvent à l'égard de ces premiers estre contés entre les modernes, se sont au milieu

des persécutions qu'ils ont souffertes & de dehors & de dedans, attendus à cette consolation, assurément ils ne se trouveront pas trompés en leur attente. Or ont eu ceux là plusieurs amis en cette vie qui les ont connus, & qui pourront avoir retenu la mémoire intellectuelle de cette connoissance. De sorte qu'il leur pourra bien arriver ce qui arrivera à S. Paul, en gardant neantmoins avec proportion l'inégalité qui est entre les choses moindres & les plus grandes.

Mais quoy qu'il doive estre de ces particularités de nostre félicité, en général elle sera telle en cette bienheureuse journée, que je n'ose entreprendre de la décrire, de peur d'en obscurcir la splendeur. Asseurement je diminuerois par la foiblesse de mes expressions, l'efficace de ce qu'en peut concevoir qui que ce soit, qui se mettra à considérer bien attentivement ce que je viens de dire de l'estat de chacun de nous, de l'estat du monde, & de celuy de toute l'Eglise.

**1659**

**Johann C. Dannhauer (1603-1666) German Philosopher and Theologian (In Response to J. C. Sondershausen)**

**An In Vita Aeterna Futuri Sint Gloruae Gradus? (Answered in Affirmative)**

**Text Not Found**

**1662; last English publication in 1866**

**Thomas Brooks (1608 – 1680): Puritan Clergyman**

**Lastly, To provoke you to labor after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holiness you have here—the more happiness you shall have hereafter. The more grace you have on earth—the more glory you shall have in heaven.**

**Holiness, the Only Way to Happiness**

(Delivered in 1662, First published in 1866)

**The Necessity, Excellency, Rarity, and Beauty of Holiness**

Lastly, To provoke you to labor after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holiness you have here—the more happiness you shall have hereafter. The more grace you have on earth—the more glory you shall have in heaven. Now before I come to make good this argument—namely, that some saints shall partake of more glory in heaven than others shall—give me permission to premise these few things to prevent mistakes.

First, That the object of their happiness, which is the eternal blessed God—will be one and the same to all saints. All glorified saints shall have but one God among them all. God shall be no more one saint's God than he shall be every saint's God in heaven, etc.

Secondly, That the beatifical vision shall be seen by all the saints, and communicated to all the saints; they shall all have a happy and blessed fruition and possession of God. All the vessels of glory shall be filled to the brim with a clear sight of God, and with a full enjoyment of God; and yet doubtless, for all this, some saints shall apprehend more of God than others, and comprehend more of God than others, and enjoy more of God than others. Though all shall be filled with those everlasting springs of pleasure and delight that are at God's right hand, Psalm 16:11—yet some shall be able to take in more of those pleasures of paradise than others shall. Though all the widow's vessels were filled to the brim with oil—yet, doubtless, some being greater and larger than others, they accordingly contained more oil than others, 2 Kings 4:3-8; and so it will be with the saints when they come to heaven. There shall be no lack of glory to any of the saints in glory. All the saints shall be filled with glory—according to their capacity. If you bring a thousand vessels of different sizes to the sea, the sea fills them all. Though their sizes differ, and some are bigger, and others lesser—yet

all are filled, every little vessel has its fill as well as the greater—just so, every saint shall have his fill of glory when he comes to glory; the felicity of every saint shall be perfect God will be all in all to all saints, Psalm 17:15.

Thirdly, All saints shall be freed from all evils alike; they shall all be freed from the aching head, and from the unbelieving heart; they shall all alike be free from the evil of sin, and from the evil of sufferings; there shall not be a saint in glory that shall ever feel a pricking brier or a grieving thorn, Ezek. 28:24; there all sorrow shall be removed from all their hearts, and all tears shall be wiped from all their eyes, Rev. 7:17.

Fourthly and lastly, The degrees of glory that saints shall have in heaven shall not be given out to them upon the account of their merits, or the dignity of their persons, or the worthiness of their works—but upon the account of God's mere mercy and grace, who in the day of retribution will delight to crown his own gifts, not our merits. And where he shall find the greatest measures of grace and holiness, there he will, of his own free mercy, bestow the greatest measure of glory. [When God crowns us, he does but crown his own gifts in us. Augustine.]

Well, friends, remember this, you must always carefully distinguish between the essence and substance of glory, and between degrees and measures of glory. Now the essence and substance of glory, which consists in the saints' full communion with God, and in their perfect conformity to God, and in their universal subjection to God, and in their everlasting fruition of God—is common to all the saints, so that no one saint shall have more of the essence and substance of glory than another has—yet the degrees and measures of glory shall be distributed to some more, to some less. Now that there shall be different degrees of glory in heaven, answerable to the different degrees of grace and holiness that the saints reach to here on earth, and that God will at last proportion his rewards according to the different degrees of labor, service, and sufferings of his people in this world, may be made evident,

1. By clear scriptures;
2. By arguments.

Now there are several SCRIPTURES that speaks out this truth. Take these for a taste:

[1.] First, 1 Cor. 3:8, "Now he who plants and he who waters are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor." The apostle having compared his own and Apollos' work together, adds, "That both should receive their reward according to their work"—that is, as their work differed—just so, should their reward differ. Though they both preached one and the same doctrine, and had both one and the same design and purpose, namely, to bring in souls to Christ, and to build up souls to Christ—yet according to their different degrees of labor—just so, should be their different degrees of reward. Though no man should work in God's vineyard for nothing—yet he who was most faithful, diligent, and laborious in planting or in watering God's husbandry, should have the greatest reward. Paul and Apollos shall at last receive their different reward according to their different labor; or they shall each of them receive, according to their proper work.

[2.] A second scripture is 1 Cor. 15:41-42, "The sun has one kind of glory, while the moon and stars each have another kind. And even the stars differ from each other in their beauty and brightness. It is the same way for the resurrection of the dead." It is very observable that the comparison runs between the glorified condition of some saints that shall rise, and other some that shall rise in the great day. Just so, that look, as one star differs from another star in glory—just so, one saint shall differ from another saint in glory at the resurrection of the dead. Though every star is bright, shining, and glorious—yet some stars are more bright, shining, and glorious than others are. Just so, though every saint will shine gloriously in heaven—yet some saints shall have a greater luster, glory and shine upon them than others shall. Look! as some heavenly bodies

are more glorious than others—just so, in the morning of the resurrection some saints shall be more glorious than others, etc.

[3.] A third scripture is 2 Cor. 9:6, "But this I say, He who sows sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall reap bountifully." A sparing liberality shall be attended with a sparing reward, and a bounteous liberality shall be attended with a bounteous reward. Look! as the harvest answers the measure of seed that is sown—just so, that he who sows but little reaps but little, and he who sows much reaps much—just so, saints' reaping at last will be answerable to their sowing here. All men's charities shall at last be rewarded proportionable to the several degrees of it. He who gives a pound shall have a greater reward than he who gives a penny. He who sows thousands shall reap more than he who sows hundreds. He shall have the most plentiful crop in heaven, who has sowed most seed here on earth, etc. They shall have interest upon interest in heaven, who sow much on this side heaven.

[4.] A fourth scripture is Luke 19:12-20. Now in this parable you have a great Lord going into a far country; but before he goes he gives ten minas to ten of his servants to trade with until his return. Now upon his return, he who had increased his mina to ten minas was made ruler over ten cities, verse 17; and he who made five from his one mina was made ruler over five cities, verse 19. Here he who improved their mina most, received the greatest reward. The nobleman in this parable is our Lord Jesus Christ, who is truly and highly noble, he being co-eternal and co-equal with his Father, in respect of his deity; he was born a king, and is now King of kings, and Lord of lords, and Prince of the kings of the earth. The far country that he is gone to is heaven, for there he went at his ascension. Now when he shall return from heaven to judge the living and the dead, he will then bring men to an account, to a reckoning about their improvement of all the gifts and graces that he has entrusted them with; and, according to the different improvement that men shall make of their talents—just so, shall be their reward.

He who makes the greatest improvement of his mina, he shall have the greatest reward, he shall be ruler over ten cities, that is, he shall be very highly honored and exalted. And he who makes a lesser improvement, he shall have a lesser reward, he shall be ruler over five cities. He who makes a great improvement of a little, he shall, if I may so speak, sit at Christ's right hand; but he who makes a lesser improvement, he must be contented to sit at Christ's left hand. God will proportion out men's reward at last answerable to their improvement of that treasure which he has put into their hands. Yet this does not infer merit of works—but a gracious disposition in God to encourage his servants in a way of well-doing, etc.

[5.] A fifth scripture is Daniel 12:3, "Those who are wise will shine as bright as the sky, and those who turn many to righteousness will shine like stars forever." [From this very text, your English commentators conclude that there are degrees of glory in heaven, etc.] The glory of heaven is here laid out in shining terms, for look how gloriously the shining of stars does excel the shining of the sky. Just so, some saints shall as far outshine others in glory, as the stars do now outshine the sky. Look! as the stars are a more beautiful and glorious part of the orb than the sky is—just so, some saints shall have a great deal more beauty and glory upon them than others shall. And look, as there are different degrees of glory between the glory of the sky and the glory of the stars now—just so, there shall be different degrees of glory between one glorious saint and another at last. All the saints shall at last shine as the sky—but those who by their doctrine, instruction, and life, turn many to righteousness, these shall shine as the stars, forever and ever. Some of the highest seats in glory shall be for such "who turn sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Jesus Christ," Acts 26:18.

It is very observable, that as the apostles were very eminent in this work—just so, Christ has given it under his own hand, that they shall sit upon twelve thrones, as so many kings, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, Mat. 19:28; Luke 22:28-29. They had done and suffered more for Christ than others, and therefore Christ will put a greater glory upon them than upon others. Though many learned men differ about the interpretation of those words, "you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"—therefore I dare not peremptorily conclude this or that to be the sense of them. Yet this is most plain and

evident in the text, that the apostles are under a promise of some peculiar and more eminent degree of honor, glory, and dignity, than others are under.

Look! as their service to Christ was a special and eminent service—just so, Christ promises them a special and eminent reward. Every man of them shall have his particular throne, and everyone of them shall have the honor and dignity of judging—that is, of governing and ruling the twelve tribes of Israel. Look! as ambassadors and chief counselors and presidents have the highest and chief seats in the kingly assembly—just so, the apostles shall have the highest and the chief seats in the general assembly and church of the first-born in heaven, Heb. 12:22-23. They shall sit, as it were, on the throne, or on the bench, with Christ—so highly and greatly shall they be exalted.

If we cannot hit upon the exact meanings of the reward here promised—yet we may safely and easily gather from the description of it that there shall be different degrees of glory in Christ's kingdom of glory. The apostles followed Christ through great tribulations and afflictions, and they continued with him in all his temptations; they forsook all, to follow him; and after they had faithfully, laboriously, successfully, and very eminently served him—they made themselves an offering for him, as I have formerly showed you, and therefore Christ will at last in a more eminent way exalt them, and glorify them, than he will others who have never seen that of Christ, nor received that from Christ, nor done that for Christ, nor suffered that for Christ—as they have done.

Degrees of glory shall at last be proportioned out answerable to those degrees of service which in this life men have been drawn out to. Such a thing as this the apostle Paul does more than hint, if I mistake not, in 1 Thes. 2:19-20, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For you are our glory and joy." The crown that Paul speaks of here is not that common crown of righteousness, nor that common crown of life and immortality, nor that common crown of glory which all the saints shall be crowned with at last; [2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; Rev. 2:10; 1 Pet. 5:4.] But he speaks here of an apostolic crown, of a special, peculiar crown, that should accrue to him upon the account of his serviceableness to their souls; and of this crown he speaks again in that Phil. 4:1, "Therefore, my brethren, my dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." He calls the Philippians his crown, and that partly because their spiritual growth, constancy, and perseverance was now his glory among other churches—but mainly because they should be his particular crown of rejoicing in the great day of our Lord Jesus. He knew that the Philippians' profit would be his crown and his advantage another day. The apostle alludes here to the custom of the Romans, who, as they had their common crowns of ivy and laurel, etc.—and these were such that their horses which won the race were often crowned with, which occasioned Theocritus to say, "See what poor things the world glories in; for, as their conquerors are crowned—just so, are their horses!" Just so, they had their peculiar, their special crowns, which were the rewards of their conquerors that had done special service for their country.

Just so, there are common crowns that belong to all the saints, as saints—as the crown of righteousness, the crown of life, and the crown of glory. And as there are these common crowns—just so, there are special and peculiar crowns, that they shall be crowned with, who are exercised in more high and excellent services than others have been employed in; and this is the crown that here the apostle speaks of. He knew very well that his reward should be answerable to his work, for though God never did, nor ever will, reward men for their works, as if they were the meritorious cause of the reward—yet he will for degrees reward them according to their works. There are peculiar crowns, special crowns, for those who have done peculiar and special services for Christ on earth.

[6.] A sixth scripture is Mat. 5:11-12, "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven." Suffering saints, persecuted saints, shall be sure of great rewards. God will reward his people, not only their innocence, integrity, patience, and courage under their sufferings—but the more their sufferings, revilings, and persecutions are multiplied in this world, the more shall their recompense and reward be multiplied in

the eternal world. It is true, Christ has many lovers of his crown—but few bearers of his cross. All would reign with him—but few care to suffer for him. But yet it is as true on the one hand—namely, that those who bear most of his cross shall be greatest sharers in his crown; those who suffer most for him on earth shall be most blessed and rewarded by him when they come to heaven.

Look! as the consolation of the saints rises higher and higher in this world, even as their sufferings rise higher and higher, 2 Cor. 1:4-5—just so, the glory of the saints shall rise higher and higher in the eternal world, as their sufferings rise higher and higher in this world. Tertullian writes of the persecuted Christians who cry out, "Your cruelty is our glory, and the harder we are put to it, the greater shall be our reward in heaven!" One speaking of the martyrs said, "look how many sufferings they have—just so many crowns they shall have!" For every suffering—God shall set a crown on their heads. "By how much men's sufferings have been greater," says Chrysostom, "by so much the more their crown shall be bright and resplendent!"

"The greater conflicts and buffetings which any saint has endured, the greater shall be his reward, and the more ample shall be his glory," says Austin. As Christ has many crowns upon his head, suitable to the multitude of his sufferings and victories—just so, Christians at last shall have crowns suitable to the multitude of their sufferings, and suitable to those famous victories which they have gained over a tempting devil and a persecuting world, Rev. 19:7. Certainly it will be but justice, that they should receive the weightiest crown who have bore the heaviest cross, 1 John 5:4, and 2:13-14.

[7.] The seventh and last scripture that I shall produce is Mat. 10:41, "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward;" that is, say some, they shall be partakers of the same reward which is laid up for the prophets. Without all question, these two things lie fair in the text:

First, That there is some special and eminent degrees of reward due unto a prophet above other men. And,

Secondly, That he who shall entertain a prophet, and perform any offices of love and favor to him under that name and notion, he shall be partaker of that reward. He who receives a prophet, as he is God's messenger, and employed in his service, and sent about his errand, and not upon any carnal or worldly respects—he shall receive a prophet's reward; that is, he shall receive either such a reward as the prophet himself shall receive at last, or he shall receive such a large, ample, and noble recompense as is fit for one to receive, who received a prophet as coming from the Lord.

Look! as such who give an honorable reception to the ambassadors of kings or princes, do highly raise themselves in the favor and esteem of those kings or princes who had sent them—just so, those who receive the faithful prophets of the Lord, as the ambassadors of God, they shall be highly interested in the favor of God, and as nobly be rewarded by God.

I might produce several other scriptures that echo to the same purpose as these seven do—but enough is as good as a feast; as that Mark 6:20; John 14:2; Mat. 20:20-24.

I shall, therefore, in the second place come to the REASONS that may further evidence and confirm this great truth—namely, that there shall be different degrees of glory in heaven. Among many other reasons that might be given, I shall only give you these five.

[1.] First, There are diversities of degrees of angels in heaven. There are cherubim and seraphim, and there are angels and archangels. Now the cherubim and seraphim are a lower rank and order of angels, and the archangels are a higher rank and order of angels. And the apostle speaks clearly of several ranks and orders of invisible creatures in that Col. 1:16. Here you have an enumeration of thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers. And so in Eph. 1:21, "Far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion." These principalities and powers are the blessed angels who minister before the Lord, and who are subordinate unto one another; and here they are reckoned up by ascending: power is above principality, and might above

power, and dominion above might. To define those orders and degrees of angels with which God is environed, is a work too high and hard for me, and though the Papists and several schoolmen are so bold as to define their particular offices and orders—yet I dare not be wise above what is written. Where the Scripture is silent—I love to be silent; and where the Scripture has no tongue—there I desire to have no ears. [Mat. 9:34, and 12:34; Mark 3:22. The very supposition of order supposes inequality and disproportion.]

There is an order in HELL, an order among the devils, and therefore you read in three scriptures of the prince of devils, and so much also that expression imports that you have in that Mat. 25:41, "The devil and his angels," which intimates a prince among those unclean and damned spirits. Now shall there be order in hell and confusion in heaven? Shall there be order among the evil angels, and shall there not much more be order among the good angels? Certainly that God who is the God of order, and who has made all things in order, and who to this day keeps all things in order here below—will never allow the least disorder and confusion to be among those princes of glory who stand continually before him. He who denies order in heaven, denies heaven to be heaven; and he who grants order in heaven, grants degrees of glory in heaven. Though there is no difference between the angels in nature—the angelical nature being alike in all—yet in office, there is a great deal of difference in the glory of the angels, for God employs some of the heavenly host in more high, noble, and excellent services than others, and answerable thereunto shall their reward be. Though all angels shall share alike in the essential and substantial glory of heaven—yet there is an additional glory, an overplus of glory, which shall be conferred upon the angels, answerable to the several and various services that they have managed and engaged in.

Now the Scripture tells us plainly that "in heaven we shall be like the angels," Mat. 22:30; and therefore if there be degrees of angels, and if the angels in heaven shall have a different glory and reward, according to the work in which they have been employed, then the glory of the saints in respect of degrees shall be different also. But,

[2.] Secondly, There are degrees of torments in hell, and therefore, by the rule of contraries, there shall be degrees of glory in heaven. Now that there are degrees of torments in hell is most evident from several plain scriptures, as from Mat. 10:14-15, "If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that house or town. I assure you: It will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town." Sodom and Gomorrah shall have an easier and cooler hell than such cities shall have, which have despised the offers of grace, and the offers of mercy. [Contempt of Christ and his gospel, is worse than sodomy.] It is very observable, that the punishments that God in this life has inflicted upon the Jews for their contempt of Christ, and his everlasting gospel, have been more terrible than his raining hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah: for suddenly, and in a moment, God consumed them, and burnt Sodom and Gomorrah up. But God has for above this sixteen hundred years been a-raining hell out of heaven upon the Jews; he has for a long time vexed them with all manner of adversity, and to this very day he has made them, all the world over, a spectacle of his dreadful severity. But all those plagues and punishments that the Jews have been and still are under, are but flea-bitings and scratches on the hand—compared to those dreadful and astonishing judgments which God, in the great day of account, will inflict upon all Christ refusers and gospel-despisers! "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." John 3:36

And so chapter 11:20-23, "Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. "Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day!" The more mercy has been upon the bare knee entreating sinners to repent, the more earnest the Lord Jesus has been in wooing sinners to believe on him and to resign up themselves wholly and only to him, the more clearly and sweetly the everlasting gospel has sounded in sinners' ears, and the more near, and the more often



heaven has been brought to sinners' doors—and yet they have bid defiance to all, and hardened themselves in their sins—with the greater violence and with the more dreadful vengeance shall such be plunged into the lowest hell.

And so in Mat. 23:14, "Woe unto you, scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites, for you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers; therefore you shall receive the greater damnation." Hypocrites shall be double damned; the hottest and the darkest place in hell is reserved for them. "Give him his portion with hypocrites;" for number and weight, there are no torments in hell, compared to the torments of hypocrites. Counterfeit sanctity is double iniquity, and therefore it is but justice that the hypocrite should have double torment.

And so in Luke 12:47, 48, "That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants, will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." Sins against light and knowledge are sins against the noblest remedy. They waste and wound the conscience most, they most open sinners' mouths to blaspheme against God, and they most harden sinners' hearts in sinning against God; and every way they dare God most, and provoke God most—to strike with an iron rod, and to whip the knowing transgressor, not with rods, but with scorpions.

It is very observable, that the more light and knowledge men sin against in this world—the greater judgments God gives them up to, even in this life, Romans 1:21-23. Oh, how much more, then, will God in the great day give them up to the greatest judgments, who have given themselves up to the greatest sins! Certainly the professors of this age, yes, of this city, whether they go to heaven or hell, will be the greatest debtors that shall be in either place—the one to the free grace of God, and the other to his justice. That those who have most of hell in their mouths, and most of hell in their hearts, and most of hell in their lives—should have most of hell in their souls at last, is but justice.

I shall conclude this second argument with a saying of Augustine, "Look!" says he, "as in heaven one is more glorious than another—just so, in hell one shall be more miserable than another." Now if there be degrees of torments in hell, which I suppose the scriptures but now cited does undeniably prove, then, doubtless, there will be degrees of glory in heaven.

[3.] Thirdly, God in this life dispenses the gifts and graces of his Spirit unequally among his saints; to some he gives two talents, to others five, and to others ten. Hence it is you read both of a weak faith, and of a strong faith. "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" and, "O woman, great is your faith;" and, "Truly, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." [Mat. 25, 8:10, 26, and 15:28.]

And hence it is that you read both of weak Christians, and of strong Christians. "He who is weak in the faith receive;" "another who is weak eats herbs;" "and to the weak, I became as weak, that I might win the weak;" "we then who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves;" "when I am weak, then am I strong." [Romans 14:1-2; 1 Cor. 9:22; 2 Cor. 12:10; Heb. 5:13-14; 1 Pet. 2:2, and 5:1.]

And hence it is that you read of babes, and of children, and of young men, and of old men, in the Scripture. Saints are of different growths. Some are but babes in gifts and grace, others are children, others young men, and others old men. God distributes the good things of this world unequally among the sons of men, as to some more, to others less; to some great things, to others little things; to some high things, to others low things. God unequally distributes spiritual blessings among his dearest children; to some he gives more light, to others less; to some a greater measure of love, to others a less; to some a greater degree of joy, to others a less, etc. Some saints shine in grace and holiness as the skies, and others shine in grace and holiness as the stars; some shine in grace and holiness as the moon, and others shine in grace and holiness as the sun; and all this springs from those different measures of grace and holiness which God bestows upon his people.

Now doubtless men may as well plead for equal degrees of grace—as they may for equal degrees of glory; they may as well plead for an equal share in the good things of this world—as they may plead for an equal share in the happiness and blessedness of the eternal world. Doubtless as God dispenses his gifts and graces unequally in this life—just so, he will dispense his rewards unequally in the next life. As men's gifts and graces are different here on earth—just so, their glory shall be different when they come to heaven. Without all question, they shall have the whitest and the largest robes of honor, and the heaviest and the brightest crowns of glory—whose souls are most richly adorned with grace, and whose lives are most eminently bespangled with holiness.

The more grace and holiness any saint has here, the more he is prepared and fitted for glory; and the more any saint is fitted for glory, the more that saint shall at last be filled with glory. The greatest measures of grace and holiness do most enlarge the soul, and widen the soul, and capacitate the soul—to take in the greatest measures of glory; and therefore the more grace, the more glory, the more holiness, the more happiness, a saint shall have at last. Certainly God will crown his own gracious works in his children proportionable to what they are—but they are different and unequally in all his children in respect of measures and degrees; and therefore God will set different crowns of glory upon the heads of his children at last. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Those who have more grace and holiness than others, they are more like God than others. They bear his glorious image in a greater print, they have a brighter character of God upon them, and they are the most lively picture of God in all the world.

Now we know, though parents love their children well, and wish all their children well, and provide for all their children well—yet commonly they love them most, and provide for them best, who resemble them most. Parents cannot but love those children most, and lay up for them most, who have most of themselves in them; and I cannot see how God can do otherwise than love them most, and provide for them best, who most resemble him to the life. The nature of God is a holy nature, and so there lies a holy necessity on his nature to love them most, who have most grace and holiness in them, Psalm 45:7.

Look! as it is natural to God to hate wickedness—just so, it is natural to God to love holiness; and as the higher men rise in wickedness, the more a holy God hates them—just so, the higher men rise in holiness, the more a holy God loves them. Now the more any are like God, and the more they are beloved by God, the higher doubtless in glory shall they be advanced by God. The best and the largest portion is laid up for that child that is most like his father. The more any man in holiness resembles God on earth, the greater and the larger portion of glory that man shall have when he comes to heaven. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, To deny degrees of glory in heaven, and to say that God will not suit men's wages to their works, nor their rewards to their services, nor crown the highest improvements of grace with the highest degrees of glory, is to render useless many glorious exhortations which are scattered up and down in the Scripture. 1 Cor. 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." If this were not a truth that I have been all this while asserting, why then, when men meet with this exhortation, they may say, "Why, it is no great matter whether we are steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord or not; for if we are, we shall never advance our reward in heaven, we shall never add pearls to our glorious crown, we shall never add one mite to our happiness and blessedness; and if we are not, we shall be as high in heaven, and our reward as great, and our crown as weighty, as theirs shall be who are steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord." [2 Cor. 7:1, and 9:6; 2 Pet. 3:18; John 15:8; 2 Pet. 1:5-7.]

And so the denial of degrees of glory in heaven will take off also the edge of all those other exhortations of perfecting holiness, of sowing liberally, of growing in grace, of bringing forth much fruit, and of adding

virtue to virtue, etc. Yes, this will cut the throat of all divine endeavors; for who will labor to be rich in grace, and to be much in service, and to abound in all the fruits of righteousness and holiness, when none of all this will turn to a man's advantage in the eternal world? If he who sows little shall have as great a harvest as he who sows much; if he who is dull and negligent in the work of the Lord shall have as great a reward as he who is active and abundant in the work of the Lord; if those trees of righteousness which bring forth much fruit shall have no greater a recompense than those trees of righteousness which bring forth many leaves of profession but little fruit, etc., who would sow much, and who would be active and abundant in the work of the Lord, and who would bring forth much fruit? truly but few, if any.

The truth that I have been laboring to make good, namely, that there shall be different degrees of glory in heaven, and that God will proportion men's reward to their work, and that he will measure out happiness and blessedness to them at last, according to the different measures of grace bestowed upon his people, and according to the work, service, and faithfulness of his people in this world; this truth, I say, held forth in its luster and glory, is a marvelous encouragement, and a mighty provocation to all sincere Christians—to labor after the highest pitches in Christianity, and to be very eminent in grace and holiness; for what man is there, who will not reason thus, "the more grace the more glory; the more holiness the more happiness; the more work the more wages; and the greater my service shall be here, the greater shall be my reward hereafter. Therefore, O my soul! grow in grace, perfect holiness, and abound in the work and service of the Lord, knowing that your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord." And thus I have given you the reasons that prove that there shall be degrees of glory in heaven.

Now I have nothing further to do upon this point—but to give a few brief answers to such OBJECTIONS as are commonly raised against this truth, that I have asserted and proved.

Objection 1. First, Some object and say, That one Christ bought us all, and that all our portions are bought by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that therefore all believers shall share alike in the inheritance of the saints in light. Now to this objection I shall answer,

[1.] First, That all saints shall be equal sharers in the substantial and essential glory of heaven, etc. But of this I have spoken before; and, therefore,

[2.] Secondly, Though a father buys a rich inheritance for all his children—yet this lays no necessity nor obligation at all upon him to allot to everyone of his children an equal portion. Just so, though our Lord Jesus Christ has by his blood purchased a rich inheritance for his children—yet this lays no necessity nor obligation at all upon Jesus Christ to divide this rich inheritance by equal portions among his children. It is true that Christ has purchased all with his blood; and it is as true that he may divide his purchase among his people as he pleases. If every man may do with his own as he pleases, why may not Christ? Must he needs be bound, when others are free?

[3.] Thirdly and lastly, I answer, That as it is true that the merits and satisfaction of Christ is the ground and foundation of our reward, and that alone which makes our works capable of a reward—just so, it is as true that our works are the subject to reward, and this is most agreeable to the compact that was made between Christ and his Father—that everlasting happiness and blessedness, that eternal glory and felicity, should be measured out to the saints according to their different measures of grace, and different degrees of service that they have been engaged in this world, and all this upon the credit of Christ's blood. Certainly there is nothing under heaven, below the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, that can make differing works capable of a different reward.

The Papists are most sadly wrong, for they are so blind and bold as to affirm that the more grace any man has, the more glory he merits by his grace. These men make degrees of grace, and not the blood of Jesus Christ, to be the meritorious cause of degrees of glory; and therefore of all men I think they are furthest from glory. Certainly this is the believer's glory, and his crown of rejoicing, that all recompenses and rewards shall

flow in upon him, not upon the account of his merits—but upon the account of Christ's blood; and thus much shall suffice to have spoken by way of answer to this objection.

Objection 2. But now, in the second place, I shall come to answer their grand and main objection; and that is taken from that parable in the 20th chapter of Matthew, where the kingdom of heaven is compared to a vineyard. Now in this parable there is mention made of a farmer that called several laborers into his vineyard, at several hours in the day; some he called at the first hour, and some he called at the third, and some at the ninth, and some at the eleventh. Now when they all came to receive their wages, the story tells us that he gave every man a penny, he gave every man an equal reward. Those who labored from the first hour, and those who labored from the third hour, and those who labored from the sixth hour of the day—had no greater a recompense than he who came in at the eleventh hour, and so had labored but one hour in the vineyard, and bore but little if any of the heat of the day. From whence the objectors conclude that there are no degrees of glory in heaven—but that all shall have glory alike, happiness and blessedness alike; every man shall have his penny, every man shall have an equal reward, and no man's penny in heaven shall be brighter or bigger than another's.

Now, by way of answer to this objection, give me permission to premise these three things:

First, That this parable of the householder, in giving to every man a penny, has no reference at all to heaven, nor to the reward, nor to the glory that shall be conferred upon the elect, and this I shall clearly and fully prove by these four following arguments:

[1.] First, This inferential particle, "for," in verse 1, shows that this parable is inserted to expound the former conclusion, namely, "that the first shall be last, and the last shall be first," and therefore the end of the parable is concluded with the repetition of the same sentence, verse 16, "the last shall be first, and the first shall be last." Christ by this parable would teach his hearers, that there is no reason why those who are first called in respect of time should boast or triumph over others, because he can easily call the uncalled at pleasure, and either make them equal with them, or else prefer them before those who are first. The scope of Christ in this parable is not to set forth the equality of celestial glory, it is not to prove that the happiness and blessedness of the saints shall be equal in heaven—but the very drift of the parable is to show, that those who are first called and converted have no cause at all to despise the uncalled and unconverted, or to trample upon them with the foot of pride, considering that they who are yet in their sins, and in an unconverted and unsanctified estate—may yet be called, and either made equal to them, or preferred before them. But,

[2.] Secondly, Interpreters do generally agree in this, that by the farmer we are to understand God himself, and by the laborers—men upon earth, and by the vineyard—the church of God; and several of them say, that by the five hours in the parable we are to understand the five ages of man.

First, By those who were called in the morning and sent into the vineyard, we are to understand those who in their childhood are called and converted; they are such who begin to seek the Lord, and to serve the Lord, even as soon as they are capable of the use of reason; as Samuel did, and as Josiah did, and as Timothy did.

Secondly, By those who are called at the third hour, we are to understand those who are converted and turned to the Lord in their youth, in the prime, the spring and morning of their days.

Thirdly, By those who were called at the sixth hour, we are to understand those who are turned to the Lord in their strength, and in their full and perfect age.

Fourthly, By those who were called at the ninth hour, we are to understand those who are converted and turned to the Lord in their declining age.

And fifthly, By those who were called at the eleventh hour, we are to understand those who are converted and turned to the Lord in their decrepit old age, when they have one foot in the grave, and there is but a short step between them and eternity, when, with the thief upon the cross, they are even ready to be turned off of the ladder of life.

Now the vineyard being the church, all that this parable proves is no more but this, that whether men are called into the vineyard of the church either sooner or later—either at the first hour, or at the ninth, or eleventh hour: yet this shall neither greaten nor lessen their reward; for if they are called at the first hour, their recompense shall be ever the greater upon that account, or if they are called at the eleventh hour, their reward shall be ever the lesser upon that account; the reward shall not be different according to the different times of men's being called and converted, and that this parable proves; but the reward shall be different according to the diversity of our works, and that my former arguments prove.

[3.] Thirdly, If the penny that everyone had in the parable be meant of glory, then it will roundly follow, that murmurers shall be saved and glorified as well as others, for the murmurers had their penny as well as the rest: verse 10-12, "But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more, and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and you have made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day." The Greek word which is here rendered murmured, signifies to grunt as swine grunt. They grumbled and grunted, and they grunted and grumbled; and pray tell me what should such swine as murmurers are do grunting and grumbling in heaven? doubtless the crown of glory is too bright, too noble, too glorious, and too weighty a crown to be set upon murmurers' heads. Heaven would be no heaven if there were but one grunter or murmurer there.

In heaven all the vessels of glory shall be full, and there shall not be the least shadow of envy or repining there. In the streets of that new Jerusalem above, none shall ever complain that others have too much, or that they themselves have too little. Every glorified saint shall sit down fully satisfied and contented with his portion there. Now should we understand the penny to be a glorified estate and condition, then this would unavoidably follow, that many shall be brought to a state of glory which are not elected, nor sanctified, nor prepared for glory; but this can never, nor must never be granted; and therefore without all question this parable does no way hold out that state of glory and felicity which all the called and chosen of God shall have at Christ's coming to judge the quick and the dead. But,

[4.] Fourthly, The penny that is here mentioned in this parable cannot, nor may not, be interpreted so as to signify an equality of glory, or an equality of happiness and blessedness, that the saints shall have in heaven, because such an interpretation, such an exposition, is cross and contrary to the common and received rules of interpreting and expounding of Scripture. Now, among other rules which are to be observed in the interpreting and expounding of Scripture, there are these two:

FIRST, You must so interpret and expound one text of Scripture, that you do not set it at strife and variance with another text of Scripture; for though there is a seeming contradiction between scripture and scripture—yet there is a blessed harmony and a glorious agreement between all the parts of Scripture. It is a very dangerous thing so to interpret Scripture as to raise contests and opposition between scriptures and scriptures; it is an evil thing to raise up scripture against scripture, and so to interpret one as to make it affront another. Woe to him who by his interpretations of Scripture proclaims the scriptures to be at open war among themselves. Now to interpret the penny in the parable so as to make it signify an equality of glory and happiness among the saints in heaven, is to set this scripture at variance and strife with all those scriptures that I have produced to prove an inequality in the glory and happiness of the saints in heaven, and therefore such an interpretation is rather to be abhorred than to be received. But,

SECONDLY, Another rule that is to be observed in the interpreting of Scripture is this—we must always interpret those scriptures which are more dark and mysterious, by those scriptures which are more plain and

clear; and not interpret those scriptures which are plain and clear by those who are dark and mysterious, for this were to darken counsel by words without knowledge, Job 38:2.

Those who interpret the penny in the parable to signify an equality of glory among the saints in heaven, they transgress this second rule; for they must then interpret all those clear and plain scriptures that I have brought to prove degrees of glory in heaven by this dark and mysterious parable, whereas they should interpret this dark and mysterious parable, if I may so say, by those plain and clear scriptures that I have already cited; and therefore their interpretation must be rejected.

It is true, of some parables we may say as Gregory does, namely, that they rather require a practicer than an interpreter, Psalm 49:4, and 97:2; John 16:29. And it is as true that other parables are so dark, obscure, and mysterious, that we shall never understand them without the sweat of our brows and the beating of our brains, and such a parable this seems to be, and therefore we must interpret the parts of it rather by other clear scriptures, than to make clear and plain scriptures bow to this—which seems to have a veil upon it. And thus you see by these arguments, that the penny in the parable has no reference at all to heaven, nor to any equality of glory that shall be among the saints there.

Secondly, Chrysostom's counsel on the text should be eyed and followed. Says he, "We should not strain every particular of a parable—but only consider the scope of Christ in the propounding of it, and accordingly apply it." We look not on every particular color in a well-drawn picture—but on the whole piece. Just so, when we come to view a parable, it is enough that we cast our eye principally upon the general intention and scope of it. He who is very exact and curious to view and observe every particular circumstance about parables, may easily draw blood, instead of milk, out of the breasts of parables. Parables are like to the scroll which Ezekiel saw in a vision spread before him, which was written within and without; without the history was written, and within the mystery was written, Ezek. 2:10. Now though the outside, the history, of a parable be like the golden pot—yet the inside, the mystery, of a parable is like the manna that was hidden therein, and it is the manna, the manna, that we must seek after. It is our wisdom to cast a special eye upon the inside of parables, upon the mystical reference that parables have, than to lie poring upon the outside of parables.

Therefore, the scope of this parable is not to prove that there is an equality of glory in heaven—but to reprove the Jews, who, being called into the Lord's vineyard early in the morning, repined and murmured that the Gentiles, who were called in at the latter end of the day, who were called in some thousand years after them, that they should through the riches of grace have an equal share with them in the reward, and stand upon as good and as noble terms with God as themselves, who had so long bore the heat of the day. God, to show that his gifts, his grace, and his rewards are free, will give his pennies as well to those who have labored but a little—as to those who have labored much; and this is no prejudice at all to his truth and justice, that his grace is free. But,

Thirdly and lastly, That by the penny we cannot, nor we may not, understand everlasting happiness and blessedness—but some other reward that hypocrites may attain to as well as sincere-hearted Christians; and the reason is obvious: for he who was sent away for his envious grumbling and grunting, was sent away also with his penny, "take your penny and be packing." [Some by the penny do understand worldly honor, and the estimation and approbation of men.] By the penny some pious interpreters do understand some competent gift or other, whatever it were, which might be well managed and improved to advantage. The vineyard is the church, and everyone that is called to labor in the vineyard is called to labor in the use and improvement of ordinances. Now everyone that is laborious in the use of ordinances shall be sure to get something; no man shall kindle a fire on God's altar for nothing. And yet it many times comes to pass that those who have been called and converted long before others, do yet make no greater, nor any better earnings on it than those do, who have been called and converted long after them. He who is called at the first hour sometimes gets no more than he who is called at the eleventh hour. It is in the trade of Christianity, as it is in other trades. Now you know that many men who have been set up in this or that trade ten, nay twenty, years before others—yet

they many times make no more earnings, no more advantage of their trade, than those who have set up but the other day, as we say.

Why, so many who have been called long to the trade of Christianity before others—yet they make no more earnings, no more advantage of that trade, than those who have been called to it but yesterday, as I may speak. His gifts, his gain, his earnings, who is called in at the eleventh hour of the day, is many times equal to his that was called in at the first hour of the day. Yes, I have formerly proved that sometimes many who are called later than others, do yet in gifts and grace excel those who were called long before them.

Now these objections being answered, that truth stands firm, like mount Zion, namely, that the more holiness you have here, the more happiness you shall have hereafter; the more grace you have here on earth, the more glory you shall have when you come to heaven.

**1665**

**John Bunyan (1628 - 1688), English Christian Preacher and Author**

**In Temple Were Chambers Bigger & Lesser, Higher & Lower, More Inward & More Outward: Which Chambers Were Types Of Mansions That Our Lord Told Us He Went To Prepare For Us**

**The Ressurrection of the Dead, and Eternal Judgment**

or, the truth of the resurrection of the bodies, both of good and bad at the last day asserted, and proved by God's word

Fourth, Shew you something also of that with which the just shall be rewarded.

First then, those that shall be found in the day of their resurrection, when they shall have all their good things brought upon the stage; they I say, that then shall be found the people most laborious for God while here; they shall at that day enjoy the greatest portion of God, or shall be possessed with most of the glory of the Godhead then. For that is the portion of saints in general (Romans 8:17; Lamentations 3:24). And why shall he that doth most for God in this world, enjoy most of him in that which is to come? But because by doing and acting, the heart, and every faculty of the soul is enlarged, and more capacitated, whereby more room is made for glory. Every vessel of glory shall at that day be full of it; but every one will not be capable to contain a like measure; and so if they should have it communicated to them, would not be able to stand under it; for there is

an eternal weight in the glory that saints shall then enjoy (2 Corinthians 4:17)

and every vessel must be at that day filled – that is, have its heavenly load of it.

All Christians have not the same enjoyment of God in this life, neither indeed were they able to bear it if they had it (1 Corinthians 3:2). But those Christians that are most laborious for God in this world, they have already most of him in their souls, and that not only because diligence in God's ways, is the means whereby God communicates himself; but also because thereby the senses are made more strong, and able, by reason of use, to understand God, and to discern both good and evil (Hebrews 5:13, 14). To him that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance (Matthew 13:11, 12). He that laid out his pound for his master, and gained ten therewith, he was made ruler over ten cities; but he that by his pound gained but five, he was made ruler over but five (Luke 19:16-19). Often, he that is best bred in his youth, he is best able to manage most, when he is a man, touching things of this life (Daniel 1:3, 4); but always he that is best bred, and that is most in the bosom of God, and that so acts for him here; he is the man that will be best able to enjoy most of God in the kingdom of heaven. It is observable that Paul saith,

Our – affliction – worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Corinthians 4:17)

Our afflictions do it, not only because there is laid up a reward for the afflicted, according to the measure of affliction; but because afflictions, and so every service of God, doth make the heart more deep, more experimental, more knowing and profound; and so more able to hold, contain, and bear more (Psalm 119:71)

Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor (1 Corinthians 3:8)

And this is the reason of such sayings as these – Lay up for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that you may lay hold on eternal life (1 Timothy 6:19), which eternal life, is not the matter of our justification from sin in the sight of God; for that is done freely by grace, through faith in Christ's blood; (but here the apostle speaks of giving of alms) but it is the same that in the other place he calls "the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." And hence it is that he in his stirring them up to be diligent in good works, doth tell them, that he doth not exhort them to it because he wanted, but because he would have

"fruit that might abound to their account" (Philippians 4:17)

as he saith also in another place,

"Beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Therefore I say, the reward that the saints shall have at this day for all the good they have done, it is the enjoyment of God, according to their works: though they shall be freely justified and glorified without works.

Second, As the enjoyment of God at that day, will be to the saints, according to their works and doings – I speak not now of justification from sin – so will their praise and commendations at that day, be according to the same, and both of them their degrees of glory; for I say, as God by communicating of himself unto us at that day, will thereby glorify us, so also he will for the adding all things that may furnish with glory every way, cause to be proclaimed in the face of heaven, and in the presence of all the holy angels; everything that hath for God, his ways, and people, been done by us while here we have been.

"Whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops" (Luke 12:2, 3)

Again, He that

"shall confess me," saith Christ, "before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32).

Now as he of whom Christ is ashamed when he comes in his glory, and in the glory of the holy angels, will then lie under inconceivable disgrace, shame, dishonor, and contempt: so he whom Christ shall confess, own, commend, and praise at that day, must needs have very great dignity, honor, and renown, "for then shall every man have praise of God" – to wit, according to his works (1 Corinthians 4:5). Now will Christ proclaim before thee and all others what thou hast done, and what thou hast suffered, what thou hast owned, and what thou hast withstood for his name (Mark 8:38). This is he that forsook his goods, his relations, his country, and life for me: this is the man that overcame the flatteries and threats, allurements and enticings, of a whole world for me; behold him, he is an Israelite indeed (John 1:47), the top man in his generation, "none like him in all the earth" (Job 1:8). It is said, that when king Ahasuerus had understanding of how good



service Mordecai the Jew had done to and for him, he commanded that the royal apparel and the crown, with the horse that the king did ride on, should be given to him, and that he should with that crown, apparel, and horse, be had through the city, in the presence of all his nobles, and that proclamation should be made before him,

"Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor" (Esther 6:9-11).

Ahasuerus in this was a type to hold forth to the children of God, how kindly he will take all their labor and service of love, and how he will honor and dignify the same; as Christ saith, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them (Luke 12:35-57). The meaning is, that those souls that shall make it their business to honor the Lord Jesus Christ, in the day of their temptation; he will make it his business to honor and glorify them in the day of his glorification (John 12:26). "Verily, I say unto you, that he will make them sit down to meat, and shall come forth and serve them. If any man will serve me," saith he, "him will my Father honor." It hath been God's way in this world to proclaim the acts and doings of his saints in his word before all in this world, and he will do it in that which is to come (Mark 14:9; Revelation 3:4; Revelation 14:1-6).

Third, Another thing that shall be yet added to the glory of the saints, in the kingdom of their Savior, at his coming is, they shall every one of them then have his throne and place of degree on Christ's right hand, and on his left, in his glorious kingdom, according to the relation they stand in to Christ, as the members of his body; for as Christ will have a special eye on us, and a tender and affectionate heart, to recompense to the full every good thing that any man doth for his name in this world: so also he will have as great regard, that there be to every member of his body, the place, and state that is comely for every such member. When the mother of Zebedee's children petitioned our Savior that he would grant to her, that her two sons might sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his kingdom: though he did not grant to her the request for her children, yet he affirmed that there would be places of degrees and honor in heaven, saying,

"To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father" (Matthew 20:20-23).

In the temple, there were chambers bigger and lesser, higher and lower, more inward and more outward: which chambers were types of the mansions that our Lord when he went away, told us he went to prepare for us.

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2,3).

The foot here, shall not have the place prepared for the eye, nor yet the hand, that which is prepared for the ear, but every one shall have his own place in the body of Christ, and the glory also prepared for such a relation. Order, as it is comely in earth, so much more in the kingdom of the God of order, in heaven; where all things shall be done in their utmost perfections. Here shall Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, with the prophets, have every one his place, according to the degree of Old Testament saints. As God said to Daniel,

"Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (Daniel 12:13).

And here also shall Peter, Paul, Timothy, and all other the church officers have their place, and heavenly state, according as God hath set them in the church in the New Testament. As Paul saith of the deacons,

"They that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 3:13). And so of all other saints, be they here of what rank, quality, or place in the church soever, they shall have every one his state, his heavenly state, according as he standeth in the body. As he saith, seeing those members that are most feeble are necessary, to them shall be given "more abundant honor" (1 Corinthians 12:22,23). Of this heavenly order in the kingdom of Christ, when his saints are risen from the dead, was Solomon a notable type in his family, and among his servants and officers, who kept such exactness in the famous order in which he had placed all about him, that it did amaze and confound beholders. For "when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cup-bearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her" (2 Chronicles 9:3,4). "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God" (Psalm 87:3).

**1668 (London); 1836 (New York)**

**John Howe (1630 – 1705), English Puritan Theologian and Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell**  
**Conformity To God, Of Our Present State, Is In Extent Larger & More Comprehensive Than That Of Our Future; Though It Be Unspeakably Less Perfect In Degree; There Is No Moral Excellency Belonging To Our Glorified State, Which Is Not In Some Degree Necessarily To Be Found In Saints On Earth**

**The Blessedness Of The Righteous Opened, And Further Recommended From The Consideration Of The Vanity Of This Mortal Life**

**In Two Treatises**

**On Psalm XVII. 15 and Psalm LXXXIX. 47**

**Chapter XVIII**

Rule 4. Directing to the endeavour of a gradual improvement in such a disposedness of spirit (as will be found in any measure already attained) towards this blessedness. That 'tis blessedness begun which disposes to the consummate state of it. That we are therefore to endeavour the daily increase of our present knowledge of God, conformity to him, and the satisfiedness of our spirits therein.

4. Rule. That when we find ourselves in any disposition towards this blessedness, we endeavour a gradual improvement therein, to get the habitual temper of our spirits made daily more suitable to it. We must still remember we have not yet attained, and must therefore continue pressing forward " to this mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. That prize (not price, as we commonly misread it in our Bibles) of which the apostle here speaks, is (as may be seen by looking back to verse 8, 9, &c.) the same with the blessedness in the text. Such a knowledge of Christ, as should infer at last his participation with him in his state of glory; or of the resurrection of the dead. This is the ultimate term, the scope or end of that high calling of God in Christ; so 'tis also stated elsewhere. Who hath ii called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus. Now we should therefore frequently recount how far short we are of this glory, and stir up our souls to more vigorous endeavours in order to it. Our suitableness to this blessedness stands in our having the elements and first principles of it in us; 'tis glory only that fits for glory; some previous sights and impressions of it, and a pleasant complacential relish thereof, that frame and attemper us by degrees to the full and Consummate state of it. This is that therefore we must endeavour, A growing knowledge of God, conformity to him, and satisfiedness of spirit therein. What we expect should be one day perfect, we must labour may be, in the meantime, always growing.

1. Our knowledge of God. The knowledge of him I here principally intend, is not notional and speculative, but (which is more ingredient to our blessedness, both inchoate and perfect) that of converse, that familiar knowledge which we usually express by the name of acquaintance. See that this knowledge of him be

increased daily. Let us now use ourselves much with God. Our knowledge of him must aim at conformity to him; and how powerful a thing is converse in order hereto! How insensibly is it wont to transform men, and mould anew their spirits, language, garb, deportment 1 To be removed from the solitude or rudeness of the country to a city or university, what an alteration does it make 1 How is such a person divested by degrees of his rusticity, of his more uncomely and agrest manners! Objects we converse with, beget their image upon us; They walked after vanity, and became vain, said Jeremiah; and Solomon, a He that walketh with the wise, shall be wise. Walking is a usual expression of converse. So to converse with the holy is the way to be holy, with heaven the way to be heavenly, with God, the way to be God-like. Let us therefore make this our present business, much to acquaint ourselves with God. We count upon seeing him face to face, of being always in his presence beholding his glory; that speaketh very intimate acquaintance indeed. How shall we reach that pitch 1 What, to live now as strangers to him 1 Is that the way 1' The path of the righteous is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The text shows us the righteous man's end, To behold the glory of God's face, &c. 'tis easy to apprehend then, his way must needs have in it a growing brightness, as he comes still nearer this end. Every nearer approach to a lucid thing infers (to us) an increase of light from it. We should therefore be following on to know the Lord, and we shall see his going forth will be before us as the morning, f He will be still visiting us with renewed, increasing light, (for such is morning light, fresh and growing-light,) and ere long it will be perfect day. Labour we to improve our knowledge of God to such a degree of acquaintance as our present state can admit of: to be as inward with him as we can, to familiarize ourselves to him. His gospel aims at this, to make those that were afar off nigh. Far-distant objects we can have no distinct view of. He can give us little account of a person that hath only seen him afar off; so God beholds the proud afar off, that is, he will have no acquaintance with them: whereas with the humble he will be familiar; s he will dwell (as in a family) with them. So the ungodly behold God till he bring them in, and make them nigh; then they are no longer strangers, but of his family and household, now thoroughly acquainted. Several notes there are of a thorough acquaintance which we should endeavour may concur in our acquaintance with God, in that analogy which the case will bear:—To know his nature; or (as we would speak of a man) what will please and displease him, so as to be able in the whole course of our daily conversation to approve ourselves to him: to have the skill so to manage our conversation, as to continue a correspondence, not interrupted by any of our offensive unpleasing demeanours: to walk worthy of God unto all well-pleasing. It concerns us most to study and endeavour this practical knowledge of the nature of God; what trust, and love, and fear, and purity, &c. his faithfulness and greatness, his goodness and holiness, &c. do challenge from us: what may in our daily walking be agreeable, what repugnant, to the several attributes of his being. To know his secrets; to be as it were of the cabinet-council. ii (The word used by the Psalmist hath a peculiar significancy to that purpose; to signify, not only counsel, but a council, or the consensus of persons that consult together.) This is his gracious vouchsafement, to humble reverential souls. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; such acquaintance with him is to be sought, to know the (communicable) secrets both of his mind and heart. Of his mind; his truths, gospel-mysteries, that were kept secret from ages and generations. We have the mind of Christ. This is great inwardness. Of his heart; his love, his good-will, his kind bosom thoughts towards our souls. To know his methods, and the course of his dispensations towards the world, his church, and especially our own spirits. This is great knowledge of God, to have the skill to trace his footsteps, and observe by comparing times with times, that such a course he more usually holds; and accordingly, with great probability, collect from what we have seen and observed what we may expect. What order and succession there is of storms of wrath, to clouds of sin; and again of peaceful, lucid intervals, when such storms have inferred penitential tears. In what exigencies, and distresses, humble mourners may expect God's visits and consolations. To recount in how great extremities former experience hath taught us not to despair; and from such experience still to argue ourselves into fresh reviving hopes, when the state of things (whether public or private, outward or spiritual) seems forlorn. To know the proper seasons of address to him; and how to behave ourselves most acceptably in his presence, in what dispositions and postures of spirit we are fittest for his converse, so as to be able to come to him in a good hour, i in a time when he maybe found. To know his voice: this discovers acquaintance, k The ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meats. God's righteous ones, that are filled with the fruits of righteousness, do proportionably abound in i knowledge, and in all sense. They have quick, naked, unvitiated senses, to discern between good and evil; yea, and can have the suffrage of several senses concerning the same object; they

have a kind of taste in their ear. They taste the good word of God, even in his previous workings on them. Being new-born, they are intimated to have tasted in the word how gracious the Lord is. As they grow up thereby, they have still a more judicious sense, and can more certainly distinguish, when God speaks to them, and when a stranger goes about to counterfeit his voice.» They can tell at first hearing, what is grateful and nutritive, what offensive and hurtful, to the divine life; what is harmonious and agreeable, what dissonant, to the gospel already received, so that an angel from heaven must expect no welcome, if he bring another. To know his inward motions and impulses; when his hand toucheth our hearts, to be able to say, This is the finger of God, there is something divine in this touch. » My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved. This speaks acquaintance, when the soul can say, I know his very touch; the least impression from him, I can distinguish it from thousands of objects that daily beat upon my heart. To understand his looks; to know the meaning of his aspects, and glances of the various casts, as it were, of his eye. r Such things intimate friends can, in a sort, talk by, with one another; I will guide thee by mine eye;

that implies an intelligent teachable subject. We have now no full-eyed appearances of God; he shows himself, looks in upon us through the lattice, through a veil or a shadow, or a glass. That measure of acquaintance with him to be able to discern and own him in his appearances, is a great participation of heaven, utter unacquaintance with God is expressed by the denial of these two, Ye have neither heard his voice, nor seen his shape, John v. 37.

Finally, which brings us home to the text, to keep our eye intently fixed on him, not to understand his looks only as before, but to return our own. Intimate acquaintance (when such friends meet) is much expressed and improved by the eye, by a reciprocation of glances, or (which speaks more inwardness) more fixed views; when their eyes do even feed and feast upon each other. Thus we should endeavour to be as in a continual interview with God. How frequent mention have we of the fixed posture of his eye towards saints. To this man will I look; I have found out, q. d. that which shall be ever the delight of mine eye, do not divert me. Towards him I will look. What he speaks of the material temple is ultimately to be referred to that which is typified, i his church, his saints, united with his Christ, Mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually; and elsewhere, He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous; he cannot (admirable grace) allow himself to look off, to turn aside his eye: and he seems impatient of the aversion of theirs, Let me see thy countenance, (saith he,) for it is comely.

Is it not much more reasonable it should be thus with us towards him 1 that we should be more delighted to behold real comeliness than he with what is so, only by his gracious vouchsafement and estimation 1 How careful Should we be, that our eye may at every turn meet his; that he never look toward us, and find it in the ends of the earth, carelessly wandering from him! How well doth it become us, 'to set the Lord always before us; to have our eye ever towards the Lord! This you see is the initial, leading thing in this blessedness of heaven. So it must have also a prime ingrediency into our heaven on earth. It is a part of celestial blessedness; but it is not peculiar to it. The present blessedness the righteous enjoy here is a participation of heaven. It hath something in it of every thing that is ingredient into that perfect blessedness. Our present knowledge of God is often expressed by vision, or sight, as we have had occasion to observe in many passages of Scripture. He hath given us such a visive power, and made it connatural to that heavenly creature, begotten of him, in all the true subjects of his blessedness. t We know that we are of God, and presently it follows, He hath given us an understanding to know him that is true. This new man is not born blind. The blessed God himself is become liable to the view of his regenerate, intellectual eye, clarified, and filled with vigour and spirit from himself. He therefore that hath made, that hath new-formed, this eye, shall not he be seen by it 1 shall not we turn it upon him! Why do not we more frequently bless our eye with that sight 1 This object (though of so high excellency and glory) will not hurt, but perfect and strengthen it. If they are refreshing, vital beams that issue from it. Sure we have no excuse that we eye God so little, i. e. that we mind him no more. Why have we so few thoughts of him in a day 1 What, to let so much time pass, and not spare him a look, a thought 1 Do we intend to employ ourselves an eternity in the visions of God, and is our present aversion from him, and intention upon vanity, our best preparation thereto 1 This loudly calls for redress. Shall God be waiting all the day, as on purpose to catch our eye, to intercept a look, and we

studiously decline him, and still look another way, as of choice 1 And what is it but choice 1 Can we pretend a necessity to forget him all the day 1 How cheap is the expense of a look! How little would it cost us! And yet how much of duty might it express 1 how much of comfort and joy might it bring into us!

constant views of God! Herein we sin and suffer both at once, things both very unsuitable to heaven. Mindfulness of God is the living spring of all holy and pleasant affections and deportments towards him; sets all the wheels a going; makes the souls as the chariots of Aminadab. These wheels have their eyes also, are guided by mind, by an intellectual principle. Knowing, intelligent beings (as we also are by participation and according to our measure) so act mutually towards one another. We cannot move towards God but with an open eye, seeing him and our way towards him. If we close our eyes we stand still, or blindly run another course, we know not, whither. All sin is darkness, whether it be neglect of good, or doing of evil: its way is a way of darkness; as a course of holy motion is walking in the light. Our shutting our eyes towards God creates that darkness; surrounds us with a darkness comprehensive of all sin. Now is every thing of enjoined duty waived, and any evil done, that sinful nature prompts us to. Well might it be said, u He that sinneth hath not seen God. When we have made ourselves this darkness, we fall of course under Satan's empire, and are presently within his dominions. He is the prince of darkness, and can rule us now at his will. Perishing lost souls are such as in whom the god of this world hath blinded their minds.—To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, is, to turn them also from the power of Satan unto God. What a hell of wickedness are we brought into, in the twinkling of an eye! . We are without God in the world, as if a man wink, though at noon-day he hath as it were put out the sun, 'tis with him as if there were no such thing. When we have banished God out of our sight and forgotten him, 'tis with us as if there were no God. If such a state grow habitual to us, (as we know every sinful aversion of our eye from God tends thereto,) what wickedness is there that will not lurk in this darkness 1 How often in Scripture is forgetting God used as a character, yea, as a paraphrase, a full, though summary expression of sin in general! as if the wickedness, the malignity, the very hell itself of sin, were wholly included (and not connoted only) here. Now consider this, (after so dreadful an enumeration, so black a catalogue,) all that forget God. And (as deep calleth to deep, one hell to another,) f The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God. That heap, that mass of wickedness, of pride, of persecution, cursing, blasphemy, 'deceit, and mischief, al! meet in one that hath not God in all his thoughts.

But who is so hardy to look the holy God in the face, and sin against him! What an astonishment is it, when he watches over present sin, or brings forth former sins out of secret darkness, and sets them in the light of his countenance! Who that understands any thing of the nature and majesty of God, dare call him for a witness of his sinning! The worst of men would find themselves under some restraint, could they but obtain of themselves, to sit down sometimes, and solemnly think of God. Much more would it prove an advantage to them, (whom I most intend,) such as sin within the nearer call and reach of mercy; that sin not to the utmost latitude; even such as lead the strictest lives, and are seldomer found to transgress. Are not their sins wont to begin with forgetting God? Did they eye God more, would they not sin less frequently, and with greater regret You his saints, that have made a covenant with him by sacrifice, that profess the greatest love and devoledness to him, and seem willing yourselves to become sacrifices, and lay down your lives for his sake; what, is it a harder thing to give him a look, a thought! or is it not too common a thing, without necessity, (and then not without injury,) to withhold these from him 1 Let us bethink ourselves, are not the principal distempers of our spirits, and disorders yet observable m our lives, to be referred hither 1 As to enjoined services; what should we venture on omissions, if we had God in our eye 1 or serve him with so declining, backward hearts 1 Should we dare to let pass a day, in the even whereof we might write down, Nothing done for God this day 1 Or should we serve him as a hard master, with sluggish, despondent spirits 1 The apostle forbids servants to serve with eye-service, as men-pleasers; meaning they should eye men less, and God more. Sure, as to him, our service is not enough eye-service. We probably eye men more than we should; but we do not eye him enough. Hence such hanging of hands, such feebleness of knees, such laziness and indifferency, so little of an active zeal and laborious diligence, so little fervency of spirit in serving the Lord. Hence also such an aversion to hazardous services, such fear of attempting any thing (though never so apparent important duty) that may prove costly, or hath danger in it. We look not to him that is invisible. And

as to forbidden things; should we be so proud, so passionate, so earthly, so sensual, if we had God more in view? should we so much seek ourselves, and indulge our own wills and humours, drive a design with such solicitude and intention of mind for our private interests? Should we walk at such a latitude, and more consult our own inclination than our rule, allow ourselves in so much vanity of conversation, did we mind God as we ought? And do we not sensibly punish ourselves in this neglect? What a dismal chaos is this world while we see not God in it! To live destitute of a Divine presence, to discern no beam of the heavenly glory; to go up and down day by day, and perceive nothing of God, no glimmering, no appearance; this is disconsolate as well as sinful darkness. What can we make of creatures, what of the daily events of Providence, if we see not in them the glory of a Deity; if we do not contemplate and adore the Divine wisdom, power, and goodness, diffused every where? Our practical atheism, and in observance of God, make the world become to us the region and shadow of death, states us as among ghosts and spectres, makes all things look with a ghastly face, imprints death upon every thing we see, encircles us with gloomy, dreadful shades, and with uncomfortable apparitions. To behold the tragical spectacles always in view, the violent lusts, the rapine and rage of some, the calamitous sufferings, the miseries and ruins of others; to hear every corner resounding with the insultations of the oppressor, and the mournful groans of the oppressed; what a painful continuing death were it to be in the world without God! At the best, all things were but a vanishing scene, an image seen in the dark. The creation a thing the fashion whereof were passing away, the whole contexture and system of Providence were mere confusion, without the least concinnity or order; religion an acknowledged trifle, a mere mockery! What, to wink ourselves into so much darkness and desolation, and by sealing up our eyes against the Divine light and glory, to confirm so formidable miseries upon our own souls! How dreadfully shall we herein revenge our own folly, in nullifying him to ourselves, who is the all in all! Sure there is little of heaven in all this! But if now we open our eyes upon that all-comprehending glory, apply them to a steady intuition of God, how heavenly a life shall we then live in the world! To have God always in view, as the director and end of all our actions; to make our eye crave leave of God, to consult him ere we adventure upon any thing, and implore his guidance and blessing; upon all occasions to direct our prayers to him and look up, to make our eye wait his commanding look, ready to receive all intimations of his will; this is an angelic life. To be as those ministers of his that are always ready to do his pleasure; to make our eye do him homage, and express our dependence and trust; to approve ourselves in every thing to him, and act as always in his presence, observing still how his eye observes us, and exposing ourselves willingly to its inspection and search, contented always he should see through and through us; surely there is much of heaven in this life; so we should endeavour to live here. I cannot omit to give you this instruction in the words of a heathen. 'We ought, (saith he) so to live, as always within view, order our cogitations as if some one might or can look into the very inwards of our breast. For to what purpose is it, to hide any thing from man? from God nothing can be hid; he is continually present to our spirits, and fomes amidst our inmost thoughts, &c. This is to walk in the light, amidst a serene, placid, mild light, that infuses no unquiet thoughts, admits no guilty fears, nothing that can disturb or annoy us. To eye God in all our comforts, and observe the smiling aspects of his face, when he dispenses them to us; to eye him in all our afflictions, and consider the paternal wisdom that instructs us in them; how would this increase our mercies, and mitigate our troubles! To eye him in all his creatures, and observe the various prints of the Creator's glory stamped upon them; with how lively a lustre would it clothe the world, and make every thing look with a pleasant face! What a heaven were it to look upon God, as filling all in all! and how sweetly would it, ere-while, raise our souls into some such sweet seraphic strains, Holy, holy,—the whole earth is full of his glory! To eye him in his providences, and consider how all events are with infinite wisdom disposed into an apt subserviency to his holy will and ends; what difficulties would hence be solved! what seeming inconsistencies reconciled! and how much would it contribute to the ease and quiet of our minds! To eye him in his Christ, the express image of his person, the brightness of his glory; and in the Christian economy, the gospel revelation and ordinances, through which he manifests himself; to behold him in the posture wherein he saves souls, clad with the garments of salvation, girt with power, and apparelled with love, travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save: to view him addressing himself to allure and win to him the hearts of sinners, when he discovers himself in Christ, upon that reconciling design, makes grace that brings salvation appear, teaching to deny ungodliness, &c. to behold him entering into human flesh, pitching his tabernacle among men, hanging out his ensigns of peace, laying his trains, spreading his net, the cords of a man, the bands of

love: to see him in his Christ, ascending the cross, lifted up to draw all men to him; and consider that mighty love of justice and of souls, both so eminently conspicuous in that stupendous sacrifice; here to fix our eyes looking to Jesus, and beholding him whom we have pierced: to see his power and glory, as they were wont to be seen in his sanctuaries; to observe him in the solemnities of his worship, and the graceful postures wherein he holds communion with his saints, when he seats himself amidst them on the throne of grace, receives their addresses, dispenses the tokens and pledges of his love: into what transports might these visions put us every day!

Let us then stir, up our drowsy souls, open our heavy eyes, and turn them upon God, inure and habituate them to a constant view of his (yet veiled) face, that we may not see him only by casual glances, but as those that seek his face, and make it our business to gain a thorough knowledge of him. But let us remember, that all our present visions of God must aim at a further conformity to him; they must design imitation, not the satisfying of curiosity: our looking must not therefore be an inquisitive, busy prying into the unrevealed things of God. Carefully abstain from such over-bold presumptuous looks. But remember, we are to eye God as our pattern. Wherein he is to be so, he hath plainly enough revealed and proposed himself to us. And consider, this is the pattern, both to which we ought and to which we shall be conformed, if we make it our business; so will sense of duty and hope of success concur to fix our eye and keep it steady. Especially, let us endeavour to manage and guide our eye aright, in beholding him, that our sight of him may most effectually subserve this design of being like him; and herein nothing will be more conducive, than that our looks be qualified with—reverence, and—love.

1. Let them be reverential looks. "We shall never be careful to imitate a despised pattern, or that we think meanly of. When this is the intimate sense of our soul, Who is a God like unto thee in holiness 1 there is none holy as the Lord: this will set our powers on work; such sights will command and over-awe our souls into conformity to him. Subjects have sometimes affected to imitate the very imperfections and deformities of their adored prince. Let us greatness our thoughts of God. Look to him with a submissive, adoring eye. Let every look import worship and subjection. Who can stand before apprehended sovereign maiesty with such a temper of soul as shall signify an affront to it? This will make every thing as suitable to God, yield and render our souls susceptible of all divine and holy impressions.

2. Let them be friendly and (as far as may consist with that reverence) amorous looks. 'Tis natural to affect and endeavour likeness to them we love. Let love always sit in pur eye, and inspirit it; the will represent God always amiable, will infinitely commend us to his nature and attributes, and even ravish us into his likeness. The loving spouse often glories to wear her beloved husband's picture on her breast. The love of God will much more make us affect to bear his image in our hearts. His law is a true representation of him, and love is the fulfilling of that law, an exemplification of it in ourselves. Love will never enter a quarrel, nor admit of any disagreement with God. His more terrible appearances will be commendable in the eye of love. It thinks no evil. But so interprets and comments upon his severer aspects, whether through his law or providence, as to judge all amiable, and frame the soul to an answerable deportment.

2. In this way then let us endeavour a growing conformity unto God. It hath been much (and not unnecessarily) inculcated already, that the blessedness of the righteous hereafter, doth not consist merely in beholding an external, objective glory, but in being also glorified. They are happy by a participated glory; by being made like God, as well as seeing his glorious likeness; whereby the constitution of their spirits is changed and reduced to that excellent, harmonious, agreeable temper, that holy composure and peaceful state, from which blessedness is inseparable. As far as we are capable of blessedness in this world, it must be so with us here. Glory without us will not make us happy in heaven; much less will any thing without us make us happy on earth. 'Tis an idle dream, of sickly, crazy minds, that their blessedness consists in some external good, that is separable and distant from them; which therefore as they blindly guess, they uncertainly pursue; never aiming to become good, without which they can never know what it is to be blessed What felicity are men wont to imagine to themselves in this or that change of their outward condition! were their state such orsuch, then they were happy, and should desire no more. As the child's

fancy suggests to it, if it were on the top of such a hill, it could touch the heavens, but when with much toil it hath got thither, it finds itself as far off as before. We have a shorter and more compendious way to it, would we allow ourselves to understand it. A right temper of mind involves blessedness in itself; 'tis this only change we need to endeavour. We wear out our days in vanity and misery, while we neglect this work, and busy ourselves to catch a fugitive shadow, that hovers about us. It can never be well, till our own souls be a heaven to us, and blessedness be a domestic, a home dwelling inhabitant there. Till we get a settled principle of holy quietude into our own breasts, and become the sons of peace, with whom the peace of God may find entrance and abode; till we have that treasure within us, that may render us insensible of any dependence on a foreign good, or fear of a foreign evil. Shall that be the boast and glory of a philosopher only, I carry all my goods with me wherever I go 1 and that, A virtuous, good man, is liable to no hurt 11i Seneca thinks "they discover a low spirit, that say, externals can add any thing (though but a very little) to the felicity of an honest mind; as if (saith he) men could not be content with the light of the sun without the help of a candle or a spark." And speaking of the constancy of the virtuous man, (saith he,) " They do ill that say, such an evil is tolerable to him, such a one intolerable, and that confine the greatness of his mind within certain bounds and limits. Adversity (he tells us) overcomes us, if it be not wholly overcome. Epicurus, (saith he,) the very patron of your sloth, acknowledges yet, that unhappy events can seldom disturb the mind of a virtuous person, (and he adds,) how had he almost uttered, the voice of a man! I pray, (saith he,) speak out a little more boldly, and say he is above them altogether."° Such apprehensions the more virtuous heathens have had of the efficacy and defensative power of moral goodness, however defective their notion might be of the thing itself. Hence Socrates the pagan martyr is reported to have cried out, (when those persons were persecuting him to death,) Anytus and Meletus can kill me, but they cannot hurt me. And Anaxarchus the philosopher, having sharply reprov'd Nicocreon, and being by him ordered to be beaten to death with iron mallets. bids, Strike on, strike on, thou mayest (saith he) » break in pieces this vessel of Anaxarchus, but Anaxarchus himself thou canst not touch.

Shall Christianity here confess itself outvied? Shall we, to the reproach of our religion, yield the day to pagan morality, and renew the occasion of the ancient complaint, 'that the faith of Christians is out-done by the teathen, infidelity? It is, I remember, the challenge of Cicilius in Minutius. " There is Socrates (saith he) the prince of wisdom, whosoever of you Christians is great enough to attempt it, let him imitate him if he can." Methinks we should be ambitious to tell the world in our lives, (for Christians should live great things, not speak them,) that a greater than Socrates is here: to let them see in us our represented pattern: to show forth higher virtues than those of Socrates; even his, who hath called us out of darkness into his glorious and marvellous light. Certain it is, that the sacred oracles of the gospel set before us a more excellent pattern, and speak things not less magnificent, but much more modest and perspicuous; with less pomp of words they give us a much clearer account of a far more excellent temper of mind, and prescribe the direct and certain way of attaining it. (Do but view over the many passages of Scripture occasionally glanced at, Chap. 7.) But we grope as in the dark for blessedness; we stumble at noon-day as in the night, and wander as if we had no eyes; we mistake our business, and lay the scene of a happy state at a great distance from us, in things which we cannot reach, and which if we could it were to little purpose.

Not to speak of greater sensualists, (whom at present I have less in my eye,) is there not a more refined sort of persons, that neglecting the great business of inspecting, and labouring to better and improve their spirits, are wholly taken up about the affairs of another sphere; that are more solicitous for better times, for a better world, than better spirits; that seem to think that all the happiness they are capable of on earth, is bound up in this or that external state of things 1 Not that the care of all public concernments should be laid aside; least of all, a just solicitude for the church's welfare: but that should not be pretended, when our own interest is the one thing with us. And when we are really solicitous about the church's interests, we should state them aright. God designs the afflictions of his people for their spiritual good, therefore that is a much greater good, than their exemption from suffering these evils; otherwise his means should cat up his end, and be more expensive than that will countervail; which were an imprudence no man of tolerable discretion 'would be guilty of. We should desire the outward prosperity of Sion, for it is a real good; but inasmuch as it hath in it the goodness, not of an end, but only (and that but sometimes neither) of a means; not a constant, but a



mutual goodness; not a principal, but a lesser subordinate goodness; we must not desire it absolutely, nor chiefly, but with submissive limited desires. If our hearts are grieved to hear of the sufferings of the church of God in the world, but not of their sins; if we more sensibly regret, at any time, the persecutions and oppressions they undergo, than their spiritual distempers, their earthliness, pride, cold love to God, fervent animosities towards each other; it speaks an uninstructed carnal mind. We take no right measure of the interests of religion, or the church's welfare, and do most probably mistake ourselves as much in our judging of our own; and measure theirs by our own mistaken model.

And this is the mischievous cheat many put upon their own souls, and would obtrude too often upon others too; that overlooking the great design of the gospel, to transform men's spirits and change them into the Divine likeness, they think 'tis religion enough to espouse a party, and adopt an opinion; and then vogue themselves friends to religion according to the measure of their zeal for their own party or opinion; and give a very pregnant proof of that zeal, by magnifying or inveighing against the times, according as they favour or frown upon their empty, unspirited religion. It being indeed such (a secret consciousness whereof they herein bewray) as hath no other life in it, than what it owes to external favour and countenance. And therefore all public rebukes are justly apprehended mortal to it; whereas that substantial religion that adequately answers the design, and is animated by the spirit of the gospel, possesses the souls of them that own it, with a secure confidence, that it can live in any times, and hold their souls in life also. Hence they go on their way with a free unsolicitous cheerfulness, enjoying silently in their own bosoms that repose and rest which naturally results from a sound and well-composed temper of spirit. They know their happiness depends upon nothing without them. That they hold it by a better tenure than that of the world's courtesy, 'they can be quiet in the midst of storms, and abound in the want of all things. They can in patience possess their own souls, and in them a vital spring of true pleasure, when they are driven out of all other possessions. They know the living sense of these words, That the good man is satisfied from himself: That to be spiritually-minded is life and peace: That nothing can harm them that are followers of the good: That the way to see good days, is to keep their tongues from evil, and their lips from speaking guile, to depart from evil and do good, to seek peace and pursue it. They cannot live in bad times; they carry that about them that will make the worst days good to them. Surely they can never be happy in the best times, that cannot be so in any. Outward prosperity is quite besides the purpose to a distempered soul; when nothing else troubles, it will torment itself. Besides, we cannot command at pleasure the benign aspects of the world, the smiles of the times; we may wait a life's-time, and still find the same adverse posture of things towards us from without. What dotage is it to place our blessedness in something to us impossible, that lies wholly out of our power; and in order whereto we have nothing to do, but sit down and wish; and either faintly hope, or ragingly despair 1 We cannot change times and seasons, nor alter the course of the world, create new heavens and new earth. Would we not think ourselves mocked, if God should command us these things in order to our being happy 1 'Tis not our business, these are not the affairs of our own province (blessed be God 'tis not so large) further than as our bettering ourselves may conduce thereto, and this is that which we may do and ought, 'tis our proper work, in obedience and subordination to God as his instruments, to govern and cultivate our own spirits, to intend the affairs of that his kingdom in us, (where we are his authorized viceroys,) that consists in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. We can be benign to ourselves, if the world be not so to us; cherish and adorn our inward man; that though the outward man be exposed daily to perish, (which we cannot help, and therefore it concerns us not to take thought

about it,) the inward may be renewed day by day. We can take care that our souls may prosper, that through our constant neglect they be not left to languish and pine away in their own iniquities. They may be daily fed with the heavenly hidden manna, arid with the fruits of the paradise of God; they may enjoy at home a continual feast, and with a holy freedom luxuriate in divine pleasures, the joys wherewith the strangers intermeddle not, if we be not unpropitious and unkind to ourselves.

And would we know wherein that sound and happy complexion of spirit lies, that hath so much of heaven in it: 'Tis a present gradual participation of the Divine likeness. It consists in being conformed to God; 'tis, as the moralist tells us, If one would give a short compendious model of it, such a temper of mind as becomes

God; or to give an account of it in his own words who prescribes it, and who is himself the highest pattern of this blessed frame, 'Tis to be transformed in the renewing of our minds, so as to be able to prove what is the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; that is, experimentally to find it in ourselves, impressed and wrought into our own spirits, so as to have the complacential relish and savour of its goodness, excellency, and pleasantness diffused through our souls. Where remember, this was written to such as were supposed saints; whence it must be understood, of a continued progressive transformation, a renewing of the inward man day by day (as is the apostle's expression elsewhere.) 'Tis a more perfect reception of the impress of God, revealing himself in the gospel; the growth and tendency of the new creature, begotten unto the eternal blessedness, towards its mature and most perfect state and stature in the fruition thereof.

And 'tis this I am now pressing; inasmuch as some account hath been already given (according as we can now imperfectly guess at it, and spell it out) what the constitution of the holy soul is in its glorified state, when it perfectly partakes the Divine likeness; that when we find in ourselves any principles and first elements of that blessed frame, we would endeavour the gradual improvement thereof, and be making towards that perfection. This therefore being our present work, let it be remembered wherein this participated likeness of God hath been said to consist, and labour now the nearest approach to that pitch and state. Your measures must be taken from what is most perfect, come now as near it as you can, and as that pagan's advise is; k" If yet thou art not Socrates, however, live as one that would fain be Socrates." Though yet thou art not perfect, live as one that aims at it, and would be so. Only it must be considered, that the conformity to God, of our present state, is in extent larger and more comprehensive than that of our future; though it be unspeakably less perfect in degree. For there is no moral excellency (that we have any present knowledge of) belonging to our glorified state, which is not in some degree necessarily to be found in saints on earth. But there are some things which the exigency of our present state makes necessary to us here, which will not be so in the state of glory; repentance, faith, as it respects the Mediator, in order to our future happiness; patience of injuries, pity to the distressed, &c. These things, and whatsoever else, whose objects cease, must be understood to cease with them. In short, here is requisite all that moral good which concerns both our end and way; there, what concerns our end only.

Yet is the whole compass of that gracious frame of spirit, requisite in this our present state, all comprehended in conformity to God. Partly, inasmuch as some of these graces which will cease hereafter in their exercise, as not having objects to draw them forth into act, have their pattern in some communicable attributes of God, which will cease also, as to their denomination and exercise; their objects then ceasing too, as his patience towards sinners, his mercy to the miserable. Partly inasmuch as other of those graces now required in us, though they correspond to nothing in God that is capable of the same name, as faith in a Saviour, repentance of sin, (which can have no place in God,) they yet answer to something in his nature, that goes under other names; and is the reason wherefore he requires such things in us. He hath in his nature that faithfulness and all-sufficient fulness, that challenges our faith; and that hatred of sin, which challenges our repentance for it, having been guilty of it. His very nature obliges him to require those things from us, the state of our case being considered. So that the sum even of our present duty lies in receiving this entire impression of the Divine likeness (in some part invariably and eternally necessary to us, in some part necessary with respect to our present state/) And herein is our present blessedness also involved. If therefore we have any design to better our condition in point of blessedness, it must be our business to endeavour after a fuller participation of that likeness, in all the particulars it comprehends. You can pitch your thoughts upon no part of it, which hath not an evident direct tendency to the repose and rest of your spirits. I shall commend only some few instances, that you may see how little reason and inducement a soul conformed to the holy will of God, hath to seek its comforts and contents elsewhere. Faith corresponds to the truth of God, as it respects divine revelations. How pleasant is it to give up our understandings to the conduct of so safe a guide; to the view of so admirable things as he reveals! It corresponds to his goodness, as it respects its offers. How delectable is it to be filling an empty soul from the Divine fullness. What pleasure attends the exercise of this faith towards the person of the Mediator, viewing him in all his glorious excellencies, receiving him in all his gracious communications by this eye and hand. How pleasant is it to exercise it in reference to another world! living

by it in a daily prospect of eternity; in reference to this world, to live without care in a cheerful dependance on him that hath undertaken to care for us!

Repentance is that by which we become like the holy God; to whom our sin hath made us most unlike before. How sweet are kindly relentings, penitential tears, and the return of the soul to its God, and to a right mind! And who can conceive the ravishing pleasures of love to God! wherein we not only imitate, but ultimately unite with him who is love itself. How pleasant to let our souls dissolve here, and flow into the ocean, the element of love! Our fear corresponds to his excellent greatness. And is not (as it is part of the new creature in us) a tormenting servile passion, but a due respectfulness and observance of God; and there is no mean pleasure in that holy awful seriousness unto which it composes and forms our spirits. Our humility, as it respects him, answers his high excellency; as it respects our own inferiors, his gracious condescension. How pleasant is it to fall before him! And how connatural and agreeable to a good spirit, to stoop low, upon any occasion to do good! Sincerity is a most God-like excellency; an imitation of his truth, as grounded in his all-sufficiency; which sets him above the necessity or possibility of any advantage by collusion or deceit; and corresponds to his omniscieny and heart-searching eye. It heightens a man's spirit to a holy and generous boldness; makes him apprehend it beneath him to do an unworthy, dishonest action, that should need a palliation, or a concealment.<sup>i</sup> And gives him the continual pleasure of self-approbation to God, whom he chiefly studies and desires to please. Patience, a prime glory of the Divine Majesty, continues a man's possession of his own soul, his liberty, his dominion of himself. He is (if he can suffer nothing) a slave to his vilest and most sordid passions at home, his own base fear, and brutish anger, and effeminate grief, and to any man's lusts and humours besides that he apprehends can do him hurt. It keeps a man's soul in a peaceful calm, delivers him from (that most unnatural) self-torment, defeats the impotent malice of his most implacable enemy, who fain would vex him, but cannot. Justice, the great attribute of the judge of all the earth, as such; so far as the impression of it takes place among men, preserves the common peace of the world, and the private peace of each man in his own bosom, so that the former be not disturbed by doing of mutual injuries, nor the latter by the conscience of having done them. The brotherly love of fellow-Christians; the impression of that special love, which God bears to them all, admits them into one another's bosoms, and all the endearments and pleasures of a mutual communion. Love to enemies, the express image of our heavenly Father; by which we appear his children, begotten of him; overcomes evil by goodness, blunts the double edge of revenge; at least the sharper edge; (which is always towards the author of it;) secures ourselves from wounding impressions and resentments; turns keen anger into gentle pity; and substitutes mild pleasant forgiveness, in the room of the much uneasier thoughts and study of retaliation. Mercifulness toward the distressed, as our Father in heaven is merciful, heaps blessing upon our souls, and evidences our title to what we are to live by, the Divine mercy. A universal benignity and propension to do good to all: an imitation of the immense, diffusive goodness of God, is but kindness to ourselves, rewards itself by that greater pleasure is in giving than in receiving; and associates us with God in the blessedness of this work, as well as in the disposition to it; who exercises loving-kindness in the earth, because he delighteth therein.

Here are some of the things wherein consists than our conformity to the Divine nature and will, which is proper to our present state. And now, who can estimate the blessedness of such a soul! Can (in a word) the state of that soul be unhappy that is full of the Holy Ghost, full of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, those blessed fruits of that blessed Spirit! Blessedness is con-naturalized unto this soul; every thing doth its part, and all conspire to make it happy. This soul is a temple, a habitation of holiness. Here dwells a Deity in his glory. 'Tis a paradise, a garden of God. Here he walks and converses daily, delighted with its fragrant fruitfulness. He that hath those things and aboundeth, is not barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus: he is the sun, and the knowledge of him the quickening beams that cherish and ripen these fruits. But the soul that lacketh these things is a desert, a habitation of devils. Here is stupid, disconsolate infidelity, inflexible obstinacy and resolvedness for hell, hatred and contempt of the Sovereign Majesty; whom yet, its secret misgiving thoughts tell it, will be too hard for it at last. Here is swollen pride and giddy vain-glory, disguised hypocrisy and pining envy, raging wrath and ravenous avarice, with what you can imagine besides, leading to misery and desolation.

You have then some prospect of a happy temper of spirit. It can now be no difficulty to you, to frame an idea of it in your thoughts, to get a notional image (or this likeness in the notion of it) into your minds; but that will avail you little, if you have not the real image also; that is, your spirits really fashioned and formed according thereto: if having the knowledge of these things, (as the pagan moralist's expression, before mentioned, is of virtuous rules and precepts,) they become not habitual to you, and your spirits be not transfigured in them. But now, I treat with such as are supposed to have some such real impressions, that they may be stirred up to endeavour a further perfecting of them. In order whereto, I shall add but this two-fold advice:

1. Be very careful that this living image (such you have been formerly told it is) may grow equally in every part. See that the impression of this likeness be entire, that it be not a maimed thing; if it be, God will never own it as his production. Integrity is the glory of a Christian; to be entire, lacking nothing. This is the soundness of heart that excludes a blushing consciousness and misgiving, exempts it from the fear of a shameful discovery. " Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, is paraphrased, by having respect to all God's commandments; to which is opposite, that being » partial in the law, spoken of by the prophet, by way of complaint concerning the priests of that time. A thing hateful in the eye of God, and as uncomfortable to ourselves, as to be without a leg or an arm. And see that it be preserved entire by a proportional and uniform growth, that fresh life and motion may daily appear in every limb of this heavenly new creature. How odious a deformity is it, when a show of moral virtues excludes godliness: And how much more odious (inasmuch as there is more impudent falsehood in it, and more dishonourable reflection upon God) when under a high pretence of godliness, any shall allow themselves in visible immorality 1 What, to be oppressive, envious, contentious, deceitful, proud, turbulent, wrathful, morose, malicious, fretful, and peevish, and yet a Christian! What serious person, that shall have no fairer representation of Christianity than such do give, would not be ready to say rather, If this be Christian religion, give me honest paganism? A Christian that hath received the proper, uniform, entire impress of the gospel of Christ, is the most meek, mild, calm, harmless thing in the world Never mention so venerable a name, if you will not be very jealous of the honour of it. Will you give God occasion to charge you, Wretch, I never had had this dishonour, if thou hadst never been called a Christian; thou art a Christian to no purpose, or to very bad; it does thee no good, and it injures me 1 But (which is more directly considerable as to our present purpose) the neglect and consequent decay of any gracious principle, infers a languor, a consumption and enfeeblement of all. Any such perverse disposition doth not affect that part only, is not only an impairment to the contrary gracious principle, but (as a cancer in some exterior part of the body) it gradually creeps up till it invade the vitals. Can the love of God live and grow in an unquiet, angry, uncharitable breast 1 Consider Jam. i. 26. 1 John iii. 17.

2. Be constantly intent upon this business of spiritual growth. Mind it as a design, make a solemn purposed business of it, your great daily business. You do not till your ground by chance, as a casual thing; but you do it industriously, and of set purpose. The apostle speaking of his own method of pursuing conformity to Christ, tells us, Phe did, in comparison, count all things else loss and dog's meat; he threw every thing else aside. Then next he recounts with himself, how far short he was; i not as if I had already attained, &c. (where by the way he intimates, that to stand still, and give over further endeavours, implies that gross absurdity, as if we thought ourselves to have attained already, to be already perfect; are we not ashamed to seem so conceited of ourselves 1) and then, ' still as he did attain in this pursuit he forgot what was behind; and held on his course with fresh and constant vigour, still reaching forth and pressing onward towards his designed mark.

In this great business we, alas! seem to dream. He that hath been observed ten or twenty years ago to be proud, and covetous, or passionate, still remains so, and we apprehend not the incongruity of it. What, always learning, and yet never come to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, to the putting off the old man, and putting on the new 1 Who would meddle with any profession upon such terms, to be always doing and yet to do nothing 1 Surely it must be imputed to this, we design not, we do not seriously intend the perfecting of holiness, to make a real progress in our way and work, and to get still nearer heaven, as we draw nearer to the end of our days on earth. We too contentedly confine ourselves within certain limits, and aim not, as we

should, at a spiritual excellency. This is the temper of many that have long trodden the path of (at least an external) religion; they will go but their own pace, and that within a self-prescribed round or circle. They perform their stated task of religious exercises, and shun the grosser vices of the time; and resolve never to go higher: much like the character that was once given to a great man,<sup>1</sup> that he followed not the more eminent virtues, and yet that he hated vice. And 'tis a true censure that a ' barbarian is said to have given of that middle temper, that dull indifferency: What is equally distant from being the matter either of praise or punishment, is upon no terms to be accounted a virtue. At least, we drive not on a design of growth and self-improvement in our spiritual states with that constancy we ought; we are off and on , our spirits are not steadily intent u we are unstable as water, how can we excel 1 God hath not put us, sure, upon so fruitless a task, wherein our utmost labour and diligence shall profit nothing. Therefore strive more vigorously, and pray with more earnest importunity. Consider and plead it with God, that he hath set before thee the hope of such a state, wherein thou art to be perfectly like him; and shalt thou (that must hereafter be like God) be now like a clod of earth 1 Thou art now a child begotten of him; and though thou art yet in the minority, yet may not somewhat be spared out of so fair an estate, hereafter designed for thee, as that thou mayst now live worthy of such a Father, and suitable to thy expected inheritance.

3. And now, a contented, satisfied temper of spirit, as I have told you, results from the other two; and will therefore follow, of course, upon growing knowledge of God, and conformity to him, as the latter of these also doth upon the former. Yea, 'tis a part of our conformity to God; but a part consequent to the impression of the things mentioned under the former head, as knowledge also is a part previous and antecedent thereto. 'Tis in the state of glory we see something superadded. The likeness impressed is pre-supposed; satisfaction follows thereupon. The case is so too in our present state; contentment is spoken of as a thing consequent and superadded; godliness with contentment. A satisfied contented spirit, when 'tis the result of godliness, (of the Divine image impressed,) is indeed great gain. Yet as to this I shall only say these two things.

1. Be distinct and explicit in the proposal of it as an end. Religion doth not brutify men, but make men more rational. Its business is to guide them to blessedness. It must, therefore, pitch their eyes upon it, as the mark and end they are to aim at, and hold them intent there. 'Tis ingenuous and honourable to God, that we should expressly avow it. We come to him for satisfaction to our spirits, not knowing whither else to apply ourselves. We turn our eyes upon him, we lay open our souls to receive impressions from him, for this very end. This is an explicit acknowledgment of him as God, our highest sovereign good.

2. Actually apply and accommodate divine visions and communications to this purpose. Say, " O my soul, now come, solace thyself in this appearance of God; come, take thy allowed pleasure in such exertions of God, as thou dost now experience in thyself." Recount thy happiness; think how great it is, how rich thou art; on purpose that thy spirit may grow more daily into a satisfied, contented frame. Often bethink thyself, What is the great God doing for me, that he thus reveals and imparts himself to my soul 1 O how great things do those present pledges pre-signify to me that thou mayst still more and more like thy portion, and account it fallen in pleasant places, so as never to seek satisfaction in things of another kind; though thou must still continue expecting and desiring more of the same kind. And remember to this purpose, there cannot be a greater participation of the misery of hell before-hand, than a discontented spirit perpetually restless and weary of itself; nor of the blessedness of heaven, than in a well-pleased, satisfied, contented frame of spirit.

**1669**

**Johannes Cocceius (1603 – 1669), Dutch religious thinker**

**A Noticeable Feature Of Cocceius's Account Of Both Eternal Punishment & Eternal Glory Is That He Spoke Repeatedly In Terms Of Steps & Degrees Structural Elements In The Eschatology Of Johannes Cocceius**

**Calvin Theological Journal 34 (1999) 76-104**

Cocceius further saw this period of worldwide peace for the church as an overture to the Parousia, the resurrection of all the dead, and the Last Judgment.<sup>64</sup> This resurrection of the dead is, moreover, the last abrogation of the covenant of works. He regarded this resurrection not only as an individual, personal occurrence, but also interpreted it salvation- historically. Preceding the last bodily resurrection, Cocceius distinguished, namely, a twofold spiritual resurrection (*resurrectio spiritualis duplex*), related to certain events in salvation history. The first spiritual resurrection related to the conversion of the Jews through the proclamation of the gospel. The second was the restoration of the world, which is subject to error and decay. The bodily resurrection would involve more than the pious. In accordance with tradition, Cocceius also spoke of the resurrection of the godless for judgment. Their eternal punishment would be in accordance with the threats of the covenant of works and would be undergone consciously and bodily. A noticeable feature of Cocceius's account of both the eternal punishment and the eternal glory is that he spoke repeatedly in terms of steps and degrees. (Note: see SD, §645-47; this gradation was fairly standard in the seventeenth century. Cocceius, however, stressed the fact that there will also be degrees in punishment. SD, §647: "Sunt & in poena gradus, Luc. 12.47. Vapulabit multis, paucis.")

It is finally worth mentioning in this regard how much attention Cocceius gave to the question of the meaning of the statement in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 about the Son's handing over of the kingdom to the Father.

...

Cocceius's notion of degrees of glory, already mentioned earlier, should not be understood in terms of the merit of good works but rather as pertaining to the fruits of righteousness that each has brought forth during his or her lifetime. Therefore, the light of those who have brought many to righteousness will shine most brightly at the resurrection. This gradation is at the same time the manifestation of God's many-shaded wisdom.

**1676 (London); 1702 (London); 1841 (London)**

**Thomas Comber (1645 - 1699), English Puritan churchman, Dean of Durham; Attempted to reconcile Puritanism and Anglicanism**

**One Glory Of Sun, Most Illustrious Of All; Another Glory Of Moon, Next In Magnitude & Splendour; Another Glory Of Stars, Less, Though Glorious Also: Difference Among Stars, Some Bigger & Others Less, For One Star Differeth From Another Star In Glory, Though All Shine In Same Heaven; So Also Difference Between One Righteous Man & Another In Resurrection Of Dead**

**A Companion to the Temple, or, A Help to Devotion**

**Commentary on First Corinthians 15**

Ver. 37. And if thou requires a more particular account, whether it be the same or another body, or whether it shall be any better after the resurrection than before, consider again that which thou sowest, whether when that is raised and springs up, it be not the same substance, and whether it be not much improved in qualities or no. Now the seed-corn which thou sowest and throwest into the earth, is not that body as to its form that shall be raised and spring up from it, the seed is but bare and naked grain, it may chance a corn of wheat, or of some other grain which is threshed and winnowed till its straw and chaff and all its coverings be taken clean off, like unto the dead body, when it is put into the grave, which is stripped of all its beauty and ornamental additions; but as well the naked corn as the body shall be raised up, and restored again in a far more comely and excellent form, the substance still remaining the very same.

Ver. 38. Which will plainly appear by pursuing the comparison, for the corn indeed is put into the ground naked and bare; But God, the first cause of this natural, as well as of the supernatural resurrection, He, I say, giveth it a body far more glorious, and better adorned with straw, ears, and other florid coverings, even As It hath pleased Him, as well to defend as to beautify it, and make it more fit to stand in that field where it must

ripen. Yet though the corn be thus guarded and adorned, no man will say it is another sort of corn, for God gives to every sort of grain, And To every single seed of every sort, Its own proper body, so that wheat produces wheat, and the corn in the ear is of the same substance with that in the earth, only much improved in the form: even so the body, after the resurrection, is the same with that which was put in the grave, but freed from all its defects, and made far more glorious by God's almighty power, who doubtless will take as much care to repair and restore us, as he doth to raise up the corn which he only restores for our sakes.

Ver. 39. But we must not stretch this similitude too far, for though every sort of corn produces all its shoots of the same kind, yet we must not infer from thence, that because all bodies of men are alike when they are laid into the grave, therefore all, both good and bad, shall be alike when they are raised; for God can out of the same matter make great variety of forms. In the first creation there was but one sort of matter to make all creatures out of: and yet all flesh, which is the subject of the resurrection, and so the fittest instance here, is not the same flesh, though made out of the same matter; but there is one kind of flesh of men, which is most excellent, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds, which are of a meaner sort, yet each of them distinct from the other: even so out of the same matter of corrupted bodies, God shall make great difference between the righteous and the wicked in the resurrection, and they that see the diversity of forms among living creatures here cannot well doubt but God is able to make the like variety hereafter.

Ver. 40. And first to set out the difference that shall be between the bodies we have now and those we shall have then, and between the bodies of the good and the bad at the resurrection; you may consider there is not only variety among earthly things compared one with another, but there are also far greater differences between celestial bodies, such as the sun, moon, and stars, which represent our bodies in the future state, and the bodies of the righteous especially, And bodies terrestrial, such as trees, herbs, and fruits, which represent the bodies we all have here, and the bodies of the wicked after the resurrection. Now these heavenly and earthly bodies were all made of one matter, but The glory of The celestial is one sort of glory, even a bright incorruptible light, and the glory of the terrestrial is another sort of glory, a faint fading verdure; even so the bodies raised will be far more glorious than they were here, and those of the saints shall be far more glorious than those of the wicked, though the matter of both was the same when it came into God's hands.

Ver. 41. Secondly, there shall be a difference also among the righteous themselves at the resurrection, which we illustrate by considering the difference there is between these very celestial bodies, to which we have compared them, for there is one glory of the sun, the most illustrious of all, and another glory of the moon, which seems to be the next in magnitude and splendour, and another glory of the stars, which still seem less, though they be glorious also: yea, and there is a difference among these stars, some are bigger and others less, for one star differeth from another star in glory, though they be all lucid and shine in the same heaven; so also is there to be a difference between one righteous man and another in the resurrection of the dead: for though all shall be glorified, and all placed in the same heaven, yet according as they have done or suffered more or less for the name of Christ, so they shall have greater or less degrees of glory in the resurrection.

Ver. 42. But to make it still clearer that it is the same body which is raised, only far more glorious, you may observe the miserable estate in which death leaves it, and then you must confess it must be much improved before it can be capable of immortality; when it is sown, that is, cast into the grave and covered with earth, in order to its springing up again, it is in a state of corruption, and will be dissolved in a little time; but when by God's power it is raised to live in that life which hath no end, it is freed from that contrariety of humours which made it liable to perpetual decay, and put into a state capable of enduring for ever in incorruption, and yet it remains as to substance the same body still.

Ver. 43. When it is sown and put into the grave, it is a mean contemptible carcass, and is In a state of dishonour, being exposed to worms and mingled with dust; but when it is raised again to live with God in his kingdom, it shall then be In a state of glory, being made bright and most illustrious. When It is sown and cast into the earth, it is In a state of weakness, unable to move or to defend itself from dissolution; but when It is

raised again to glorify God, it shall then be In a state of power, and able to exercise all its faculties better than ever it did before.

Ver. 44. When It is sown and laid into the grave, it is no more but a natural body, such as those we bear about here, consisting of flesh, blood, and bones; but when it is raised again to a celestial life, it is made a spiritual body, pure and unmixed, like those heavenly bodies which suffer no corruption. And that none may doubt that the same body may suffer this variety, even now we see there is a natural body, such as these on earth, and there is a spiritual body, such as those which are in heaven, and yet both made of the same first matter.

Ver. 45. Now that we shall have more glorious bodies for that more glorious state, is further evident from the two principles whence we derive them both; the first from our forefather Adam, the second from our incarnate Redeemer; And so It is Written, Gen. ii. 7, the first man Adam, from whom these natural bodies descend, was made of corruptible matter, and became a living soul, which being put into his mortal body, was to stay no longer there than till God recalled it, he having no power to give or continue life to any of his posterity. But Jesus Christ, from whom we must receive our spiritual bodies, though he was real man, and so is called the last Adam, yet is he very God still, and so was hade a quickening spirit, Rom. viii. 10, 11, having in himself a power to give a new and never-failing life to those he raises from the dead; and as the cause is more noble, so must the effect be also.

Ver. 46. And as Adam, the author of corruption, was first, and Christ incarnate the author of immortality, though far more excellent in dignity, yet came after in order of time; so shall it be in the two states derived from them. The state after the resurrection is the more excellent, howbeit that was not to be the first in order of time which is best, even the glorified body, which is spiritual, for we are not partakers of that as yet; But that corruptible body which is natural is the first, which we have at this present, and afterward, when we have laid down this, then we shall have a glorious body given us by Christ, even that which is spiritual, it being the usual method of Providence to begin first with that which is less perfect, and so to proceed to that which is better and more perfect.

Ver. 47. We must therefore be content at present with these infirmities which we have, hoping and patiently waiting for the better state, for, according to the difference of the originals, the exemplars must differ also; the first man, being made of dust, is of the earth, and consequently his nature is corruptible and earthy, apt to dissolve into the same principles of which it was compounded; and we can have no better a constitution here. But Christ, though being incarnate, he may be called the second man, yet he is able to give us a better being, as he is the Lords and eternal Son of God, who came down From heaven; and as he rendered his own human nature incorruptible, raising it from the grave by his divine power, so shall he do ours also. Ver. 48. While we are on earth, we must be like the first Adam; when we go to heaven, we shall be like the second: for As is the nature of the first, earthy, corruptible, and mortal, such are they that spring from him, even all that live in this world, they Are earthy, and must die and turn to corruption. But on the other side, as is the nature of the second, heavenly, glorious, and incorruptible, such are they also that are raised again by Him to live in the next world, they Are heavenly, glorious, and immortal, being suitable unto that place for which they are designed.

Ver. 49. It is true, we have not arrived to this excellent state yet, but we ought to believe our nature shall be advanced by Christ as much as ever it was degraded by Adam; and as we have already in this world borne the image of the earthy Adam, being liable to pains and diseases, to death and corruption, we ought firmly to expect that we shall also, in the world to come, bear the image of the heavenly Adam; that is, be raised again, and rendered like Him in glory, immortality, and incorruption.

Ver. 50. Finally, to confirm you in the hope of this blessed change, do but consider to what end the dead are raised, even to dwell in the kingdom of heaven; now this I say, brethren, must necessarily follow from that consideration, that flesh and blood, not only as that signifies sinfulness and evil inclinations', but (as we here



understand it) for the very matter of these mortal bodies, as they are now, requiring meat and drink, rest and sleep, and as they are liable to diseases and death, this frame till it be altered and improved cannot inherit the Kingdom Of God, for that is the habitation only of glorified beings, nor is there any meat or drink there to supply such necessities as we have here: you cannot imagine such gross flesh should dwell there, neither doth a frail body, so liable to corruption as this is which we now bear, inherit that kingdom, where there is nothing but incorruption, for every thing must be suited to its proper place, and therefore our bodies must be glorified that they may live in a glorious place and an immortal state.

**1686**

**Johan C. Van Bleiswijk, Dutch Theologian**

**Geestlyck Graad-boek (“On the Degrees of Future Rewards and Punishments”)**

**No Text Found**

**1695 (1815 Publication in Versailles)**

**Jacques Bénigne Bossuet (1627-1704) French Catholic Bishop and Theologian**

**Il y a plusieurs demeures dans la maison de mon Père; s'il n'en était pas ainsi, je vous le dirais.**

**Méditations sur l'évangile, Volume 2 - Page 55**

**LXXVeme Jour - Confiance en Jésus-Christ Notre Intercesseur. Ibid.**

Que voire cœur ne se trouble pas, qu'il ne craigne rien: il y a plusieurs demeures dans la maison de mon Père: je m'en vais vous préparer la place.

Les temps de trouble arrivaient: c'était l'heure de la puissance des ténèbres; les apôtres étaient déjà comme au milieu d'écarts troubles: Jésus-Christ leur avait déclaré qu'il allait être trahi et par l'un d'eux; il avait désigné le traître à quelques-uns, et ils l'avaient vu partir de la table et de la maison: il venait de leur dire le dernier adieu. Mes petits enfants, je m'en vais, et je ne serai plus avec vous: il leur faisait voir la violence de ses ennemis prête à éclater: sa sainte cène ne leur avait remis devant les yeux que du sang répandu, et un corps livré; et la tentation était tout ensemble, et si terrible, et si proche, que Pierre, le plus fervent, le plus hardi, le plus favorisé d'eux tous, y devait succomber jusqu'à renoncer à son maître; et cela dans la nuit même où ils allaient entrer. En cet état, il n'y avait rien de plus nécessaire que de les précautionner contre tant de troubles. C'est aussi à quoi se termine tout ce discours, jusqu'à la fin de ce chapitre: et après avoir dit dès le commencement: Ne vous troublez pas, ne craignez rien: il finit encore par les mêmes mots: Je vous donne ma paix, je vous laisse ma paix; que votre cœur ne se trouble pas, ne craignez pas; après quoi il termine ce discours, et se lève pour aller à la mort. Il faut donc entendre et peser toutes ces paroles. Par rapport à celle-ci: Ne vous troublez pas: nous verrons qu'au lieu de trouble, tout inspire la confiance aux apôtres. Ce qui leur causait le plus de trouble, c'est qu'en leur disant: Je m'en vais, il semblait ne leur laisser aucune espérance de le suivre: il les avait mis au rang des Juifs, qui semblaient exclus de cette grâce: Je m'en vit; et comme j'ai dit aux Juifs, vous ne sauriez venir où je vais.

Il est vrai qu'il avait dit à saint Pierre: vous ne pouvez encore me suivre, mais vous me suivrez après: par où il leur donnait quelque espérance; puisque saint Pierre devait le suivre un jour ou il allait, les autres semblaient aussi y être appelés. Mais pour ne leur laisser aucun doute: Il y a, dit-il, plusieurs demeures dans la maison de mon Père: il n'y en a pas seulement pour moi et pour Pierre; il y en a pour plusieurs, il y en a pour vous: Je m'en vais, mais c'est pour vous préparer la place; ne vous troublez donc pas; ne craignez rien, vous croyez en Dieu; c'est dans son royaume que votre demeure vous est préparée: Croyez aussi en moi; car c'est moi qui y vais préparer la place. Ne vous troublez donc pas, ne craignez rien. Croyez en moi comme vous vous croyez en Dieu, et tout est en sûreté pour vous.

Il y a plusieurs demeures dans la maison de mon Père; s'il n'en était pas ainsi, je vous le dirais.

Avec tant de bonté, avec tant d'amour, vous cacherais-je votre sort? Admirez et ressentez la tendresse de ces paroles: S'il n'en était pas ainsi, je vous le dirais. Ce n'est pas aux seuls apôtres qu'elles sont dites, c'est encore à nous. Répétons les encore un coup, et laissons-nous-en pénétrer: s'il n'en était pas ainsi, je vous le dirais; je ne vous veux rien cacher, et avant que de partir, je veux vous apprendre tous les secrets qui vous regardent. Ayant aimé les siens, il les a aimés jusqu'à la fin, et en s'en allant, il leur veut ôter tout sujet de crainte.

Si je m'en vais, c'est que je vais vous préparer une place. Jésus notre avant-coureur est entré pour nous; et c'est pour cela qu'il est appelé notre pontife selon l'ordre de Melchisédech. Nous avons un grand pontife qui a pénétré les cieus: il est entré dans ce sanctuaire éternel, dont l'entrée était interdite aux hommes à cause de leurs péchés. Il a percé au dedans du voile: et notre foi, notre espérance y entre après lui; car il nous est allé préparer la place, et c'est pour cela qu'il y entre.

Remettons-nous devant les yeux la structure de l'ancien temple, où était le lieu très saint, le Saint des saints, la partie du sanctuaire la plus intime, celle où était l'arche, où Dieu même avait établi sa résidence, lieu inaccessible à tout autre qu'au souverain pontife, qui encore n'y pouvait entrer qu'une fois l'an. Il était couvert d'un grand voile parsemé de chérubins, pour nous faire souvenir de ce chérubin qui, avec une épée flamboyante qu'il remuait d'une manière menaçante, gardait la porte du paradis «, pour empêcher nos premiers pères d'y entrer, après qu'ils en eurent été chassés. Ce voile sacré et ces chérubins répandus dessus, semblaient encore nous dire à l'entrée du sanctuaire: N'entrez pas; rien d'impur ne doit entrer en ce lieu; c'est la figure du ciel, où personne ne doit entrer jusqu'à ce que le souverain pontife en ait ouvert l'entrée. C'est là ce voile qui nous cachait la gloire de Dieu: c'est là ce voile qui nous rendait le sanctuaire inaccessible: c'est le voile qui nous marquait que nous étions interdits, impurs, incapables d'entrer jamais dans le Saint des saints: c'est ce voile qui fut déchiré de haut en bas par le milieu, et mis en deux parts, lorsque Jésus-Christ expira. La terre trembla en même temps; les tombeaux s'ouvrirent, et les morts ressuscitèrent, en témoignage que par la mort et par le sang de Jésus, le sanctuaire était ouvert, les morts recevaient la vie, l'interdit était levé, tout était changé pour les hommes.

Le pontife s'ouvrait l'entrée dans le sanctuaire par le sang des animaux; mais Jésus-Christ y devait entrer par son propre sang, par l'oblation de lui-même. Le pontife, avant que d'entrer dans le sanctuaire, offrait pour ses péchés et pour ceux du peuple; mais le vrai souverain pontife n'avait pas besoin d'offrir pour lui; et en qualité de Fils unique il entra dans le ciel par son propre droit naturel. Et c'est pourquoi n'offrant que pour nos péchés, c'est à nous qu'il ouvre l'entrée: Je m'en vais vous préparer la place.

Son sacerdoce s'exerce principalement dans le ciel; car s'il n'eût été sacrificateur que pour la terre, Une l'aurait point été du tout; puisqu'il y avait pour la terre un autre sacerdoce et d'autres victimes. Mais celui-ci, dont le sang est non seulement innocent et pur, mais encore infiniment précieux, commence à la vérité l'exercice de son sacerdoce sur la terre, où il fallait qu'il mourut pour les pécheurs; mais il le consomme dans le ciel, où il paraît pour nous devant la face de Dieu, où assis à la droite de la majesté de Dieu, il opère continuellement la rémission des péchés, en intercédant pour nous, et nous ouvrant la porte du ciel par le sang du Nouveau Testament répandu pour la rémission de nos péchés.

Ne soyons donc point troublés, ne craignons rien. Que peut faire le monde contre nous, que de nous chasser de notre pays, de notre maison, de toute la terre et de la vie? Mais quand nous perdrons tout cela, il y a plusieurs demeures dans le ciel: nous y avons notre place et une retraite assurée, où le monde et la puissance des ténèbres ne peut plus rien. Croyons donc en Dieu, qui nous y reçoit: mais croyons aussi en Jésus-Christ, qui nous y va préparer la place; adorons le sang de l'alliance par lequel il y est entré; adorons ses plaies, par lesquelles il intercède pour nous et nous ouvre l'entrée du ciel. Vous croyez en Dieu, croyez aussi en moi: car je suis Dieu, mais un Dieu homme, un Dieu qui ai été votre victime; un Dieu qui ai offert pour vous ce que j'ai pris de vous-mêmes: Croyez en Dieu, croyez en moi: après cela ne vous troublez pas, ne craignez rien. Si vous aviez quelque chose à craindre, et capable de vous troubler, ce seraient vos péchés qui crient contre

vous, et ne vous permettent pas le repos de la conscience; mais ils sont purgés: Jésus-Christ a levé l'interdit, et il vous tend les bras du haut du ciel pour vous y recevoir. Quittez donc comme lui la chair et le sang; sacrifiez vos passions et vos désirs sensuels: c'est le sang qu'il vous faut répandre pour vous conformer à Jésus-Christ: ne craignez rien, ne vous troublez pas, encore un coup. Nous avons un souverain pontife qui a pénétré les deux: présentons-nous donc avec une entière, confiance devant le trône de la grâce, pour en être secourus dans nos besoins: devenons inébranlables dans la confession" de son saint nom. Mais ne soyons pas de ceux qui le confessent de bouche et le renoncent par leurs œuvres si nous le renonçons, il nous renoncera; et si nous lui sommes infidèles, la faute en sera en nous: car pour lui il est ferme dans ses paroles, et il ne se peut renoncer lui-même. Ne craignez donc rien, ne vous laissez troubler de rien: croyez en Dieu, croyez en Jésus-Christ, par qui vous avez accès auprès de Dieu.

**1695 (died)**

**John Scott, DD., Rector of St. Giles's in the Fields, London**

**The Christian Life: From Its Beginning to Its Consummation in Glory**  
**Collected Works of John Scott??**

Published in London, 1747

Republished in a six-volume edition in Oxford in 1826.

**1747 Edition, Volume 1, pp: 169-171**

The Gospel, whose great design is to direct us to our happiness, doth endustriously endeavor to root out evil in our minds, and to plant in its room a gentle, obsequious, and condescending disposition. For hither tend all those evangelical precepts which require us to become weak to the weak, that we may gain them (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:22), to bear with their infirmities (Romans 15:1), and support them and be patient towards them (1 Thess. 5:14), and, on the other hand, submit ourselves to our Elders (1 Peter 5:5) and to those that have the rule over us (Hebrews 13:17), to obey our Magistrates, our parents, and our masters; to be subject to principalities, and not speak evil of dignities; to honour kings, and submit to their laws and governors (1 Peter 2:13-14). In a word, to honour all men as they deserve (1 Peter 2:17), and to hold good men in reputation (Phil 2:19) and in honour to prefer one another (Romans 12:10).

The sense of all this is, to oblige us to treat all men as becomes us, in the rank and station we are placed in; to honour those that are our superiors whether in place or virtue; to give that modest deference to their judgements, that reverence to their persons, that respect to their virtues, that honour to their desires or commands, which the degree or kind of their superiority requires; to condescend to those that are our inferiors, and treat them with all the candour and ingenuity, sweetness and affability, that the respective distances of our state; to consult their conveniences, and do them all good offices, and pity and bear with their infirmities, so far as they are safely and wisely tolerable. By the constant practice of which our minds will be gradually cured of all that perverseness and surliness of temper, which indisposes us to the respective duties of our relations; of all that contempt and selfishness which renders to us averse to the proper duty of the superiors; and of all the self-conceit and impatience of command which indisposes us to the duty of inferiors.

And our wills being wrought once into an easy pliability either to submission or condescension, we are in a forward preparation of mind to live under the government of Heaven, where doubtless under God the Supreme Lord there are numberless degrees of superiority and inferiority. For some are said to reap sparingly, and some abundantly; some to be the rulers of five cities, and some of ten; some to be the least, and some the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven; All of which implies that, in that blessed state, there is a great variety of degrees of glory and advancement. And indeed it cannot be otherwise in the nature of the thing; for our happiness consisting in the perfection of our natures, the more or less perfect we are, the more or less happy we must necessarily be; for every degree of goodness we obtain to, is a widening and enlargement of our souls for farther Degrees of Glory and Beatitude. And accordingly when we arrive at

heaven, which is the element of beatitude, we shall all be filled according to the content and measure of our capacities, and drink in more or less of its rivers of pleasure, as we are more or less enlarged to contain them. So that according as we do more and more improve our selves in true goodness, we do naturally make more and more room in our souls for heaven, which doth always fill the vessels of glory of all sizes, and pour in happiness upon them till they all overflow and can contain no more.

Since therefore they are all of them entirely resigned to, and guided by right reason, there is no doubt but in these their different degrees of glory and dignity, they mutually behave themselves towards one another, as is most fit and becoming, since under God the head and King of their society, there is from the highest to the lowest a most exact and regular subordination of members, they do every one perform their parts and duties towards every one, in all those different stations of glory they are placed in, and consequently do submit and condescend to each other, according as they are of a superior or inferior class and order. So that if when we go from hence into the other world, we carry along with us a submissive and condescending frame of spirit, we shall be trained up, and predisposed to live under the blessed hierarchy of heaven; to hold a cheerful conformity to the laws and customs of it; and to render all the honors to those above, and all the condescension to those beneath us in glory, which statutes of that heavenly regiment do require; in doing whereof we shall all of us enjoy the most unspeakable content and felicity.

For though in the Kingdom of Heaven, as the kingdoms of the earth, there are numberless degrees of advancement and dignity, and one star there, as well as here, differeth from another star in glory; yet to freely, and cheerfully do they all condescend and submit to each other, in these their respective differences of rank and station, that in the widest distances of their state, and degrees of glory, they all maintain the dearest intimacies and familiarities with each other; and neither those that are superior are either envied for their height, or contemned for their familiarity, nor those that are inferior despised for their meanness or oppressed for their weakness. For in that blessed state, every one being best pleased with what becomes him, it is every one's joy to behave himself towards every one as best becomes the rank and degree he is placed in; and those that are below them, and those that are above, do glory in condescending to those that are below them, and those that are below, do triumph in submitting to those that are above them; thus in all those differences of glory and dignity between them, they alternately reverence their superiors, and condescend to their inferiors, with the same unforced freedom and alacrity, and so do eternally converse with one another (notwithstanding all their distances) with the greatest freedom, and most endearing familiarity.

**1699**

**Jane Leade (1624 – 1704): Christian Mystic, Founder of Philadelphian Movement**

**The Ascent to the Mount of Vision**

**Online Text**

(1699 Publication date, London)

One of Jane Lead's later published Prophetic Works, sent by God's Eternal Wisdom to reveal more about the internal First Resurrection, the State of Separated Souls, the Expectation of the Return of the Patriarchal Life, and the Manifestation of the Kingdom of Christ upon the Earth in the Nazarite Sons and Daughters of God.. This was made public in 1699.

This manuscript from the 17th century has been out of print for a very long time and has been generally inaccessible to the general public. It contains terminology and wording that are missing from modern edited versions.

This on-line reproduction presents the old manuscript "as close to the original as possible" — rendering the text and appearance of the 1699 printing without any interpretation or commentary, — both of which are here left for the Spirit of Truth, who will always provide for the seeking and humble in heart.

12. On the Fourth side of the Mountain, which lay Westward, was the great Secrets of the Deceased, the various Regions that they were lodged in, and the Glorious Mansions that did appertain to such as departed in a high degree of Perfection; with all the great Wonders of the great Weight and Glories of Eternity. It was told me, all of this was to be concealed yet, and shut up from the knowledge of the present Age of Time: And was but only peculiar to some that should have a Light, and discovery of these Marvelous things, as they were capable to take them in; Standing in the Passive meekness, and pure Faith-expectation for the accomplishment of all what has been here declared: For the time may be nearer, or further off, as we see the gathering into these Holy Courts may be, so hasten then we may, the Blessed approach of this Rising blissful Day, as in the Golden knot of Love we tyed and knit together are. Amen.

Now if it shall be asked, Where it is that this Mountain, and Holy Paradise shall be found? It is Answered, It is founded upon Holy Ground, where the Philadelphian Knot of Perfect Love-Unity hath sent forth their strong Perfumes, and attractive Powers to fetch in those that are to make up the full Number of the Heavenly Roll, that shall stand with the LAMB: in whose Princely Power and Spirit they shall obtain with Him to Reign. Even so: Amen. All this Confirm by the Seal of the Anointing Power.

13. THIS great Mystery and Secret, of the various degrees of the Deceased, and separated Souls, which opened on the fourth side of the Mountain, being permitted me to disclose to the Worthy and Believing, that desire to have so much of the Counsel of God made known, as has been revealed herein, to such as are weaned from the Mothers Breast of Tradition: even to them, it is given forth to know, what is reserved for the latter Ages of time. Now there were shewn to me seven States or Regions which were allotted to the Dead.

14. The first Order I shall mention, is of those that have Lived and Died in a most Wicked and Diabolical Spirit, without any Change or Repentance: Such as Blasphemers, Contemners of God, Apostates, &c. These have their places in the Tormenting, Anguishing Fire, of the dark Luciferian Kingdom, where they are to be Punished till the decreed Ages of Ages are expired, within those Spheres or Circles: Which is dreadful enough to endure, to fright all from coming here.

15. The second is of those, that have lived in the outward Birth after the Flesh, but know nothing of being Born again from out of the Dead and Earthly Image: Cleaving to this Worldly Principle, and extending their delight and love no farther than to what is Temporary, living wholly as without God in the World: These have their places in the lower and grosser part of the Airy Region. Where tho' they have not much Torment, yet on the other hand they have but little rest; and such lovers, they are of their Bodies that many of them visit their dead Corpses, and abide sometime with them, as finding more ease there than in that other place allotted them.

16. Now a third sort are of that Rank and Order, that have been believing in God and Christ, and under Conviction of their lost State without him, and who have made some progress in the Heavenly Warfare: Having gone so far as to live a Sober Rational Life, but have come short of that more inward and Spiritual work of Renovation, not having reached to Mortification and self Abnegation, but dying much short of it. Yet their Mansion is more pleasant, being in the upper part of the Airy Region, annexed to Paradise: Where they want not for Motives and Stirrings up to go on, and recover what they omitted and lost, while living in the Body.

17. As these Centers were opened and past before me, it was much upon me to be informed out of that depth of the Eternal Wisdom, that here opened it self, what became of all the Children that died, either in Infancy or Minority. Then the Vision open'd shewing me a very pleasant Flowery and delightful Sphere, with a wonderful bright Light, that covered it as a Firmament, and the word said, this is the Children's Sphere and Kingdom. It appeared like a little World fill'd up with them, from the Womb, to the stature of about 12 Years. This was inferiour to Paradise, but was appropriated to Wisdom; to be under her Government and

Dominion, who appointed here several ministering Angels to Discipline, and Educate them, in the Faith of Jesus: For being stained with original Sin, they were to believe in and receive the Lamb of God as their Redeemer: And so, by Union with him, they become Virgins without Spot or Blemish. Hereby it was said that Wisdom did make out her self, in the Fathers new-created Wonders, in these Children being transplanted out from the Earthly, into the Divine and Spiritual Orb of Light.

18. Now the Three other Regions, (to wit, Paradise, Mount-Sion, and the New Jerusalem) I have already given an account of it in the Book of the Eight Worlds. I must pronounce, Happy and Blessed are they, that dye so fitly qualified, as immediately to pass through all these before-mention'd Regions, that none of them may detain them, but that (as an Arrow) swiftly they may fly into this more high degree of the Paradisiacal Sphere, for they shall not long rest here, before their Ascension shall be; where they shall see the King of Mount Sion, stretching out the Golden Cord, that shall draw them up to sit with him upon his Throne, which he has prepared for them; and so to rise from one Glory to another, till in the fullness of the Father's Glory, Christ shall install them, jointly with himself. The everlasting Gates of the New Jerusalem here open, and wide do stand: Which properly does belong to the high and lofty Majesty, as his Principal Seat or Mansion-house. Which he will in the concluding part of all Scenes make to descend, to fill the whole Creation, with the splendor of it's Glory: Even so, Amen.

19. But for caution, let none think they can reach to these two last degrees, at the passing out of the Body, but as Christ in them shall come to be grown up in a perfect Stature, covering them all over with his divine Nature. Which we hope and believe, may be wrought out effectually by the same Power that gave a Resurrection to his dead Body, and an Ascension to Glorification: in the Faith of which we wait and pray, for this perfect Day.

20. I was Considering and Recollecting with my self the manifold Mysteries, that among the Dead lay yet hid, which in these Ages past were to be concealed and shut up: but as the nearer approach is of the finishing of the fullness of Redemption, the Word of the Eternal Wisdom has been pleas'd to make known, what is beyond the present belief of the World: but to the Impartial seekers and Worthy inquirers the secrets that appertain to the States of separated Souls, may be communicated.

21. In the first place we are to consider how these three Ranks of such as have departed this World, short of Redemption, shall come to recover the Regeneration or Remaining part of the Work, which they might possibly have attained in this Life; for which end the Mediatorship of Christ was established by the Father, and continued in the Melchizedeck-Order. And as Souls are daily Dying in this imperfect State, so Christ is daily renewing the Efficacy of his Blood, that must still atone for them. It is also further made Manifest, that the great Saints that are made Kings and Priests, as they have Thrones, so they have Seats of Judgment, and are also made Saviours with their high Prince and Saviour, being of the same Merciful, and meek Nature, as joined and made one Spirit with him. And their intercession with him, is of acceptation and efficacy, for these their fellow Members that have lag'd behind, and lost their time either in this Life or in other Centres: So that it is laid for a Foundation-truth that the great Saints may help the less, whether in the higher World or the lower.

Now as it was queried in my self, so it may be by others how those that are departed, shall be brought to Repent and believe in Christ for Salvation? It was here shewn to me that there were There Prophets, Pastors and Teachers, that did exercise their Function and Office, as well as in these Regions below. For it is well to be understood, that this Converting and Regenerating work is to go forward on, till that which is perfect do so enter into every Member, that they come to be in Congruity with their perfect Head: who must see the full Fruit of the Travail of his Soul, throughout the whole Creation. For Christ the Head does not account himself perfect till every Member be cojoined with him. Therefore, also the high Saints do Sympathize with the groaning Creation, because till all are brought in, their Joy cannot be full.

If it be asked, What Scripture is there for this? I recommend the same that was open'd to me from the Revelations, Chap. 5.8. Where the 24 Elders were in Office to receive the Golden Vials of the Prayers of the Saints, and to pour them before the Throne. Whereby it is implied that the Prayers of the Saints, of a lesser degree may pass through them that are of a higher. Then another Scripture I shall superadd is that, 1Cor. 15.29. Where you find the Living, did enter into the Covenant of Baptism for the Dead; as being capable of helping them forward in their Process to Christ, by Concurrence and Union of Spirits with them. And had we more of this Concurrence of Spirits one with another, the Kingdom of our Lord had not been so long detained and kept back; but a quicker dispatch might have been made, but we are in hopes that as the day-Star shall more Universally arise in Hearts, this Light shall so spread it self, as that the knowledge of these great Mysteries shall find more kind entertainment in the World, that lyes Buried in so much Ignorance and Darkness. Then there will be less to do in those other Regions, because there will not so many dye in an imperfect State, and the Kingdom of Satan will be weakened and diminished thereby, who shall not be able to hold his dominion, either in this invisible dark Sphere or the visible Principle. I shall now conclude this Point with this Acclamation, Rejoice ye Heavens and shout ye lower parts of the Earth, for the Lord God Omnipotent is about to do Marvelous things, which shall be seen and admired by such as do long for, and Love his Appearance: Which approaching is still nearer and nearer. Even so come: Come, O Lord, in thy Kingdom, Power, and Glory; Amen.

**1700**

**William Burkitt (1650 – 1703), English Biblical Expositor**

**Learn Hence, That There Are Degrees Of Glory In Heaven, Probably According To Measures & Degrees Of Service We Have Done For God On Earth; There Is, No Doubt, An Equality Of Glory There, As To Essentials, But Not With Respect To Accidentals**  
**Expository Notes, With Practical Observations, On The New Testament**

(Published 1700, republished 1832)

**First Thessalonians 2:19-20**

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.

Here, in the close of the chapter, St. Paul acquaints the Thessalonians with the true reason why he had such an endearing affection for them, and such a fervent desire to be present with them: they were his hope, his joy, his crown of rejoicing; that a, they were then the cause of his hope, not the ground and foundation of his hope: that Christ alone was; but their conversion by his ministry was, in concurrence with other things, a good ground of hope concerning his own salvation; ye are now my hope, my joy, and crown of rejoicing.

Where note, A very remarkable gradation in the words; he calls them his hope. his joy, and his crown of rejoicing. His hope, that is, the matter of his hope, that they should be saved; his joy, that is, the occasion of his joy, in their conversion by his ministry; and his crown of rejoicing in Christ's presence at his coming, that is, the fruit and success of his ministry amongst them would add to his crown, and redound to his glory, in the day of Christ.

Learn hence, that there are degrees of glory in heaven, probably according to the measures and degrees of service we have done for God on earth; there is, no doubt, an equality of glory there, as to the essentials, but not with respect to the accidentals; besides the joy and satisfaction which the ministers of Christ are partakers of, in heaven, in common with other glorified saints, they have an additional joy and glory from the success of their pious and painful labours, which God has crowned with (he conversion and edification of many souls. Lord! who could not study, spend, and be spent, in the service of such a master? Is it not worth all our labour and sufferings, to appear in the presence of Christ, accompanied with all those souls whom we have

instrumentally either brought home or built up in the most holy faith, either converted, comforted, or confirmed in the way to heaven? To hear one spiritual child say, "Lord, this is the instrument by whom I believed;" another, "This is the minister by whom I was established;" a third, "This is he that quickened me by his example, and provoked me to love, and lo good works. O blessed be God that I ever saw his face, and heard his voice!" But, Lord! what will it be to hear thy blessed voice saying to us, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into the joy of me your Lord! I have kept an exact account of all your fervent prayers for your people, of all your instructive and persuasive sermons, of all your sighs and groans poured forth before me on behalf of those whom you would have persuaded to be happy, but could not. Every tear from your eye, and drop of sweat from your face, shall now meet with eternal recompense; you shall now find me, according to my promise, not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love." O what a master do the ministers of Christ serve! Who would not sacrifice all that is dear for him, who has the assurance of such an exceeding and eternal weight of glory from him?

**1701 (First Publication)**

**His Holiness St. Leon, Pope (Actual Name Jean-Baptiste Morvan de Bellegarde)**

**Des degrez pour monter à la Beatitude**

**Sermon XCV**

**Des degrez pour monter à la Beatitude.**

Jesus voyant cette multitude de peuple, a monte sur une montagne, eit s'étur.t ujfii, fit

Les Disciples s'approcherent de lui.

1. Jesus-Christ s'est servi de remedes exterieurs , pout guerir les maux interieurs par la douceur de sa grace.
2. L'humilité est le premier degre pour monter à la Béatitude.
3. La pauvreté de Saint Pierre, & des autres Apôtres a été tres-riche, & tres-puissante.
4. Quelle est la douceur qai conduit à la Béatitude.
5. Quelle est la terre qu'on a promi/eaux peisonnes douces.
6. La loi de la justice n'est autre chose que l'amour de Dieu.
7. L'homme devient en quelque maniere semblable a Dieu par la misericorde.
- 8 Il faut purifier l'œil du cœur,afin qu'il fait en état de voir Dieu.
9. Quelle est la veritable paix , qui fait l'homme enfant de Dieu.

**1703 (Latin); 1827 (English Translation)**

**Dr. George Bull (1634–1710): English theologian & Bishop of St David's**

**Different Degrees Of Bliss & Glory In Christ's Heavenly Kingdom Answer To Different Degrees Of Grace Here Below; Several Objections Against This Doctrine Are Answered**

**The Works of George Bull, D.D. Lord Bishop of St. David's Volume 1**



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### **Sermon 7**

#### **The Different Degrees of Bliss and Glory in Christ's Heavenly Kingdom answer to the Different Degrees of Grace Here Below; Several Objections Against this Doctrine are Answered**

PETER i. 11: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

It is the great concern of every man, in the first place, to get the saving grace of God, and having gotten it, to proceed and increase in it; earnestly to reach after a principle of the divine life within himself, and having attained it, to cherish and improve it; to endeavour of evil (as we are all naturally and antecedently to the divine grace) to become truly good, and then every day to grow better; first to be sincere disciples of the holy Jesus, and then to aspire, study, and labour hard, to become great proficient in his divine school.

This latter duty, St. Peter earnestly and vehemently presseth on the converted Jews of the dispersion, to whom he writes, and in them upon all of us, in the verses preceding my text; where he exhorts them in the most emphatical expressions to an holy covetousness after spiritual riches, and to accumulate and heap up heavenly treasures with as much greediness, as the men of this world do their gold and silver: to add one grace to another, and one degree of each grace upon another, and to abound in virtue and good works. For after he had, ver. 4. minded them of the great design of Christianity, which is to make men partakers of the divine nature, by rescuing them from the corruption that is in the world through lust, i. e. to convert men from their evil and wicked courses, and to bring them to a state of grace and regeneration; and charitably supposing this to be already done in them, he proceeds to shew them their farther duty, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. For if all these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As if he had said, You have now, God be thanked, escaped the pollutions of the world, and are truly, I hope, converted to Christianity, and in baptism have been regenerated by the Holy Ghost; (that he means by their being made partakers of the divine nature.) This indeed is a very great achievement, and an invaluable mercy of God, vouchsafed to you; yet I beseech you, rest not here; but besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, &c. So that the sum of his discourse is to press them first to truth in grace, and then to growth in grace; to acquire the divine virtues reckoned up by him, and then to abound in them. And to persuade them to this abounding in grace and virtue, he useth a very powerful motive and argument in the words of my text: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As if he had said, If you thus abound in grace, you shall abound in glory; you shall not only come to heaven, or get just within the gate of that glorious region, (and yet happy is he that can arrive to be but a doorkeeper in the house of his heavenly Father,) but you shall have an abundant entrance into it; you shall go very far, and attain an higher pitch and degree of glory there. This is the plain and obvious sense of the words.

Not to spend time needlessly, or to trouble you with any farther preface, the text thus briefly explained and considered, with relation to the context, readily and of itself offers to us this proposition. There shall be degrees of bliss and glory in Christ's heavenly kingdom; and the more we abound in grace and good works here, the more abundant shall our reward be hereafter. This proposition I intend, with the divine assistance, for the theme and subject of my following discourse.

That this is no nice or fruitless speculation, fitted only to exercise the wits of men, or to entertain their curiosity, but a branch of that truth which is according to godliness a, as the apostle Paul expresseth it, Tit. i. 1. that is, a doctrine tending to the advancement and furtherance of piety and virtue amongst men, will be soon evident to any man that with any degree of serious attention shall consider it.

If this be a truth, it must needs be a useful one, pointed it, referring the words in the regeneration to that which went before, thus; Ye which have followed me in the regeneration: whereas they should be joined to the following words, thus: Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, &c. In the regeneration; what is that? Not in baptism, nor in the regeneration or renewing of the Spirit, as some have fancied; for neither of these significations will make good sense in this place; but in the resurrection, which will be indeed a regeneration, or second generation of men to life, after that life which they had in their first generation was extinguished.

Which second generation, or production of men to life, is more properly the work of God, as being effected solely by his divine power, without the concurrence of any second causes; whereas in our first generation into the world our parents were instruments. Hence those words of the Psalmist concerning Christ, Psalm ii. 7. Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee, are said by St. Paul to be then fulfilled in him, when God raised him from the dead, Acts xiii. 32, 33. The promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

And hence also, all the godly are said at the resurrection to become the children of God, upon the very account of their being then raised by God to a blessed immortal life, Luke xx. 36. They are called the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

Well then! In or at the regeneration, or resurrection, when Christ shall sit in the throne of his glory, as the Judge of men and angels, it is promised to the twelve apostles, that they also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Concerning the full sense of which words, though there is some dispute, yet this is generally agreed among interpreters, and it is most evident from the context, that they express some singular and eminent glory, which the apostles should receive in the world to come, as the reward of their singular and eminent self-denial, in devoting themselves to Christ's Gospel. And though every saint shall in his degree be enthroned in the heavenly glory; yet here are twelve thrones of judicature and preeminence, answering to the twelve apostles then in being. Indeed Judas, one of the twelve, afterward fell from his office, and so lost his throne too. But this was through his own default, and our blessed Lord failed not in his promise. But the cursed traitor, by his horrid violation of the condition of it, forfeited his right therein. There being twelve apostles at that time to whom our Saviour spake these words, he saith they should sit upon twelve thrones; as if Judas also should have his throne to sit on; not that he thought the wretch should ever attain that throne, (for he knew him from the beginning to be a devil,) but because, if Judas had continued in the faithful discharge of his office, as the other apostles did, he should have had his throne, as the other apostles had theirs, as St. Chrysostom well observes; "for Christ speaks of his apostles, according to their "present righteousness," and not so much of their persons, as of their state and office. As if he should have said, The office of apostles, as it is an office of the highest service, labour, and difficulty, so it hath the highest reward propounded to it; insomuch that they who well perform it, shall be advanced to the most eminent thrones of glory in the life to come, and be nearest to myself the King of glory.

For, to sit upon thrones, judging (or governing, or being over) the twelve tribes of Israel, is a metaphorical expression, taken (as Grotius well observes upon the place) from the ancient state of the kingdom of Israel, in which the princes, or heads of the tribes, came nearest in dignity to the king's majesty, and in the public assemblies sat next to the royal throne in chairs of state made of ivory. So that it is manifest, Christ here promiseth his apostles an eminent degree of glory and dignity in his heavenly kingdom. And hence the language is different, which our Saviour useth, concerning the reward of those who should afterwards imitate

the apostles, and follow them in their active and passive virtue, though hand "at a very humble distance." For of those in the next verse he saith, that they should receive an hundredfold, (a very ample and liberal reward of their self-denial, in whatsoever instance expressed,) and inherit everlasting life; but he doth not say, as of the apostles, that they shall sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

The next place we shall cite will give light to the former, and speaks more clearly to our present purpose. It is to be found in the very next chapter, the twentieth chapter of the same Gospel of St. Matthew, where we read, ver. 20, 21. that the mother of the sons of Zebedee, James and John, came with her two sons to Christ with this petition, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. She had heard from her sons, that the apostles in general had a promise of a more eminent dignity in Christ's kingdom, like that of the princes or heads of the tribes in the kingdom of Israel, as hath been already noted. But she knew that even among the apostles themselves there would be degrees of dignity; as in the ancient kingdom of Israel, the two first places belonged to the princes of the tribes of Judah and Joseph; these two first places therefore she asks for her two sons in the kingdom of Christ. To-sit at the right hand of a king, according to the eastern custom, is the very next place of dignity to the king himself. Hence Solomon sitting on his royal throne commanded his mother to be set on his right hand, 1 Kings ii. 19.

Consequently the third place of dignity in the kingdom is described by sitting at the king's left hand; for accordingly as any man was greater in the kingdom, so in the public assemblies he sat nearer to the king. To this petition of Salome, our blessed Lord having first by the way given a check to her vanity, and her erroneous opinion about his kingdom, at length, ver. 23. he thus more directly answers, To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. Christ speaks as man in the state of humiliation, referring all things of his kingdom (according to his manner) to his Father, from whom he received it. But as to our present purpose: our Saviour denies not that there shall be a right-hand and a left-hand place, as a first and second place of dignity, and consequently a third place, and so downwards, in his heavenly kingdom, yea, he plainly asserts, that there shall be such degrees of honour therein; but he only teacheth, that those places and degrees shall be distributed according to the pleasure of his Father, who best knows who are fittest for them; and that this pleasure of God was not yet to be made known, either to Salome and her sons, or to any of the sons of men; but the discovery of it to be reserved to the revelation of the righteous judgment of God at the last day. , So that this text very manifestly confirms the proposition; especially if we add the words of our Saviour presently afterwards in the same chapter, spoken upon the same occasion, ver. 26, 27. Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister: and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. For hence St. Jerom thus argues against Jovinian, "If we 'shall be equal in "heaven, we in vain humble ourselves here, that we "may be greater there." Indeed our Saviour in these words most plainly acknowledgeth, that there shall be some greater, some lesser, some first or chief, some inferior in his heavenly kingdom; and he shews that the only way to attain a preeminence hereafter, is by the lowest humility here, and by condescending to the meanest for their spiritual good and advantage.

The same doctrine is plainly taught us (whatever some learned men have fancied to the contrary) from the very scope of the parable of our Saviour, Luke xix. of the ten servants, who received of their lord, being to go into a far country, each of them a pound, to trade with till his return. At which time he that had increased his pound to ten pounds was made ruler over ten cities, ver. 16, 17. and he that gained but five pounds was made ruler over five cities, ver. 18, 19- the lord's reward bearing proportion to the several improvements made by his servants.

To the same sense and purpose very many of the ancient Fathers, and the most learned modern interpreters, generally expound those words of our Saviour, John xiv. 2. In my Father's house are many mansions. The multitude of mansions in heaven seems hardly intelligible, without admitting a difference of degrees in the heavenly glory. For if all the saints should be placed in one and the same degree or station of bliss, they would have all one and the same mansion in heaven; but in our heavenly Father's house there are many mansions, some higher, some lower, according to the measure of proficiency in virtue, which men have

attained to in this life. So Clemens Alexandrinus, "There are "with the Lord many rewards and mansions, according to the proportion of men's lives c." So also Tertullian, "How are there many mansions "with the Father, but according to the variety of "merits" that is, (in the language of those writers,) the good works of men. So the Fathers of the church afterward alleged this text against Jovinian, who held a parity of rewards in the life to come.

Another common proof of this doctrine is taken out of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xv. 41, 42. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is true, in the context of this place, the manifest scope and intent of the apostle is to shew the vast difference between those bodies of ours that die and turn to corruption, and the glorious bodies we shall receive at the resurrection. But yet, in these words it seems plain, that the apostle riseth higher, and by the way sets forth the disparity that there will be at the resurrection, even among the glorified bodies of the saints; some shining with brighter, some with lesser rays of glory: as among the heavenly lights, some are more glorious than others. As if he should have said, .There is a difference, not only between the terrestrial and celestial bodies, but even the celestial bodies differ among themselves; the sun being the brightest of the heavenly lights, the moon in its appearance to us the next to it; and among the stars, some being more bright and conspicuous than others. So in the resurrection, not only the glorified bodies of the saints shall differ from their corruptible bodies they had here, but also among those glorified bodies themselves there shall be degrees of glory.

Unless we thus expound the apostle, it will be hard to give a tolerable account of his discourse in this place. For we must otherwise suppose, that he compares those bodies that are sown in corruption, the rotten stinking carcasses of men, to some of the glorious heavenly lights, though of a lesser magnitude; than which comparison, what can be more incongruous or absurd! Hence Tertullian in the place, in part already cited, thus understands the text, "How are there many mansions with the Father, unless it be according to the variety of men's "good works? How also shall one star differ from "another star in glory, but according to the diversity of rays or beams of lighte?" And as the greatest, so the best part of modern interpreters, acknowledge this exposition of the apostle's words to be true and genuine, yea and absolutely necessary.

But our last text of Scripture will put the matter out of all doubt, which we read 2 Cor. ix. 6. But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. It is certain, and confessed by all, that the design of the apostle in this place is to excite and stir up the Corinthians to a liberal charity towards their distressed brethren, and that his chief argument is contained in these words. It is confessed also, that in these words, to sow, signifies to do good works, particularly works of charity; to reap, to receive the reward, the future eternal reward of such works. Indeed the apostle elsewhere plainly interprets himself to this sense; viz Gal. vi. 8. He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Where also the latter words manifestly respect in the first place works of charity and beneficence, particularly such as are exercised towards our spiritual teachers, as appears from ver. 6. Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things.

Now our apostle, in the place alleged out of his Epistle to the Corinthians, expressly asserts, that as our sowing is more sparing or more liberal, so shall our reaping be also; the greater charity exercised by us in this world, the greater felicity and happiness attends us in the world to come: and so on the contrary, the thinner our seeds of charity are sown here, the lesser will be our harvest of glory hereafter. Nothing can be more express to our purpose than this testimony, and therefore I shall seek after no other or farther proofs from Scripture of the proposition I have undertaken to demonstrate.

But to these direct testimonies of Scripture, I shall only add, by way of overplus, one or two reasons, or arguments grounded on Scripture.

1. It is certain, that amongst the damned there will be an inequality of punishments, some suffering lesser, others greater degrees of torment; therefore it is highly reasonable to think, that in the opposite state of the blessed there will be also a disparity of rewards. The antecedent is determined, and beyond all contradiction asserted, by our Saviour himself. For speaking of the town or city that shall reject the Gospel preached to them by the apostles, he tells us, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city, Matt. x. 15. And in the next chapter he assures us, that it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for Chorazin and Bethsaida, who had heard his doctrine and seen his miracles, and would be converted by neither of them; and that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, than for Capernaum, upon the same account, Matt. xi. 20—24. And most express are his words, Luke xii. 47. &c. And that servant, which knew his master's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

2. There are degrees of honour and glory among the angels in heaven, and though they are all of them glorious creatures, yet among them some are higher, some inferior in dignity, some are greater, others lesser; therefore we have reason to conclude, that there will be an order and gradation among the blessed saints of heaven likewise. For we are sure, that in the future state we shall be like unto the angels; and why not in this? Seeing in the angelical polity there are divers orders, ranks, and degrees, can we imagine that the communion of the saints in heaven shall be a levelled society? This is utterly incredible. Now the antecedent here again is most evident from Scripture; and though we dare not intrude ourselves into the things we have not seen, or imitate the temerity of that learned and sublime conjecturer Dionysius, who undertakes to reckon up exactly the several orders of the angelical hierarchy, as if he had seen a muster of the heavenly host before his eyes; yet that there are orders and degrees among the blessed angels, we may with all assurance affirm, having the plainest warrant of the holy text for the assertion. For we often read in Scripture, not only of angels, but also of archangels, i.e. chief angels, that have a pre-eminence above the rest. This is so known and confessed by every man, that we need not cite the texts wherein mention is made of them.

To these reasons we may add the consent of the catholic church in this question. It is certain, that it was ever held in the primitive church as an undoubted truth, that there shall be a disparity of rewards in the life to come; and that this was never called into question, until the conceited opinionist Jovinian, among his other paradoxes, ventured to broach the contrary doctrine. But how he was entertained for this by the most eminent doctors of the church of his age, St. Jerom, St. Austin, and others, we very well know. His obstinacy in this and other erroneous tenets, against the plainest evidence of Scripture and reason, hath placed him in the black catalogue of heretics.

And it is pity that amongst the reformed foreign divines there should be any found that should dare to patronise so exploded an error; especially if we consider the very weak arguments by which they endeavour to justify their dissent from the catholic church. To the brief examination of which arguments we are in the next place to proceed.

1. They say they cannot conceive how this doctrine can be maintained, without admitting with the papists the merit of good works. For if, as our labour is greater or lesser in God's service here, our reward shall be greater or lesser in the life to come; then there is a proportion observed between our labour or work, and the reward. And this necessarily infers the merit of our work or labour.

I answer,

that this objection is founded on a plain mistake of the doctrine of Scripture, which we defend. For when we say with the holy Scriptures, that every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour, we do not mean that there will be an exact proportion between a man's labour and his reward; for it is certain that the highest degree of grace can never equal the lowest degree of glory, nor can the best of saints by all that he can do deserve so much as to be a doorkeeper in the house of his heavenly Father: but the proportion here is

between the work and reward of one good man, compared with the work and reward of another; and in this comparison the proportion is exact. A very learned Father of our church explains this by an apposite similitude, which I shall give you as near as may be in his own words translated. "Suppose," saith he, "three husbandmen to be employed in cultivating or dressing the field of some prince, one for one day only, another for three days, the third for six days. Now if the prince, out of his royal bounty, shall give to the first a thousand talents, to the second three thousand talents, to the third six thousand; it is evident that the reward is measured out to each of these according to the different measure of their labour: but yet it were ridiculous for a man hence to conclude, that the labour of him that wrought six days deserved six thousand talents, yea or so much as six talents, yea or so much as one talent, and so in the rest. After the same manner are we to conceive of the divine remuneration. For although we affirm, that God measures out to every man a different degree of glory, according to the different measure of his labour; yet it doth not follow from hence, that between the work and reward of one and the same man there is an equality of proportion; but only that between the different works and rewards of different men there is an equality of proportionality. If therefore the work of any man be compared with the reward of the same man, viz. eternal life, we may presently discern an infinite inequality between them; but if the works of different men and the rewards of different men be compared, according to the degrees of eminence in the same life eternal, there will appear an accurate proportionality. And this is to reward every man according to his own labour.

I need not say any more in answer to this argument, and shall therefore pass to the next.

2. They thus argue. The future glory of the saints is the purchase of Christ's righteousness, which is alike imputed to all true believers, and they have an equal share therein, and consequently they shall share equally in the future glory!

I answer,

The doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ, as it hath been too commonly taught and understood, hath been a fruitful mother of many pernicious and dangerous errors in divinity. In this objection, it is supposed, that the righteousness of Christ is so imputed to every believer, that it becomes formally his righteousness, and that upon the sole account thereof he hath a right to the future glory. And if this were true, if Christ's righteousness were thus ours, that righteousness being the most perfect righteousness, nothing less could answer it than the highest reward in heaven; and so indeed it would necessarily follow, that the future glory of all the saints should be alike and equal. But this supposition hath no foundation in Scripture, yea it is plainly false. And that it is so, if we had no other argument, the very doctrine we are now upon were sufficient to evince.

We have proved by very plain texts of Scripture, that there will be a disparity of rewards in the life to come, according to the disparity of men's graces and good works in this life; and from hence we may safely conclude, that the doctrine of those who teach that the perfect righteousness of Christ is formally the righteousness of every believer, and that thereupon he hath a right to the highest reward in heaven, is certainly false. Nay indeed, if that doctrine of theirs were true, a consequence would follow, which cannot be uttered without trembling, that every saint shall be equal to Christ in glory; Christ's righteousness being his, and so he having a right to whatsoever that righteousness deserved. But to answer more directly to the objection, there is nothing more certain, than that the future glory of the saints is the purchase of Christ's righteousness.

But how? By the meritorious obedience of Christ, in his life and death, a covenant of grace, mercy, and life eternal was procured, ratified, and established between God and the sinful sons of men; the condition of this covenant is faith working by love, or a faith fruitful of good works; and there is also sufficient grace promised to all that shall heartily seek it for the performance of that condition. It is from this covenant of infinite mercy in Christ Jesus alone that our imperfect good works have any ordination to so excellent a reward as the future glory; and it is the mercy, the rich mercy, the royal bounty and liberality of God,

expressed in the same covenant, that assigns to greater degrees of grace here, greater degrees of glory hereafter. This is the plain truth.

But to be short, and to shew the perfect sophistry of this objection, I ask the objectors, whether they do not acknowledge that the present grace of the saints in this life is as well the purchase of Christ's righteousness, as their future glory? They must, they will, they do confess it. Now then, according to their argument it will follow, that all the saints have equal degrees of grace in this life, because they have an equal share in the righteousness of Christ, by which that grace was purchased; than which assertion nothing can be more notoriously false. This their argument therefore is a manifest fallacy.

3. Their last objection is taken from the parable of our Saviour, Matt. xx. 1. &c. where the kingdom of heaven, that is, the church of God, is compared to a vineyard, the master whereof went out in the morning to hire labourers, and agreed with them for a penny a day. Three hours after, or at the third hour, he went out and hired more; and so again at the sixth and ninth hours; yea at the eleventh hour he did likewise. And when they came all to receive their wages, he gave the last he had hired as much as he had agreed for with the first, viz. every one a penny, neither more nor less. Whence they infer that the future reward, signified by this penny, shall not be proportioned according to the difference of men's works, but be one and the same to all.

I answer,

this parable belongs not at all to the matter in question, seeing the scope of it is to justify God's proceedings in the dispensation of his grace towards the church of the Jews, and that of the Gentiles; the latter of which was not called till a long time after the former; and though being so much junior to it, yet was made its equal in the benefits and blessings of God's gracious covenant. The Jews were first hired into the vineyard betimes in the morning, in the more early ages of the world, in the days of Abraham, with whom and his posterity God made a special covenant of grace and mercy; and in the after-ages, (which seem to be signified in the parable by the third, and sixth, and ninth hours,) at such times as the true religion was in danger to fail among them, he by extraordinary means and instruments raised and restored it again; as in the days of Moses and Elias, and after the captivity of Babylon. But the Gentiles were not called into the vineyard till the day was far spent, in the last time and dispensation; (undoubtedly signified in the parable by the eleventh hour;) and yet these, by the goodness of their heavenly Master, are admitted to the same privileges with the Israelites, and they receive the same reward which was promised to the Jews, with whom I the right hand of God, there will be many vessels (if I may use the common similitude) of different sizes and capacities, some greater, some lesser, but all of them shall be filled. This different, but in every one satisfactory perception of the future heavenly bliss, seems to have been typified and represented by the Israelites gathering of manna (that food of heaven) in the wilderness; of which we read, Exod. xvi. 18. that he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack: they gathered every man according to his own eating. To explain this as far as we are able, it is to be observed, that although whilst we are in this state of proficiency and running our race, it be not only lawful, but a laudable ambition and emulation in us, to strive to outstrip and excel each other in virtue, and so to gain the richer prize; yet when our race is finished, and the great Bpa/3«/Tij? or Judge of it hath given his award, and passed the decisive sentence, we must not, we shall not contend, but fully acquiesce and rest therein. And then the servant, who having increased his pound but to five more, shall hear his lord thus pronouncing, Well done thou good servant, be thou ruler over five cities: he, I say, shall be as well pleased and satisfied as the other servant, who, having made a double improvement, shall receive a proportionable reward, and have authority over ten cities.

Among the blessed in heaven there shall be no discontent or repining, no pride or disdain, no grudging or envy; but there shall be all contentment, all joy, all thankfulness, all love. They that are seated in the higher mansions of glory, shall not look down with contempt on those that are beneath them; nor shall these lift up an envious eye towards the other; but they shall perfectly love and delight in each other: and by an inexpressible union of sublimated charity, each shall make what the other enjoys his own, and all together shall make up in different notes one sweet harmonious concert in the praises of God, the fountain of their bliss. To this purpose is the saying of St. Austin on John xiv. 2. speaking of the different rewards of the

blessed in heaven: It comes to pass through charity, that what each hath is common to all; for thus every man hath it also in himself, when he loves and rejoiceth in, and so enjoys in another, what himself hath not.

It is hard indeed for us mortals, whilst we dwell in these houses of clay, and are encumbered with the sinful inclinations and passions of this flesh, to conceive of this, and to comprehend the divine power of exalted love. But let us consider, why may not that be among the saints hereafter, which we are sure is among the holy angels now? In that celestial hierarchy, archangels and angels, cherubims and seraphims, and thrones, and the lower orders of those blessed spirits, disagree not among themselves, though they differ from one another in honour and dignity; but on the contrary, they perfectly love and delight in each other, and all in their God. And in their several stations, they readily and cheerfully execute the will and pleasure of their great Lord and Master, whose ministers they are; and all together make one family of love and peace, of joy and order, and one harmonious choir, in perfect concert, and with ravishing melody, sounding forth the praises of their heavenly King. And thus it shall be with the saints after the resurrection, when they shall be made like unto the angels, i. e. when they shall enjoy the same life immortal which the angels do, and be joined to them, and incorporated into their blessed society.

And now, lastly, to apply this whole discourse: Let us, by what hath been said, be excited and stirred up to a diligent, earnest, and zealous pursuit after an increase of virtue, and a greater proficiency in the ways of righteousness and holiness. Let us shun no labour that comes in our way, and is within our reach and compass, whereby we may glorify God, and do good to others; for we see, the more grace the more glory; and the greater and more industrious our labour in God's service hath been in this life, the greater and more copious and abundant shall our reward be in the life to come. We cannot be truly righteous overmuch, as the slothful world would persuade us, nor can there be any excess or superfluity in virtue, or in the habits and exercises of real piety and charity. How great soever our labour be in the business of religion, none of it shall be lost labour, or in vain in the Lord. Every degree of grace which we advance to here, shall raise us a degree higher in the future glory. And all the good works that ever we do, shall be recorded in the faithful register of the divine Omniscience, and not one of them shall be forgotten, or miss of its reward.

Oh! that this consideration might often and very deeply enter our thoughts! How would a vigorous sense of this truth awaken and rouse us out of our remissness and negligence in religion, that too often seizeth on us! How would this inspirit and animate us to generous attempts even of heroic virtue, which in this degenerate age are derided, as vain romantic enterprises!

How often at least would this thought call us from our idle solitude or unprofitable society, to our prayers and devotions! How many precious hours of our time would it rescue and redeem, from being misspent and lost in vanity and folly! How readily should we embrace, yea, how studiously should we seek after the opportunities of doing good! for indeed farther every such opportunity is an advantage offered us by the good providence of God, to enrich our souls, and to add to our heavenly store and treasure, the only true treasure, that shall never fail or be taken from us.

In a word, therefore, let us in the first place (as I said in the beginning of this discourse) take care to secure our being in a state of grace; for "it is a folly for him, that is not yet sure of life, to "contend for honour V And having done this, let us not rest here, but advance more and more in that blessed state, and go on to perfection.

I conclude with the words of St. Peter in the close of this Epistle, Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory now and for ever. Amen.

**1707**

**John Norris, M.A. (1657 – 1711)), Rector of Bremerton Church near Serum**



**That There Are Degrees Of Glory, Though By Some Much Contested, Is Yet I Think Most Certain & Unquestionable Truth; Certainty Of Which I Shall Endeavour To Establish Upon These Few Evident Principles  
Discourses On The Beatitudes**

(5<sup>th</sup> Edition printed in London in 1707)

**Discourse the Eighth**

Matth. V. ver. x,xi, xij. Blessed are they which are persecuted for Righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Or, as it may be read from the Close, Great is their Reward in Heaven. It has been ever a great occasion of Dissatisfaction to some Men that there should be any such thing as Evil in the World. A greater yet, is that this Evil should often fall upon good, and sometimes upon the best of Men. But the greatest of all is, that not only good Men should meet with Evil, but that their very Goodness should betray them into it; that suffering should not only be the Portion of the Righteous, but that Men should suffer for the Sake of their Righteousness. It seems hard indeed that a Righteous Man should suffer, but much more that he should suffer for his being Righteous and that Affliction should not only be the Lot, but also the effect and Conference is his Virtue. For if Honesty and Integrity cannot be a Defense and Privilege against Evil, yet one would expect it should not be a Procurer of it, and that if the Man were not the better for his Virtue, yet at least he should not be the Worse. These have been always as perplexing appearances in the Moral, as any that arise in the Natural System of the World; a frequent Trouble and Discouragement to the Good and Pious, and a more frequent Occasion of Triumph to the Atheistical and Profane, who have railed from hence their most plausible Objections both against the Being and the Order of Divine Providence, which by these greatest Difficulties of it they have been encouraged either to Deny or to Condemn.

With the two first of these Difficulties I am not at present concerned, nor shall I determine of what force the last and greatest might be, were this the last state of things, and the All-concluding Scene of the World. Perhaps it might then be strong enough to conclude what some are now so weak as to wish and believe. But certainly with the supposition of an After-stats the Objection is so far from being Desperate, that I can fee nothing Difficult in it: And I think 'tis here sufficiently answered by that ample Compensation promised by our Saviour to all those whose faithful adherence to a good Cause, shall at any time engage them in Sufferings and Afflictions. For says he, Blessed are they which are persecuted for Righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Which last Words (as our Saviour afterwards explains them) contain not only a Promise of Heavenly Happiness in general, but of a greater Degree and Measure of it, and entitle the Sufferers for Religion, those who undergo Persecution for Righteousness sake, to a more than ordinary weight of Glory.

So that hence arise two Propositions to be distinctly considered: First, That there are Degrees in that Glory which shall be the Reward of Saints in Heaven. Secondly, That one of the Highest Degrees of it shall be the Reward of those who suffer Persecution for the sake of Righteousness. That there are Degrees of Glory, though by some much contested, is yet I think a most certain and unquestionable Truth. The certainty of which I shall endeavour to establish upon these few evident Principles. First, I consider that this must needs be the natural and necessary result of things. And here I desire only it may be granted me, That there are some certain Dispositions of Soul necessary to relish and enjoy the Happiness of Heaven. This I think is a Supposition that need not be disputed, since even to the enjoyment of sensible good there is requisite a proportion of Sense. The Ear must be tunably set to relish the Charms of Music, and the Palate must be rightly disposed to find any pleasure in the sweetest Delicacies. And if these grosser Objects that have a more natural Affinity with the Organs of Sense, and strike hard upon them, will not yet affect them without some more particular inward Preparation; there is greater reason to think that the Delights of Heaven that are so far above the Level of our Natures, so pure and so refined, cannot be tasted but by a suitable Disposition of Soul. The Necessity of which appears so great, that I am apt to think (as a late worthy Writer of our Church does) that the whole Moral Excellency of some Virtues is their Qualification for the Happiness of another State, they being of no great consequence to the present Order of this World.

Well then, if certain Dispositions of Soul be required to fit us for the Happiness of Heaven, then it follows, that the more disposed any Soul is for the Glories of Heaven, the more happy she must needs be in the enjoyment of them. And if so, then 'twill be necessary to say, either that all Souls are equally disposed, which would be to contradict the Sense and Experience of the whole World; or if one be better disposed than another, then in proportion one will also be more happy than another. The Consequence is plain and necessary. If there must be a Moral Qualification of Soul to fit a Man for Happiness, then certainly the more qualified the more happy. Which has made me often wonder at the self-inconsistency of those who allowing a virtuous Frame and Temper of Mind to be a Natural Disposition for Happiness, do yet deny greater Degrees of Glory to greater Degrees of Virtue. Indeed if a Moral Disposition of Soul did not fit us for Happiness, the case were otherwise; but since 'tis allowed to do that, I cannot conceive but that the Degrees of Happiness must follow the Degrees of Virtue. And indeed how can he that thinks at all, think otherwise, but that a Soul well purged and purified, that has undergone a long course of Mortification, till she is thoroughly awakened into the Divine Life and Likeness, and is arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, Eph. 4. 1 3 must find more Happiness in the Vision of God, than a Soul just pregnant with the Divine Form, and that carries away with her only the first Rudiments of Spiritual Life!

Certainly that Soul which is most like God will be most happy in the fruition of him. This is no more than what may be concluded from the mere natural necessity of things without having recourse to any Positive Order of God about it. But neither may that be supposed to be wanting. For, Secondly, I consider that the same may be concluded from the Justice and Goodness of God as well as from the Nature of things. And first, from his Justice. Not that there lies an Absolute and Antecedent Obligation upon God to bestow greater Rewards upon greater Saints; for if Eternal Life be ( as the Apostle represents it) the Gift of God, Rom. 6. 23. no doubt but the Degrees of it are so too. God cannot become a Debtor to Man, or to any other Creature, but by a free Act of his own. He may indeed oblige himself to us by a voluntary engagement, but we cannot pass any strict Obligation upon him by anything we can do; and to talk of Meriting in this Sense is no less than Blasphemy, and I can hardly believe that any Man that understood himself, ever thus held it.

But though God be not absolutely obliged to his Creatures, but only upon Supposition, and consequently cannot be Absolutely bound to reward greater Saints with greater Happiness, yet if we once suppose him to engage himself by Promise to be a Rewarder of Virtue in general; there will be all the reason in the World to think that by the same Promise he has also Virtually obliged himself to crown the greatest Virtues with the greatest Rewards. For since the reason why he engaged himself to be a Rewarder of good Men was not (as is already cautioned) any Absolute Merit of theirs, but only to show his great Love of Virtue and Goodness, 'tis reasonable to conclude that by the same Motives, and in pursuance of the same End, he also engaged himself to be a more liberal Rewarder of greater Saints. Since this is as necessary a means to show his Love to Virtue and Goodness as the other. And therefore though we should grant (which yet in the sequel will appear otherwise) that God had expressly promised only to be a Rewarder of Virtue in general, yet since the End and Reason of this His engagement was to show His great Love to Virtue, this would be warrant enough to conclude, That he had implicitly and virtually engaged Himself to have an equal regard to the several Degrees of Virtue, and to reward them after their respective Proportions.

But to rise higher yet, though God cannot be in Strict Justice obliged to reward the best of our Services but by an engagement of his own, much less to reward them with Eternal Happiness, yet I think there must be acknowledged a kind of Congruity or Becomingness on God's part so to do, even Antecedently to any Promise or Covenant. There is indeed no strict Obligation till after some Covenant; but there may, and I think must be a Congruity even before; For though there be at first no Proportion of Equivalence between our best Works and the Rewards of Heaven, and consequently no possible room for any strict Merit, yet I cannot but think with a Person of great Judgment and Moderation, that there is a proportion of Convergency; that is, as he afterwards explains it, though there be nothing strictly due from God to the Services of good Men, yet 'tis highly worthy of God to reward them; upon which account they also may be said to be worthy, according to that of the Apocalypse, They will walk with me in white, for they are worthy, Rev. 3. 4.

And indeed unless we will admit of this Congruity, I do not see how to justify the Senses of that Apostolical Maxim, He that comes to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him, Heb. 11 . 6. 'Tis plain that the Apostle here speaks of the Grounds of Natural Religion, and what should move and qualify a Heathen Man to make his first Addresses to God.

This he tells you is to believe the Being and the Providence of God, that he is, and that he is a Rewarder. But now how shall a Heathen Man believe that God is a Rewarder? By any Revelation of his? But that he is not yet supposed to admit. He must therefore conclude it by his own natural Reason, by considering the Idea and Nature of God, that which may naturally be known of him, and how becoming in is for so excellent a Being to reward those who apply themselves seriously and heartily to him.

Well then, if it be reasonable to believe upon the Stock of natural Principles that God is a Rewarder, without being allured of it by any Revelation (which is here supposed in the Heathen's Cafe) then it follows, that even antecedently to any Promise of God there is a great Congruity, though not a strict Obligation that he should be a Rewarder. For otherwise what ground could the Heathen Man have so to Conclude or Believe? This Congruity therefore must of necessity be allowed, however apt some may be to startle at it, when the Word Merit is put before it.

This is Prejudice, but the thing it self as I have here stated and explained it, is both innocent and necessary to be granted. And if there be such a Congruity that God should be a Rewarder in general, then by the same Proportion it follows that he should dispense his Rewards according to the Degrees of Virtue. There being certainly at least as much Congruity in this as in the other. And besides this, there is no reason to question but that the Goodness of God which is in it self infinite, and which is already supposed to exert it self so liberally as to reward the little and defective Services of a short Life with Eternal Glories, will also be a co-assistent with it self, as to reward those most, who have pressed forward to the highest Degrees of Sanctity. And were it not for this, I do not see what encouragement there is for Men to Excel in Virtue, which yet the Goodness of God obliges us to suppose.

For what should move a Man to be eminently good, considering how difficult it is to be so, and how little recompensed in this World; if it were not in order to a greater Reward hereafter? If it be said, that the least Degree of Glory is a sufficient encouragement for the greatest Degree of Virtue; I grant it is so, were that greatest Degree of Virtue the necessary Condition of it, without which the least Glory could not be obtained.

But since less will suffice for that (as must be admitted, unless you will say that all glorified Saints are equally good and virtuous) I do not see how there can be sufficient encouragement for higher Attainments, but only upon the Supposition of greatest Rewards. Which therefore from the Goodness as well as Justice of God there is good Reason to conclude.

Thirdly and lastly, From Principles of Reason I appeal to Holy Scripture, which I think will be found to speak as fully and plainly to this purpose as may reasonably be decreed. For there we find that God will render to every man according to his deeds, Rom.. 2. 6. And again, that every one shall receive the things done in his Body, according to that He hath done, whether it be good or bad, 2 Cor. 5. 10. And left this should be referred to the general Distribution of Rewards and Punishments, more expressly it is said, that he that sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and that "he that sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully" 2 Cor. 9. 6. The same again is expressly represented under the Parable of the Talents committed to the Management of Servants, who were severally rewarded according to their several Improvements, Luke . And though Parables are not allowed to conclude throughout, yet certainly as to the thing directly and purposely intended by them they are as conclusive as any other Forms of Speech, which in this Parable must be the different Dispensation of Rewards hereafter, or nothing. Again, the Scripture mentions different Seats of Glory, Joh. 14. 2. In my Father's house are many Mansions, says our Saviour, that is, Mansions of different Ranks and Orders; For 'twould have been but a small piece of News for our Saviour to have told his

Disciples, that in Heaven there were a great many Mansions in number. Nor would this be so suitable to the Introduction of his Discourse, Let not your Hearts be troubled.

Again we read of particular Rewards belonging to a number of particular Characters, as of a Prophet's Reward, and a Righteous Man's Reward. He that receives a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophet's Reward, says our Saviour, Mat. 10. 41. Why a Prophet's Reward, if there be not some special Reward assigned to a Prophet? And again, 'tis plainly intimated that every Degree, and every Act of Virtue shall have, its proper Recompense, where 'tis said, Mat. 10. 42. Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these my little ones A Cup of cold Water only in the Name of a Disciple shall in no wise lose his Reward.

To which purpose there is also a very express place in the Proverbs, Prov. 19. 17. He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and look what he layeth out it shall be paid him again. Where there is a Reward promised not only to Charity in general, but to every Degree of it. And if every Degree of Virtue shall be particularly rewarded, it evidently follows that the greater our Virtues are, the more abundant shall be our Reward, otherwise some Degrees of Virtue would go unrewarded, contrary to the Supposition.

To this it may be added, that a greater Degree of Blessedness is every where attributed to Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles, &c. when their Glorification is expressed by their Sitting down in the Kingdom of God, and that of other Saints, by their sitting down with them in allusion to the Eastern manner of Feasting. This Privilege of a more eminent Seat is particularly assigned to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by our Saviour, when he tells us, Mat. 8. n. that Many shall come from the East and the West, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven. And so again to the Apostles, Mat. 19.28. Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the Throne of his Glory, ye also shall sit upon Twelve Thrones. It cannot be denied but that this is meant of the Apostles only, and not of his Disciples at large, because of the Twelve Thrones. And why should Twelve of them only be specified, if they were not to be Thrones of an higher Order? Or what Extraordinary would our Saviour have promised to his Disciples? And this is further confirmed by St. John, who in the Description of the Heavenly Jerusalem, makes the Twelve Apostles the Foundations of the City. And the Wall of the City (says He) had twelve foundations, and, in them the Names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb, Rev. 21.14, A place exactly parallel to that of the Twelve Thrones.

To dispatch all in a Word, the Condition of Saints in Glory is expressed in Scripture by their being Mat. 22. 30. and 'tis of it self reasonable to think that the same General Order and Proportion shall be observed in both these Sons of God, Angels and Men. But now 'tis most certain that the Angels have their different Orders and Hierarchies, being distinguished into Thrones and Dominions, Principalities and Powers, and into Angels and Arch- Angels, and that some of them fit nearer to the Throne of God than others. Whereupon the Talmudists call Michael the Arch-Angel, The Prince of Faces, or the Prince of the Presence, being (as they say) so near to the King of Heaven, as to be admitted to sit down by him, and register the good Actions of the Israelites. And says the Angel Gabriel of himself, I am Gabriel that sit and in the presence of God, Luk. 119. He distinguishes himself as much by his Station as by his Name. And the Vision of Isaiah represents one of the Angelic Orders covering their Faces with their Wings, which supposes them to be nearer than Ordinary to the Presence of God, so as not to be able to abide the Glory of it, without the help of a Veil.

Since therefore there is such a Variety in the Angelical Stations, and our future Condition is generally represented by theirs, this alone were enough to put us upon thinking that our Glorification must admit of the like gradual Diversity. And 'tis no more than what natural Order and Decency seems to require, that the Members of Christ's Mystical Body should retain the same Diversity in the other World that St. Paul ascribes to them in this, that there should still be an Eye and an Hand, an Head and a Foot, more Honourable and less Honourable Parts: i Cor. 12.

Whereof the Natural Heaven exhibits a very convenient Emblem, in which one Star differs from another Star in Glory. And after all, though there were no plain Proof to be had for this, yet there is such an obvious Congruity in the thing as would convince where it could not silence. And I believe there is no Man, though never so forward to raise Objections against what has been contended for, and to equalize the Glories of Heaven (for the other World has its Levelers as well as this) that could yet obtain Leave of his own Modesty to expect as bright a Crown as the Virgin Mary, or St. Paul.

Having thus far asserted the different Degrees of Glory, which I have the longer indited upon, because 'tis a very practical as well as notional Theory, being of great consequence to the encouragement of Heroic Goodness, I come now to consider the second thing proposed, that one of the Highest Degrees of Glory shall be the Reward of those who suffer Persecution for the sake of Righteousness, that is, of Martyrs. And here for the Eviction of this, having already shown that there are Degrees of Glory in proportion to the Degrees of Virtue, I think 'twill suffice to show that Martyrdom is one of the highest Degrees of Virtue. For the Argument reduced to Form will stand thus:

- An higher Degree of Virtue shall have an higher Degree of Glory
- But Martyrdom is an higher Degree of Virtue
- Therefore Martyrdom shall have an higher Degree of Glory

The first Proportion is what we have been proving hitherto. To infer the Conclusion therefore there needs only a Proof of the second. Here therefore my Business shall be to give a short representation of the Excellency of Martyrdom.

The Honour of Martyrdom was so great in the Primitive Church, that even the Commonness of it, which depredates every thing else, could not diminish from its Veneration. It was then thought of so great Excellence, as to supply the room of Baptism,, and the new Convert, whose early and sudden execution prevented his solemn Admission into the Christian Church, was yet esteemed a very good Member of Christ's Mystical Body, and numbered with his best Saints in Glory everlasting. The same Honour to Martyrs made them choose their Tombs for the places of their Devotion; and God himself was pleased to signalize his special regard to these his Saints, and to show how precious their Death was in his sight, by making the places of their Rest the Stage of his Miracles.

Nor is there any thing in all this more strange and extraordinary, than the Excellency of the Virtue it self which was thus honoured. A general representation of which is thus given by the Pen of a Celebrated Writer of the Roman Church (A Church which, by the way, has made more Martyrs, and has fewer than any in the World).

But she has dealt long enough in Blood, to be able to form an Idea of Martyrdom from the Martyrs which she has made. We see (says one of her Sons) nothing in the Church more noble than Martyrdom; the highest form of Virtue, the loft Expression of Charity; and when A Man has spilt his Blood and parted with his Life for Jesus Christ, there if not any inflame that can further be expressed, from his Love.

Lastly therefore may we acknowledge nothing more August in Religion than Martyrs. They Are the Heroes of Christianity, the gallant Men of this State, the Noblest Parts of this mystical Body. There is no greatness that gives not way to their Dignity; whatever we admire is below their worth, arid according to the Opinion of one of the wisest Fathers of the Church (he means St. Cyprian) "'tis more to be A Martyr than to be an Apostle. Neither hath any thing been ever more Honoured in the World. Heaven has wrought an Hundred Miracles to discover their Innocence, wild Beasts have reflected them, the Flames have seared their Garments, Tyrants have admired them, and many times their Executioners have become their Disciples, in so much that these renowned Champions had great reason to be afraid of Vain-glory, at the same time that God delivered them from Sorrow.

The Description is handsome and elegant; but what they Describe, they have left to our Church to Practice.

But more particularly and distinctly, to take the just Height of the Excellency of Martyrdom, we must first lay down a Measure whereby the Excellency of any Virtue is to be estimated. Now the Excellency of any Virtue may be measured either from the Goodness of the Object willed, or from the Degree of willing it. And two Persons that are equally Virtuous with respect to the good that is willed, may yet be very unequally so with respect to the Degree of Willing, because one may will the same Good, and the same degree of Good more intensely and affectionately than the other.

Thus for instance, Virginity may be said to be more excellent than a Conjugal Life, and that though you do suppose the States themselves to be equally Pure, because 'tis harder to preserve Virginal than Conjugal Chastity: So that though the Degrees of Purity be supposed the same in both States; yet because they are more strongly wiled in the one than in the other, the Virgin may be said to be more pure than the Conjugated Person; not, perhaps as a Lover of greater Purity, but as a stronger and more pertinacious Lover of the same, which he adheres to under more disadvantageous Circumstances; And this I take to be the Case of Martyrdom, whose general Excellency above other Virtues consists in the Degree of Inclination or Adhesion to good, which in the Martyr is supposed to be so strong as to determine him rather to suffer Death, and the utmost Extremity of it, than to transgress what he knows to be his Duty. And indeed if we consider how sweet Life is, and how naturally averse we are to Death even in the most easy, much more under the most terrifying Circumstances, it must needs be a very strong and peremptory adhesion to Virtue that shall engage a Man to quit his Life rather than his Innocence, and Dye rather than offend. But to be more particular yet. To recommend the excellency of Martyrdom there is a Concurrence of the greatest Virtues. The most eminent of which (for 'twere endless to reckon up all) are the greatest Faith, the greatest Love, and the greatest Courage.

### **First, The greatest faith**

There is indeed no Faith like the Faith of a Martyr. This is that Faith which overcomes the World, and all that is terrible in it; That Faith to which all things are possible and nothing difficult, and that removes Fear, which is more than to remove Mountains. This is that Faith which is more especially the Substance of things hoped for, and the Argument or Demonstration of things not seen. This noble Definition of Faith is never so fully verified as in the Faith of a Martyr. This is that Faith that turns the End of the Perspective, and shortens the interval of Time, and makes the future World present, and represents Heaven open, and the Son of Man landing on the Right Hand of God ready to defend, and receive, and reward those that will be content to endure the Cross, and despite both the Shame and the Pain of it for his sake. And all this with such certainty and fulness of Persuasion, that 'tis ready to change its Nature, through too much Evidence, and to cease to be any longer Faith, and commence Science or Revelation. For indeed nothing less than this, than such a full down-bearing Persuasion can well enable a man to drink off this bitter Cup, and to be Baptized at this Bloody Font. It must certainly be a strange Degree of Affiance and Confidence which that Man has in God, who can resign up all that is good and pleasant, and submit himself to all that is evil and terrible in this World, and meet Death with all its Natural and Artificial Terrors, and trust God for his Reward in another Life. What a generous, victorious Faith is this! And what a noble Idea must such a Person have of God.

The Faith of Abraham is highly celebrated in Scripture for his readiness to offer up his Son at the Command of God. And no doubt 'twas a very rare and extraordinary Faith that could reconcile him to such an unnatural undertaking. But certainly the Faith of a Martyr is very much beyond this, as much as 'tis a higher act of Reliance to trust God with one's own Soul, and for one's Eternal Happiness, than for a Posterity to inherit a promised Land.

### **Secondly, The greatest Love**

There is indeed no Love like the Love of a Martyr. This is that Love which is properly stronger than Death, and which is so perfect as to cast out or overcome all Fear. This is a Degree of Love truly Seraphic: and

which comes the nearest of any to the Love of Angels and beatified Spirits. If there be any such thing as Seraphic Love in the World, this is it. Not only because 'tis bright and flaming, noble and generous, but because 'tis a Love that gets above all the Bodily Passions, silences all the motions of the lower Life, and makes the Man as if he were all Soul and Mind. More particularly, Martyrdom is the greatest Love of Virtue, and the greatest Love of God.

First, Martyrdom is the greatest Love of Virtue because that is valued at a higher rate than Life it self, which the Martyr will rather lose than Sin. Our Saviour makes it the greatest Instance of and Argument for Friend for a Man to lay down his Life for his Friend. And so doubtless it is. For 'tis then plain that the Man sets a greater value upon his Friend, than he does upon Life. And the like may be said of the Martyr, that he sets a higher value upon Virtue, than he does upon Life, which yet is so dear that (as one observes, who for our safety too well understands the secret Springs and Inclinations of Human Nature) All that a man has will he give for it, Job. 2. 4. And yet this very Life for which a Man will give all things, is by the Martyr given as a Sacrifice to His Innocence.

Secondly, Martyrdom is the greatest Love of God, because the Martyr sets so high a Price upon him, that he will choose rather to die than forfeit the enjoyment of his Favour and Blessedness, and may truly say with the Psalmist, Psal. 63.4. Thy loving kindness is better than Life. 'Tis an easy thing for a Man in a warm gutsy fit of Devotion, when the Evil day is far off, and no probable danger of any competition between his Religion and his Life, to say that he fees a greater Value upon the loving Kindness of God than upon Life. You know who did so. Though I should die with thee, yet I will not deny thee, that is, (to reduce the Words to a more Logical Order) I would rather die than deny thee. This is easily said, but not so easily done, as the Event too sadly showed.

But he that says he values the loving Kindness of God more than Life, and dies rather than forfeit it, may be believed. For what greater Love can there be than this, or what higher Instance or Trial of it? The greatest Love of God was to die for Man. God could not signalize his Love to Man by any higher instance than by dying for him; and the greatest Love of Man is to die for God.

### **Thirdly, The greatest Courage**

For there is also no Courage like the Courage of a Martyr. He fears no Evil but only Sin and Damnation, which are just and reasonable Objects of Fear, and will undergo any other Evils to avoid these, which is the truest and the greatest Courage. For where is there any like it? I would not have the Man of Honour or Duelist, of all the Pretenders to Courage in the World, offer a Competition here. For 'tis most certain that he abuses the notion of Courage as well as that of Honour. His Courage is to dare to sin and be damned, that he may avoid the Reproach of Cowardice, that is, not to fear and avoid what with all possible concern he should, and to avoid what he started not. And if this be Courage, I must then confess that I do not know what is Cowardice.

But neither may the Military Man be a Competitor here. 'Tis I confess great and brave for a Man in a just and laudable Cause, for the Defense of his Prince and Country, to fall a Sacrifice at the Head of an Army. And the Herald's Office supposes as much. But there are also some Allays that qualify the Glory even of this Action. For the Man is supposed to be engaged with Multitudes and Numbers, which encourage as well as defend; and to fight in a Heat, when his Spirits are railed, and his Blood runs high, so as scarce to be able to feel a Shot or a Stab that shall be given him, and to want Opportunity of Retreat, and to be kept from reflecting upon his Danger by Noise, Tumult and Confusion, and to have the Spur of Emulation, and the Incentive of Anger, sometimes of Hatred and Revenge-, and which is more than all the rest, the Hopes of safe come-off at last. Believe me, this goes a great way, and I question whether among those that venture themselves in War, one of ten thousand would do so, if he knew beforehand that he should certainly die in the Field.

But now to have a Man go alone and in cold Blood to the Stake, or to the Scaffold; When in every Period of

his Advance 'tis still in his Power by compliance to recede from his dreadful undertaking, and there calmly and deliberately submit himself to certain Execution, and feel himself die with all his Thoughts, Reflections and Passions about him; this is Courage indeed, and such a Noble Spectacle as might well deserve to be a Theatre to Angels and Men, yea even to God himself.

These are some of those great things that illustrate the excellency of Martyrdom, and show it to be: one of the highest Degrees of Virtue, and consequently that it is entitled to an higher Degree of Glory: Which the Scripture also expressly makes to be the Portion of Martyrs, who are said to endure tortures, and not to accept of deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection, Heb.11. - A Better Resurrection, that is, a Resurrection to a Better State of Happiness, that being the only Measure whereby one Resurrection may be said to be Better than another. And. says the Angel to St. John concerning those who are clothed with white Robes, and had Palms in their Hands, Rev. 7. 14. These are they which came out of great Tribulation, and have washed their Robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they Before the Throne of God, and serve him day and night in his Temple. And he that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell Among them.

And now since there is a brighter Crown of Glory prepared for Martyrs, and those that suffer Persecution for the sake of Righteousness, all that further remains is to commend from the Premises these two Practical Inferences.

First, That we entertain no hard Thoughts of the Justice or Goodness of God for suffering so many severe Persecutions in the Christian Church, some whereof were violent, as under the Roman Emperors; some Fraudulent by Heretics, as Arias, Nestorius, &c. And some of a mixed nature, consisting both of Fraud and Violence, when both Temporal and Spiritual Power did combine together (as now in the Papal See) against the Lord and his Christ. I say we should learn from hence not to censure the ways of God for this, nor to charge him foolishly, since there is so plentiful a Reward laid up for those that suffer in the Cause of Righteousness.

Secondly, That we do fortify our selves with the Consideration of this Beatitude, That if God should ever honour us so far as to call us to the Trial of the Cross, we may be so true to God, to Religion, and to our own Souls, as to Suffer courageously and thankfully, ever looking up to that glorious Crown, that white Robe, and those Triumphant Palms which distinguish the Noble Army of Martyrs, who eternally sing Hymns and Praise to God for the Blessing of those Crosses, which now spring up into Crowns, and in bearing of which they find so great Reward.

Glory Be to God on High

**1716 (English); 1826 (English)**

**August Hermann Francke (1663 – 2727), Important German Pietist Leader**

**Three Practical Discourses: I. Of The Love Of God. II. Of Charity To The Poor. III. Of The Differing Degrees Of Glory**

**Missing Online Resource**

Publisher: London: Printed and sold by Joseph Downing, 1716

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**1717**



**David Constant de Rebecque (1638-1733): Pastor / Philosopher, Lausanne, Switzerland**  
**Discours sur les degrés de gloire (Discourse on the Degrees of Glory)**  
**Livres Imprimés A Lausanne Au Xviiè Siècle**

See publication information (but not the text) on this site: [Livres imprimés à Lausanne au XVIIe siècle](#)  
Prononcé le 12. Mai, 1717. A Lausanne, Suisse Chez Frederick Gentil. M.  
David was Professor of Philosophy and Pastor at a church in Lausanne, Switzerland  
Book in library in Lausanne, Switzerland

**1723; Reprinted in London in 1830**  
**Thomas Green (1658–1738), English academic and bishop Church of England**  
**Of The Different Degrees Of Glory And Happiness In Heaven**  
**Four Discourses on the Four Last Things**

(Note: Reprinted In London In 1830)

**Of the different Degrees of Glory and Happiness in Heaven**

I PROCEED now to the fourth thing that I designed, which was to show that there are different degrees of glory and happiness in Heaven.

Men shall be rewarded in the next life, not only according to the kind and quality of their actions in this, considered in general as good and evil; and so good shall be rewarded to the good, and evil to the evil; (for thus our Saviour teaches, Matt. xvi. 27.) "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and shall reward every man according to his works:" and Rev. xxii. 12, 13, "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last," tells St. John, "behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to render to every man according as his works shall be;" and Rom. vi. 23, "The wages of sin is death;" but the degree of reward shall likewise be proportioned to the degrees of good and evil that men shall have done here on earth; that is, a more eminent degree of piety and holiness here, shall be rewarded with a proportionably greater share of glory and happiness hereafter; and greater and more heinous sins shall then be loaded with greater and heavier punishments.

I shall chiefly consider the former of these in this place; that good men shall hereafter receive in Heaven a reward proportionable to the degree of their holiness and obedience to GOD in this world. This is plainly asserted in abundance of places of the Holy Scriptures. I shall mention some of them. Thus saith the prophet Daniel, chap. xiii. 3, "They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." Which is much the same with what St. Paul expressly affirms concerning the different glory of the saints at the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory: so also is the resurrection of the dead." In these words the Apostle, no doubt, sets forth the disparity that will be at the resurrection, even among the glorious bodies of the saints, some shining with brighter, and some with fainter rays of glory; as among the heavenly lights some are more glorious than others.

To the same sense have been generally expounded by many of the ancient fathers, and some of the most learned modern interpreters, those words of our Saviour, John xiv. 2, "In my Father's house are many mansions." ' The multitude of mansions in Heaven seems hardly intelligible, without admitting a difference of degrees in the heavenly glory. For if all the saints should be placed in one and the same degree of bliss, they would all have one and the same mansion in Heaven; but when it is said, that in our "heavenly Father's house there are many mansions," it cannot well be understood in any other sense, but that there are some higher, and some lower mansions, according to the measure of proficiency in virtue and goodness, which

men have attained to in this life. Hence, says a learned father of the Church, There are with the Lord many rewards and mansions, according to the proportions of men's lives. And thus says another, "How are there many mansions with the Father, but according to the variety of the good works of men?" Hence also our Saviour promises to the Apostles, that at the great and general renovation of all things, "when CHRIST shall sit on the throne of his glory," as the judge of men and angels, "they also should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," St. Matt. xix. 28. Intending, no doubt, thereby to express to them, ' That as the office of an apostle was an office of the highest service, labour, and difficulty; so they who should perform it well, should have the highest reward for so doing; should then be exalted also so as to sit in the next degree of glory and power to himself, the King of glory.'

This again is plainly intimated to us by our Saviour, in the parable of the talents, St. Luke xix. 15. "He that had gained ten talents, was made ruler over ten cities; and he that had gained five talents, was made ruler over five cities," ver. 16, 17, 18, 19. The reward which the LORD bestowed upon his servants bearing proportion to the several improvements made by each of them. And upon this principle, the Apostle St. Paul presses the Corinthians to be very liberal and bountiful to their distressed brethren, because according to the degree of their charity, would be the degree of their reward, 2 Cor. ix. 6. This, I say, " He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly: and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully;" clearly implying, that the more good we do in this world, the more abundant shall be our reward in the next: and so, on the contrary, the thinner our seeds of charity, and other good works are sown here, the lesser will be our harvest of glory hereafter.

I think nothing can be spoken more plainly to this purpose than those places of Scripture which I have mentioned. Yet still, to add a further confirmation to it, it may not be amiss here to take notice, that though all the angels of Heaven are glorious creatures, yet there are among them some higher in dignity, and some lower; some are greater, and others are lesser; some are angels, and some are archangels, that is, chief angels, some that have a pre-eminence above the rest.

Now seeing we are sure that in the future state "we shall be like unto the angels," Luke xx. 36, why should we not be so in this respect also? seeing in the angelic polity, there are diverse orders, ranks, and degrees, why should we imagine that the communion of saints should be a levelled society? This is utterly incredible. And therefore, for these reasons, ' the Catholic Church has ever held it as an undoubted truth, that there shall be a disparity of rewards in the life to come.' Notwithstanding the plainness of the foregoing truth, some have thought fit to call it into question, alleging such reasons as the following for their so doing. ' First, That since the merits of CHRIST'S death, by which eternal life is purchased for all, are of virtue sufficient to purchase the highest degree of glory for them all; there is, therefore, they say, no doubt but that all will receive the same effect from them; that is, that all will be made partakers of the same degrees of glory, and no difference made between them in that respect.'

In answer to this, it may be said, that it is very true indeed that CHRIST is the common Saviour of all, his blood is alike sufficient, and was alike shed for the redemption of all; but it does not therefore follow, that the rewards purchased by that blood will be bestowed on all alike, any more than that the same degrees of holiness and sanctification will, through the efficacy of that blood, be alike communicated to all. For eternal life and happiness does not accrue to us, by way of necessary and natural result, but from the all-sufficient merits of CHRIST'S obedience and sufferings: but a covenant of grace, and mercy, and life eternal is thereby procured, . ratified, and established between GOD and the sons of men; and the condition of this covenant on their part, is faith working by love, or a faith fruitful of obedience and good works, and thus the Scripture has declared, that "CHRIST is the author of eternal salvation to them that believe and obey him:" and to them only. So that obedience is the condition to be performed on our part, and according to the degrees of our holiness and obedience, shall be the degrees of our happiness. ' It is indeed by this covenant of infinite mercy in CHRIST JESUS alone, that our imperfect good works are made a condition of so excellent a reward, as the future glory; for nothing that we can do, can possibly deserve so great a reward.

The highest degree of grace and goodness, can never be equal to the lowest degree of glory, so as to deserve it.

There being no proportion between an eternal reward, and a short momentary service, though it be that of the best saints. But it is the mercy, the rich mercy, the royal bounty and liberality of GOD, expressed in the same covenant, that assigns to greater degrees of grace and goodness here, greater degrees of glory hereafter. And accordingly it is declared in the several places of Scripture above mentioned, that thus it shall be.'

Another objection against the disparity of rewards in the life to come, is usually raised from the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, mentioned by our Saviour, St. Matt. xx. where it is said, That they that came in at the last hour, received as much as those that came in at the first, and had borne the heat and burden of the day. Whence they infer, that the future reward, signified by this penny, shall not be proportioned according to the difference of men's works, but be one and the same to all. In answer to this, it may truly be said, that this parable belongs not at all to the matter in question; as if thereby was designed to be shewn that all good men shall have equal degrees of glory in the other world: whereas the scope of it is plainly intended to another purpose, viz. to justify GOD'S proceedings in the dispensation of his grace towards the Church of the Jews, and that of the Gentiles; the former being greatly offended, and murmuring that the latter, who were called in the last age of the world, should partake of the benefits and blessings of the Messiah, equally with them, who were the ancient people of GOD. It not being here intended to be intimated to us, that all good men shall hereafter be admitted to equal degrees of glory in heaven; but only to show us, that the Gentiles, who were to be called long after the Jews, should be admitted to the same privileges, and made partakers of the same blessings which were promised the Jews, with whom the covenant was first made. It appearing thus plainly from the Holy Scriptures, that there shall be a disparity of rewards in the life to come, and that the degrees of men's happiness hereafter shall bear a proportion to the degrees of their holiness in this life; if any further proof of this were necessary, it might very well be supposed, both from the justice and equity of GOD, and from the reason of the thing itself.

From the former of these it may very well be supposed, that those good men, who by an early piety, and an uninterrupted course of goodness all their lives long, have excelled in the works of the Lord in this world, shall hereafter be distinguished and honoured with greater degrees of glory in the next. For though our Saviour does indeed say in general, Matt. xiii. 43, that "the righteous shall shine in the kingdom of their Father;" that is, that all the saints that are admitted to everlasting life, shall be glorious therein; yet, I hope, it is not at all improper to believe, but that such of them as had shewn an uncommon zeal for the glory of GOD, and were more eminent for sanctity; and were never in all their lives defiled by any great and enormous sins, shall be honoured above those in the heavenly mansions, who may possibly in their life-time, through the frailty of human nature, have been guilty of many such, though upon their true repentance for them' afterwards, GOD had been pleased of his infinite mercy, through the merits of their Saviour, to admit them to pardon first, and then to happiness. Will not they who have endured a great fight of afflictions, or who have gone through the fiery trial of martyrdom, have in Heaven more reason to rejoice, and be happier than others? inasmuch, as they will, according to St. Peter, 1 Epist. chap. iv. 13, be "partakers of CHRIST'S suffering, that when his glory shall be revealed," and be on that account "highly exalted," Phil. ii. 9, they may "be glad also with exceeding joy."

From the reasons of the thing indeed, it cannot well be otherwise, but that the more pure and holy men have been in this world, the more capable they will be of the happiness of the next, as being thereby the better prepared and disposed for a fuller enjoyment of GOD, wherein, no doubt, one great and substantial part of the happiness of Heaven will consist. ' For if a pure spiritual mind, free from all carnal lusts and passions, be absolutely necessary to put us into a fit capacity of relishing those refined joys that are above, it will from hence naturally follow, that the more spiritualized and exalted men's dispositions are, and the better prepared and fitted their souls are for the enjoyment of the heavenly pleasures, the more pleasing, delightful, and

satisfactory will be their taste and perception of them; and consequently the greater, more enlarged, and comprehensive, will their happiness be.

The emanations of happiness indeed are diffused every where from GOD, as the common fountain of celestial bliss, and perhaps do fill all the saints alike; but then, though every capacity shall be filled, yet their capacities and dispositions for them being unequal, some may receive a greater measure and proportion of them than others; and so consequently be more happy than they are. Just as the light of the sun is the same, and yet its rays are received in a greater or lesser quantity, according to the make and texture of the body it shines upon.

I have now only this one thing more, which I think proper to take notice of on this head, and that is this, that though there shall be different degrees of glory in the life to come, yet this difference shall occasion no uneasiness among the saints above, but all shall be entirely happy: because to every saint in that blessed place, his own degree shall be to him a satisfactory beatitude. This has been thought to be represented to us by the Israelites' gathering of manna (that food of Heaven) in the wilderness, of which we read, Exod. xvi. 18, that "he that gathered much, had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his own eating." This may likewise be expressed by a common similitude, of many vessels of different sizes and capacities, some greater, and some lesser; when if all of them be filled, it is the same thing, one is not then fuller than another. So here; if the blessed saints above shall all receive their full proportion of happiness which GOD shall be pleased to dispense to them, according to their capacities, from those rivers of pleasure which flow from his right hand, there can be no reason to doubt, but that all will be entirely pleased and satisfied with that proportion. Even the lowest degree of happiness in those blessed mansions, being infinitely above what their utmost wishes, while here on earth, could have aspired after.

And then besides, though in this lower world indeed, such as are of meaner spirits, are more narrow-hearted, are apt to repine at the promotion of others, and to envy the felicity which they see them enjoy above themselves: yet among the blessed in Heaven, there are no such peevish and ill-natured qualities, as discontent and repining, pride and disdain, grudging or envy, but all are full of contentment, of joy, and of thankfulness. They shall all there be joined in such perfect love, that they who are seated in the higher mansions of glory, shall not look down with contempt or disdain on those that are beneath them; nor shall they that are below, lift up an envious eye towards those that are above them; ' but there shall be such a perfect harmony among them all, that each shall rejoice as much in the happiness of others, as in his own, and take as great delight therein, as if it really were so. And so altogether shall make up, though in different notes, one sweet harmonious concert in the praises of GOD, the fountain of their bliss.

For why may not this be so among the' saints hereafter, as we are sure it is among the holy angels now? We know that after the resurrection, the saints shall be made like unto the angels, and enjoy the same life immortal as they do, and be incorporated into their blessed society. ' Now in that celestial society, archangels and angels, cherubim and seraphim, thrones and dominions, and the lower orders of those blessed spirits, do not disagree among themselves, though they differ from one another in honour and dignity; but on the contrary, they perfectly love and delight in each other, and all in their GOD, being always ready in their several stations, cheerfully to execute the will and pleasure of their great LORD and Master, whose ministers they are; and do join all together, night and day, with inexpressible pleasure, in "giving blessing, honour, and glory, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." What the Consideration of these things does require from us.

### **1728 Date of Death**

**Joseph Boyse (1660–1728), Presbyterian minister and religious writer**

**Sermon on 1 Corinthians 3:8: The Different Degrees of Future Rewards**

**Sermons of Joseph Boyse**

**1731; 1815 (American Edition in Philadelphia)**

**Thomas Ridgley (c.1576–1656)**

**Whether There Are Degrees Of Glory In Heaven?**

**A Body Of Divinity: Wherein The Doctrines Of The Christian Religion Are Explained And Defended**

(Published in Philadelphia in 1815)

Pages 399-403

There is one thing more, which, though it be not particularly mentioned in this answer, I would not entirely pass over, that is, what may be said to a question proposed by some, viz. Whether there are degrees of glory in heaven? The Papists not only maintain that there are, but pretend that greater degrees thereof shall be conferred on persons, in proportion to the merit of their good works here on earth; and therefore have assigned to them the highest places there, who have performed works of supererogation, by doing more than was strictly enjoined them by the of God. But all Protestant divines, who allow that there are degrees of glory in heaven, strenuously maintain that these are rewards of grace as every ingredient in the heavenly blessedness is supposed to be. And when this doctrine is made the subject of controversy among them; neither side ought to contend for their particular opinion, as though it was one of the most important articles of faith, or charge them who defend the other side of the question, as though they were maintaining something that was directly contrary to scripture, or of a pernicious consequence.

They, on, the other hand, who suppose that there are no degrees of glory in heaven, are afraid, that if they should assert the contrary, it would, in some measure, eclipse the glory of the grace of God, and givr; too much umbrago to the Popish doctrine of the merit of good works. But this all Protestant divines, as was but now observed, sufficiently fence against. And, inasmuch as it is farther argued against degrees of glory, that those external and relative privileges, which they enjoy, such as election, justification, and adoption, belong equally and alike to all saints; and the same price of redemption was paid for all, therefore their glory shall be equal: this method of reasoning will not appear very conclusive, if we consider that sanctification is as much the result of their being elected, justified, redeemed, and adopted, as their being glorified; but that appears not to be equal in all, therefore it does not follow from hence, that their glory, in a future state, shall be so. And though their objective blessedness, which consists in that infinite fulness of grace that there is in God, is inconsistent with any idea of degrees; yet it does not follow, that the communications resulting from hence, which are finite, shall be in a like degree; nor can it be inferred from hence, that if there are degrees of glory, the state of those who have the least degree, shall be imperfect in its kind, or have any thing in it which shall afford the least abatement of their happiness, or be the occasion of envy or uneasiness, as the superior excellencies of some, in this imperfect state, often, appear to be, since that is inconsistent with perfect holiness: nor is it to be supposed that there are any degrees, with respect to the deliverance of the saints from the sins, guilt, and miseries of this present life, which is equal in all; nor do they, who think that there are degrees of glory in heaven, in the least insinuate that every one shall not be perfectly filled and satisfied, in proportion to his receptive disposition; as a small vessel, put into the ocean, is equally full, in proportion to its capacity, with the largest; and therefore none of the saints will desire, nor, indeed, can contain more than God designs to communicate to them

As for that scripture which is sometimes brought in defence of this opinion, viz. the parable of the persons that were hired to work in the vineyard, in Matt. xx. 9. in which it is said, that they that rvere hired about the eleventh hour, received every man a fenny, which is as much as others received who were hired early in the morning, and had born the heat and burden of the day; that does not sufficiently prove it, since some of these labourers are represented as murmuring, and insinuating that they had wrong done them, to whom Christ replies, It thine eye evil, because 1 am good? and they are described as called, but not chosen, ver. 15, 16.

Therefore it is not designed to set forth the glory of heaven, but the temper and disposition of the Jewish church, who were partakers of the external blessings of the covenant of grace, and the gospel-church, as having equal privileges; so that the arguments generally insisted on.

Another scripture which is also brought to prove this doctrine, is in 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead; where the apostle is speaking concerning the happiness of the saints after the resurrection, whom he compares not with what they were when they left the world; for then had no glory, being sown in corruption and dishonour; but he seems to compare the glory of one saint, after the resurrection, with that of another; and accordingly he illustrates it by the brightness of the heavenly luminaries; every one of which has a glory superior to terrestrial bodies: nevertheless he seems to intimate, that if we compare them together, the glory of the one exceeds that of the other. Thus the glory of the least saint in heaven, is inconceivably greater than that of the greatest here on earth: it is, indeed, full and complete in its kind; yet when compared with the glory of others, it may in some circumstances fall short of it.

To prove that there are no degrees of glory in heaven, can hardly be reckoned sufficient to overthrow the contrary doctrine; especially if those other scriptures, that are often brought to prove that there are, be understood in the most obvious sense thereof; and they are such as these, viz, Daniel xii. 3. They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever; where the prophet speaks of those who excel in grace and usefulness in this world; and then considers them not only > wise, but as turning many to righteousness; whose glory, after the resurrection, of which he speaks in the foregoing verse, has something illustrious and distinguishing in it, which compared to the brightness of the firmament and stars. To this it is objected, that our Saviour, in Matt. xiii. 43. illustrates the happiness of all the glorified saints, whom he calls the righteous, by their shining as the sun; therefore the prophet Daniel means no other glory but what is common to all saints; and consequently there are no degrees of glory. But to this it may be replied, that our Saviour does not compare the glory of one of the saints in heaven, with that of another; but intimates, that the happiness of every one of them shall be inconceivably great, and very fitly illustrates it by the brightness of the sun; whereas the prophet is speaking of some that were honoured above others in their usefulness here; and then considers them as having peculiar degrees of glory conferred upon them hereafter, which is something more than what he had said in the foregoing verse, which is common to all the saints, when he speaks of them as awaking out of the dust to everlasting life.

There is another argument brought by some, to prove this doctrine, taken from the parable of the talents, in Matt. xxv. 14, & seq. in which the reward is proportioned to the respective improvement thereof; which seems to respect some blessings which they were to receive in another world; inasmuch as our Saviour compares himself to one that is travelling into a far country, and after a long time, returning and reckoning with his servants: by the former of which is meant, his ascension into heaven; and by the latter, his return to judgment; and consequently those regards which differ in degree, must respect some peculiar glory, which he will confer on his people in another world; and, indeed, the whole chapter seems to refer to the same thing. The former parable of the wise and foolish virgins denotes the behaviour of persons here, and the consequence thereof hereafter: and the latter part of the chapter expressly speaks of Christ's coming to judgment, and dealing with every one according to his works. If therefore the improvement of these talents respects some advantages that one is to expect above the other, it seems to intimate that there are degrees of glory.

Moreover, this is farther argued from those various degrees of grace that some have in this world above others, which is a peculiar honour bestowed on them, and is sometimes considered as the fruit and consequence of their right improvement of those graces which they had before received. And this may be considered as laying a foundation for greater praise; which argues that the soul shall be enlarged in proportion thereunto, so that it may give unto God the glory due to his name, as the result thereof. Therefore if we take an estimate of God's future, from his present dispensations, it not only removes some objections that are sometimes brought against this doctrine; but adds farther strength to those arguments taken from the

scriptures before-mentioned, to prove it. But notwithstanding all that has been said, on this subject, it is the safest way for us to confess, that we know but little of the affairs of another world, and much less of the circumstances of glorified saints, considered as compared with one another. Nor are we to conclude, if there are degrees of glory, that the highest degree thereof is founded on the merit of what any have done or suffered for Christ; or, on the other hand, that the lowest is inconsistent with complete blessedness; which, shall be proportioned to their most enlarged desires, and as much as they are capable of containing. Thus concerning the question proposed by some, viz. Whether there are degrees of glory?

There is another which has some affinity with it, that I would not wholly pass over; namely, whether the saints in heaven shall not have some additional improvements, or make progressive advances in some things, which may be reckoned a farther ingredient in their future happiness? This is to be insisted on with the utmost caution, lest any thing should be advanced which is inconsistent with the complete blessedness, which they are immediately possessed of: however, I do not think that it will detract from it, if we should venture to assert, that the understanding of glorified saints shall receive very considerable improvements, from those objects which shall be presented to them, and the perpetual discoveries that will be made of the glorious mysteries of divine grace, whereby the whole scene of providence, and its subserviency to their eternal happiness, shall be opened, to raise their wonder, and enhance their praise. Since it is not inconsistent with the perfect blessedness of the angels, to desire to know more of this mystery, which they are said to look into, 1 Pet. i. 12. and inasmuch as their joy is increased by those few occasions, which daily present themselves; why may not the same be said with respect to the saints in heaven; especially if we consider that this will redound so much to the glory of God, as well as give us more raised ideas of that happiness which they shall be possessed of.

**1732**

**John Wesley (1703 – 1791), Arminian Reformer**

**On The Resurrection of The Dead**

**Sermon CXXXIV—On the Resurrection of the Dead**

(Published in 1732, published again in 1872)

Sermon CXXXIV.—On the Resurrection of the Dead.

" But some man will say, how are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come ." 1 Cor. xv, 35.

The apostle having, in the beginning of this chapter, firmly settled the truth of our Saviour's resurrection, adds, "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?" It cannot now any longer seem impossible to you that God should raise the dead: since you have so plain an example of it in our Lord, who was dead and is alive; and the same power which raised Christ, must also be able to quicken our immortal bodies.

" But some man will say, how are the dead raised up 1 and with what body do they come?" How can these things be? How is it possible that these bodies should be raised again, and joined to their several souls which many thousands of years ago were either buried in the earth, or swallowed up in the sea, or devoured by fire?—which have mouldered into the finest dust,—that dust scattered over the face of the earth, dispersed as far as the heavens are wide;—nay, which has undergone ten thousand changes, has fattened the earth, become the food of other creatures, and these again the food of other men? How is it possible that all these little parts, which made up the body of Abraham, should be again ranged together, and, unmixed with the dust of other bodies, be all placed in the same order and posture that they were before, so as to make up the very self same body, which his soul at his death forsook? Ezekiel was indeed, in a vision, set down in a valley full of dry bones,"and he heard a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone; the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them above, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet." This might be in a vision. But that all this, and much more,

should in time come to pass; that our bones after they are crumbled into dust, should really become living men;—that all the little parts whereof our bodies were made, should immediately, at a general summons, meet again, and every one challenge and possess its own place, till at last the whole be perfectly rebuilt:—that this, I say, should be done,—is so incredible a thing, that we cannot so much as have any notion of it. And we may observe, that the gentiles were most displeas'd with this article of the Christian faith: it was one of the last things the jonheathens believed; and it is to this day the chief objection to Christianity,"How are the dead raised up? With what body do they come?" In my discourse on these words, I shall do three things:—

I. I shall show, that the resurrection of the self same body that died and was buried, contains nothing in it incredible, or impossible.

II. I shall describe the difference which our Saviour makes between the qualities of a glorified, and a mortal body.

III. I shall draw some inferences from the whole.

1. I shall show, that the resurrection of the selfsame body that died, contains nothing in it incredible, or impossible.

But before I do this, it may be proper to mention some of the reasons upon which this article of our faith is built.

And 1. The plain notion of a resurrection requires, that the selfsame body that died should rise again. Nothing can be said to be raised again, but that very body that died. If God give to our souls at the last day a new body, this cannot be called the resurrection of our body; because that word plainly implies the fresh production of what was before.

2. There are many places of Scripture that plainly declare it. St. Paul, in the 53d verse of this chapter, tells us, that" This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Now by this mortal, and this corruptible, can only be meant, that body which we now carry about with us, and shall one day lay down in the dust.

The mention which the Scripture makes of the places where the dead shall rise, farther shows, that the same body which died shall rise. Thus we read in Daniel:" Those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." And, we may likewise observe, that the very phrase, of sleep and awake, implies, that when we rise again from the dead, our bodies will be as much the same as they are when we awake from sleep. Thus again our Lord affirms; John v, 28, 29," The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." Now if the same body do not rise again, what need is there of opening the graves at the end of the world? The graves can give up no bodies but those which were laid in them. If we were not to rise with the very same bodies that died, then they might rest for ever. To this we need only add that of St. Paul:" The Lord shall change this vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Now this vile body, can be no other than that with which we are now clothed, which must be restored to life again.

That in all this, there is nothing incredible or impossible, I shall show, by proving these three things. 1. That it is possible for God to keep and preserve unmixed, from all other bodies, the particular dust into which our several bodies are dissolved, and can gather and join it again, how far soever dispersed asunder. 2. That God



can form that dust, so gathered together, into the same body it was before. 3. That when he hath formed this body, he can enliven it with the same soul that before inhabited it.

1. God can distinguish and keep unmixed, from all other bodies, the particular dust into which our several bodies are dissolved, and can gather it together and join it again, how far soever dispersed asunder. God is infinite both in knowledge and power. He knoweth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names: he can tell the number of the sands on the sea shore: and is it at all incredible, that he should distinctly know the several particles of dust into which the bodies of men are mouldered, and plainly discern to whom they belong, and the various changes they have undergone? Why should it be thought strange, that he, who at the first formed us, whose eyes saw our substance yet being imperfect, from whom we were not hid when we were made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth, should know every part of our bodies, and every particle of dust whereof we were composed? The artist knows every part of the watch which he frames, and if it should fall in pieces, and the various parts of it lie in the greatest disorder and confusion, yet he can soon gather them together, and as easily distinguish one from another, as if every one had its particular mark. He knows the use of each, and can readily give it its proper place, and put them all exactly in the same figure and order they were before. And can we think that the Almighty Builder of the world, whose workmanship we are, does not know whereof we are made, or is not acquainted with the several parts of which this earthly tabernacle is composed? All these lay in one vast heap at the creation, till he separated them one from another, and framed them into those distinct bodies, whereof this beautiful world consists. ArH -i'v may not the same power collect the ruins of our corrupted bodies, v.uJ restore them to their former condition 1 All the parts into which men's bodies are dissolved, however they seem to us carelessly scattered over the face of the earth, are yet carefully laid up by God's wise disposal till the day of the restoration of all things. They are preserved in the waters and fires, in the birds and beasts, till the last trumpet shall summon them to their former habitation.

But, say they, "It may sometimes happen that several men's bodies may consist of the self same matter. For the bodies of men are often devoured by other animals, which are eaten by other men. Nay. there are nations which feed upon human flesh, consequently they borrow a great part of their bodies from other men. And if that which was part of one man's body, becomes afterwards part of another man's, how can both rise at the last day with the same bodies they had before?" To this it may easily be replied, that a very small part of what is eaten turns to nourishment, the far greater part goes away according to the order of nature. So that it is not at all impossible for God, who watches' over and governs all this, so to order things, that what is part of one man's body, though eaten by another, shall never turn to his nourishment, or if it does, that it shall wear off again, and some time before his death be separated from him', so that it may remain in a capacity of being restored at the last day to its former owner.

2. God can form this dust, so gathered together, into the same body it was before. And that it is possible all must own, who believe that God made Adam out of the dust of the earth. Therefore the bodies of men being dust after death, it is no other than it was before; and the same power that at the first made it of dust, may as easily remake it, when it is turned into dust again. Nay, it is no more wonderful, than the forming a human body in the womb, which is a thing we have daily experience of, and is doubtless as strange an instance of divine power as the resurrection of it can possibly be. And were it not so common a thing, we should be as hardly brought to think it possible, that such a beautiful fabric as the body of man is, with nerves and bones, flesh and veins, blood, and the several other parts whereof it consists, should be formed, as we know it is, as now we are, that hereafter it should be rebuilt when it has been crumbled into dust. Had we only heard of the wonderful production of the bodies of men, we should have been as ready to ask, How are men made, and with what bodies are they born >. as now, when we hear of the resurrection, How are the dead raised up, and with what bodies do they come?

3. When God hath raised this body, he can enliven it with the same soul that inhabited it before. And this we cannot pretend to say is impossible to be done, for it has been done already. Our Saviour himself was dead, rose again, and appeared alive to his disciples and others, who had lived with him many years, and were then fully convinced, that he was the same person they had seen die upon the cross.

Thus have I shown, that the resurrection of the same body is by no means impossible to God. That what he hath promised he is able also to perform, by that "mighty power by which he is able to subdue all things to himself." Though, therefore, we cannot exactly tell the manner how it shall be done, yet this ought not in the least to weaken our belief of this important article of our faith. It is enough, that he, to whom all things are possible, hath passed his word, that he will raise us again. Let those who presume to mock at the glorious hope of all good men, and are constantly raising objections against it, first try their skill upon the various appearances of nature. Let them explain every thing which they see happen in this world, before they talk of the difficulties of explaining the resurrection. Can they tell me how their own bodies were fashioned, and curiously wrought? Can they give me a plain account, by what orderly steps this glorious stately structure, which discovers so much workmanship and rare contrivance, was at first created? How was the first drop of blood made, and how came the heart and veins, and arteries to receive it? Of what, and by what means, were the nerves and fibres made? What fixed the little springs in their due places, and fitted them for the several uses for which they now serve? How was the brain distinguished from the other parts of the body, and filled with spirits to move and animate the whole? How came the body to be fenced with bones and sinews, to be clothed with skin and flesh, distinguished into various muscles? Let them but answer these few questions about the mechanism of our bodies, and I will answer all the difficulties concerning the resurrection of them. But if they cannot do this without having recourse to the infinite power and wisdom of the First Cause, let them know, that the same power and wisdom can reanimate it, after it is turned into dust. And that there is no reason for our doubting concerning the thing, because there are some circumstances belonging to it which we cannot perfectly comprehend, or give a distinct account of.

II. I now proceed to the second thing I proposed, which was, to describe the difference the Scripture makes between the qualities of a mortal, and of a glorified body.

The change which shall be made in our bodies at the resurrection, according to the Scripture account, will consist chiefly in these four things: 1. That our bodies shall be raised immortal and incorruptible. 2. That they shall be raised in glory. 3. That they shall be raised in power. 4. That they shall be raised spiritual bodies.

1. The body that we shall have at the resurrection, shall be immortal and incorruptible: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Now these words immortal and incorruptible, not only signify, that we shall die no more; for in that sense the damned are immortal and incorruptible; but that we shall be perfectly free from all the bodily evils which sin brought into the world. That our bodies shall not be subject to sickness, or pain, or any other inconveniences we are daily exposed to. This the Scripture calls "the redemption of our bodies;" the freeing them from all their maladies. Were we to receive them again, subject to all the frailties and miseries which we are forced to wrestle with, I much doubt whether a wise man, were he left to his choice, would willingly take his again;—whether he would not choose to let his still lie rotting in the grave, rather than to be again chained to such a cumbersome clod of earth. Such a resurrection would be, as a wise heathen calls it, "A resurrection to another sleep." It would look more like a redemption to death again, than a resurrection to life.

The best thing we can say of this house of earth, is, That it is ruinous building, and will not be long before it tumbles into dust; that it is not our home: we look for another house, eternal in the heavens. That we shall not always be confined here, but that in a little time we shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, from this burden of flesh, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. What frail things these bodies of ours are! How soon are they disordered! To what a troop of diseases, pains and other infirmities are they constantly subject! And how does the least distemper disturb our minds, and make life itself a burthen! Of how many

parts do our bodies consist! And if one of these be disordered, the whole man suffers. If but one of these slender threads, whereof our flesh is made up, be stretched beyond its due proportion, or fretted by any sharp humour, or broken, what torment does it create! Nay, when our bodies are at the best, what pains do we take to answer their necessities, to provide for their sustenance, to preserve them in health, and to keep them tenantable, in some tolerable fitness for our souls' use! And what time we can spare from our labour is taken up in rest, and refreshing our jaded bodies, and fitting them for work again. How are we forced, even naturally, into the confines of death; even to cease to be;—at least to pass so many hours without any useful or reasonable thoughts, merely to keep them in repair! But our hope and comfort are, that we shall shortly be delivered from this burthen of flesh. When “God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.” Oh when shall we arrive at that happy land where no complaints were ever heard, where we shall all enjoy unin interrupted health both of body and mind, and never more be exposed to any of those inconveniences that disturb our present pilgrimage! When we shall have once passed from death unto life, we shall be eased of all the troublesome care of our bodies, which now takes up so much of our time and thoughts. We shall be set free from all those mean and tiresome labours which we must now undergo to support our lives. Yon robes of light, with which we shall be clothed at the resurrection of the just, will not stand in need of those careful provisions which it is so troublesome to us here either to procure, or to be without. But then, as our Lord tells us, “Those who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more, but they are equal to the angels.” Their bodies are neither subject to disease, nor want that daily sustenance, which these mortal bodies cannot be without. “Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God will destroy both it and them.” This is that perfect happiness which all good men shall enjoy in the other world. A mind free from all trouble and guilt, in a body free from all pains: i. e. diseases. Thus our mortal bodies shall be raised immortal. They shall not only be always preserved from death, (for so these might be, if God pleased,) but the nature of them shall be wholly changed, so that they shall not retain the same seeds of mortality: they cannot die any more.

2. Our bodies shall be raised in glory. “Then shall the righteous shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” A resemblance of this we have in the lustre of Moses's face, when he had conversed with God on the mount. His face shone so bright, that the children of Israel were afraid to come near him, till he threw a veil over it. And that extraordinary majesty of Stephen's face, seemed to be an earnest of his glory.” All that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.” How then, if it shone so gloriously even on earth, will it shine in the other world, when his, and the bodies of all the saints, are made like unto Christ's glorious body! How glorious the body of Christ is, we may guess from his transfiguration. St. Peter, when he saw this, when our Lord's face shone as the sun, and his raiment became shining and white as snow, was so transported with joy and admiration, that he knew not what he said. When our Saviour discovered but a little of that glory which he now possesses, and which in due time he will impart in his followers, yet that little of it made the place seem a paradise; and the disciples thought, that they could wish for nothing better than always to live in such pure light, and enjoy so beautiful a sight. “It is good for us to be here: let us make three tabernacles.” Here let us fix our abode for ever. And if they thought it so happy only to be present with such heavenly bodies, and to behold them with their eyes, how much happier must it be to dwell in such glorious mansions, and to be themselves clothed with so much brightness!

This excellency of our heavenly bodies, will probably arise in a great measure from the happiness of our souls. The unspeakable joy that we then shall feel, will break through our bodies, and shine forth in our countenances. As the joy of the soul, even in this life, has some influence upon the countenance, by rendering it more open and cheerful: so Solomon tells us, “A man's wisdom makes his face to shine.” Virtue, as it refines a man's heart, so it makes his very looks more cheerful and lively.

3. Our bodies shall be raised in power. This expresses the sprightliness of our heavenly bodies, the nimbleness of their motion, by which they shall be obedient and able instruments of the soul. In this state our

bodies are no better than clogs and fetters, which confine and restrain the freedom of the soul. The corruptible body presses down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weighs down the mind. Our dull, sluggish, inactive bodies, are often unable, or backward, to obey the commands of the soul. But in the other life, "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Or, as another expresses it, "they shall run to and fro like sparks among the stubble." The speed of their motion, shall be like that of devouring fire in stubble, and the height of it above the towering of an eagle; for they shall meet the Lord in the air, when he comes to judgment, and mount up with him into the highest heaven. This earthly body is slow and heavy in all its motions, listless and soon tired with action. But our heavenly bodies shall be as fire; as active and as nimble as our thoughts are.

4. Our bodies shall be raised spiritual bodies. Our spirits are now forced to serve our bodies, and to attend their leisure, and do greatly depend upon them for most of their actions. But our bodies shall then wholly serve our spirits, and minister to them, and depend upon them. So that, as by a natural body, we understand one fitted for this lower, sensible world, for this earthly state; so a spiritual body is one that is suited to a spiritual state, to an invisible world, to the life of angels. And, indeed, this is the principal difference between a mortal and a glorified body. This flesh is the most dangerous enemy we have: we therefore deny and renounce it in our baptism. It constantly tempts us to evil. Every sense is a snare to us. All its lusts and appetites are inordinate. It is ungovernable, and often rebels against reason. The law in our members wars against the law of our mind. When the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak; so that the best of men are forced to keep it under, and use it hardly, lest it should betray them into folly and misery. And how does it hinder us in all our devotions! How soon does it jade our minds when employed on holy things! How easily by its enchanting pleasures, does it divert them from those noble exercises! But when we have obtained the resurrection unto life, our bodies will be spiritualized, purified, and refined from their earthly grossness; then they will be fit instruments for the soul in all its divine and heavenly employment; we shall not be weary of singing praises to God through infinite ages.

Thus after what little we have been able to conceive of it, it sufficiently appears that a glorified body is infinitely more excellent and desirable than this vile body. The only thing that remains is,

III. To draw some inferences from the whole. And first, From what has been said, we may learn the best way of preparing ourselves to live in those heavenly bodies, which is by cleansing ourselves more and more from all earthly affections, and weaning ourselves from this body and all the pleasures that are peculiar to it. We should begin in this life, to loosen the knot between our souls and this mortal flesh: to refine our affections, and raise them from things below to things above: to take off<sup>1</sup> our thoughts and disengage them from present and sensible things, and accustom ourselves to think of, and converse with, things future and invisible; that so our souls, when they leave this earthly body, may be prepared for a spiritual one, as having beforehand tasted spiritual delights, and being in some degree acquainted with the things which we then shall meet with. A soul wholly taken up with this earthly body is not fit for the glorious mansions above. A sensual mind is so wedded to bodily pleasures, that it cannot enjoy itself without them, and it is not able to relish any other, though infinitely to be preferred before them. Nay, such as follow the inclinations of their fleshly appetites, are so far unfit for heavenly joys, that they would esteem it the greatest unhappiness to be clothed with a spiritual body. It would be like clothing a beggar in the robes of a king. Such glorious bodies would be uneasy to them, they would not know what to do in them, they would be glad to retire and put on their rags again. But when we are washed from the guilt of our sins, and cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, then we shall long to be dissolved, and to be with our exalted Saviour: we shall be always ready to take wing for the other world, where we shall at last have a body suited to our spiritual appetites.

2. From hence we may see how to account for the different degrees of glory in the heavenly world. For although all the children of God shall have glorious bodies, yet the glory of them all shall not be equal. "As one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." They shall all shine as stars, but those who, by a constant diligence in well doing, have attained to a higher measure of purity than others, shall shine more bright than others. They shall appear as more glorious stars. It is certain that the most heavenly bodies will be given to the most heavenly souls; so that this is no little encouragement to us to make the greatest progress we possibly can in the knowledge and love of God, since the more we are weaned from the things of the earth now, the more glorious will our bodies be at the resurrection.

3. Let this consideration engage us patiently to bear whatever troubles we may be exercised with in the present life. The time of our eternal redemption draweth nigh. Let us hold out a little longer, (3d all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and we shall never sigh nor sorrow any more. And how soon shall we forget all we endured in this earthly tabernacle, when once we are clothed with that house which is from above? We are now but on our journey towards home, and so must expect to struggle with many difficulties; but it will not be long ere we come to our journey's end, and that will make amends for all. We shall then be in a quiet and safe harbour, out of the reach of all storms and dangers. We shall then be at home in our Father's house, no longer exposed to the inconveniences, which, so long as we abide abroad in these tents, we are subject to. And let us not forfeit all this happiness, for want of a little more patience. Only let us hold out to the end, and we shall receive an abundant recompense for all the trouble and uneasiness of our passage, which shall be endless rest and peace.

'Let this especially fortify us against the fear of death: it is now disarmed, and can do us no hurt. It divides us indeed from this body awhile, but it is only that we may receive it again more glorious. As God therefore said once to Jacob, "Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will go down with thee, and will surely bring thee up again;" so I may say to all who are born of God, Fear not to go down into the grave: lay down your heads in the dust; for God will certainly bring you up again, and that in a much more glorious manner. Only "be ye steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," and then let death prevail over, and pull down, this house of clay; since God hath undertaken to rear it up again, infinitely more beautiful strong and useful.

**1733**

**Adam Lebrecht Müller, Christian Scholar**

**Significant investigation of Matters of Eternal Life (Gradus Vitae: Oder Deutliche Untersuchung derer Stufen des Ewigen Lebens)**

**No Text Available**

**1737**

**Jonathan Edwards (1703 – 1758), Arminian Reformer**

**Many Mansions**

**Online Text**

(published 1737)

In these words may be observed two things,

1. The thing described, viz., Christ's Father's house. Christ spoke to his disciples in the foregoing chapter as one that was about to leave them. He told 'em, verse 31, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is

glorified in him," and then goes to giving of them counsel to live in unity and love one another, as one that was going from them. By which they seemed somewhat surprised and hardly knew what to make of it. And one of them, viz., Peter, asked him where he was going; verse 36, "Simon Peter said unto him, Lord whither goest thou?" Christ did not directly answer and tell him where he was going, but he signifies where in these words afterwards, in the verse 12, he tells 'em plainly that he was going to his Father.

2. We may observe the description given of it, viz., that in it there are many mansions. The disciples seemed very sorrowful at the news of Christ's going away, but Christ comforts 'em with that, that in his Father's house where he was going there was not only room for him, but room for them too. There were many mansions. There was not only a mansion there for him, but there were mansions enough for them all; there was room enough in heaven for them. When the disciples perceived that Christ was going away, they manifested a great desire to go with him, and particularly Peter. Peter in the latter part of the foregoing chapter asked him whither he went to that end that he might follow him. Christ told him that whither he went he could not follow him now, but that he should follow him afterwards. But Peter, not content with Christ, seemed to have a great mind to follow him now. "Lord," says he, "why cannot I follow thee now?" So that the disciples had a great mind still to be with Christ, and Christ in the words of the text intimates that they shall be with him. Christ signifies to 'em that he was going home to his Father's house, and he encourages 'em that they shall be with him there in due time, in that there were many mansions there. There was a mansion provided not only for him, but for them all (for Judas was not then present), and not only for them, but for all that should ever believe in him to the end of the world; and though he went before, he only went to prepare a place for them that should follow.

The text is a plain sentence; 'tis therefore needless to press any doctrine in other words from it: so that I shall build my discourse on the words of the text. There are two propositions contained in the words, viz.,

I. that heaven is God's house, and

II. that in this house of God there are many mansions.

Prop. I. Heaven is God's house. An house of public worship is an house where God's people meet from time to time to attend on God's ordinances, and that is set apart for that and is called God's house. The temple of Solomon was called God's house. God was represented as dwelling there. There he has his throne in the holy of holies, even the mercy seat over the ark and between the cherubims.

Sometimes the whole universe is represented in Scripture as God's house, built with various stories one above another: Amos 9:6, "It is he that buildeth his stories in the heaven;" and Psalm 104:3, "Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters." But the highest heaven is especially represented in Scripture as the house of God. As to other parts of the creation, God hath appointed them to inferior uses; but this part he has reserved for himself for his own abode. We are told that the heavens are the Lord's, but the earth he hath given to the sons of men. God, though he is everywhere present, is represented both in Old Testament and New as being in heaven in a special and peculiar manner. Heaven is the temple of God. Thus we read of God's temple in heaven, Revelation 15:5. Solomon's temple was a type of heaven. The apostle Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews does from time to time call heaven the holy of holies, as being the antitype not only of the temple of Solomon, but of the most holy place in that temple, which was the place of God's most immediate residence: Hebrews 9:12, "He entered in once into the holy place;" verse 24, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself." Houses where assemblies of Christians worship God are in some respects figures of this house of God above. When God is worshipped in them in spirit and truth, they become the outworks of heaven and as it were its gates. As in houses of public worship here there are assemblies of Christians meeting to worship God, so in heaven there is a glorious assembly, or Church, continually worshipping God: Hebrews 12:22,23, "But ye are come unto mount Sion, [and unto] the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, that are written in heaven."

Heaven is represented in Scripture as God's dwelling-house; Psalm 113:5, "Who is like [unto] the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high," and Psalm 123:1, "Unto thee I lift up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens." Heaven is God's palace. 'Tis the house of the great King of the universe; there he has his throne, which is therefore represented as his house or temple; Psalm 11:4, "The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven."

Heaven is the house where God dwells with his family. God is represented in Scripture as having a family; and though some of this family are now on earth, yet in so being they are abroad and not at home, but all going home: Ephesians 3:15, "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Heaven is the place that God has built for himself and his children. God has many children, and the place designed for them is heaven; therefore the saints, being the children of God, are said to be of the household of God, Ephesians 2:19: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." God is represented as a householder or head of a family, and heaven is his house.

Heaven is the house not only where God hath his throne, but also where he doth as it were keep his table, where his children sit down with him at his table and where they are feasted in a royal manner becoming the children of so great a King: Luke 22:30, "That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom;" Matthew 26:29, "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

God is the King of kings, and heaven is the place where he keeps his court. There are his angels and archangels that as the nobles of his court do attend upon him.

Prop. II. There are many mansions in the house of God. By many mansions is meant many seats or places of abode. As it is a king's palace, there are many mansions. Kings' houses are wont to be built very large, with many stately rooms and apartments. So there are many mansions in God's house.

When this is spoken of heaven, it is chiefly to be understood in a figurative sense, and the following things seem to be taught us in it.

1. There is room in this house of God for great numbers. There is room in heaven for a vast multitude, yea, room enough for all mankind that are or ever shall be; Luke 14:22, "Lord it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room."

It is not with the heavenly temple as it often is with houses of public worship in this world, that they fill up and become too small and scanty for those that would meet in them, so that there is not convenient room for all. There is room enough in our heavenly Father's house. This is partly what Christ intended in the words of the text, as is evident from the occasion of his speaking them. The disciples manifested a great desire to be where Christ was, and Christ therefore, to encourage them that it should be as they desired, tells them that in his Father's house where he was going were many mansions, i.e., room enough for them.

There is mercy enough in God to admit an innumerable multitude into heaven. There is mercy enough for all, and there is merit enough in Christ to purchase heavenly happiness for millions of millions, for all men that ever were, are or shall be. And there is a sufficiency in the fountain of heaven's happiness to supply and fill and satisfy all: and there is in all respects enough for the happiness of all.

2. There are sufficient and suitable accommodations for all the different sorts of persons that are in the world: for great and small, for high and low, rich and poor, wise and unwise, bond and free, persons of all nations and all conditions and circumstances, for those that have been great sinners as well as for moral livers; for weak saints and those that are babes in Christ as well as for those that are stronger and more grown in grace. There is in heaven a sufficiency for the happiness of every sort; there is a convenient accommodation for

every creature that will hearken to the calls of the Gospel. None that will come to Christ, let his condition be what it will, need to fear but that Christ will provide a place suitable for him in heaven.

This seems to be another thing implied in Christ's words. The disciples were persons of very different condition from Christ: he was their Master, and there were his disciples; he was their Lord, and there were the servants; he was their Guide, and they were the followers; he was their Captain, and they the soldiers; he was the Shepherd, and they the sheep; [he was, as it were, the] Father, [and they the] children; he was the glorious, holy Son of God, they were the poor, sinful, corrupt men. But yet, though they were in such different circumstances from him, yet Christ encourages them that there shall not only be room in heaven for him, but for them too; for there were many mansions there. There was not only a mansion to accommodate the Lord, but the disciples also; not only the head, but the members; not only the Son of God, but those that are naturally poor, sinful, corrupt men: as in a king's palace there is not only a mansion or room of state built for the king himself and for his eldest son and heir, but there are many rooms, mansions for all his numerous household, children, attendants and servants.

3. It is further implied that heaven is a house that was actually built and prepared for a great multitude. When God made heaven in the beginning of the world, he intended it for an everlasting dwelling-place for a vast and innumerable multitude. When heaven was made, it was intended and prepared for all those particular persons that God had from eternity designed to save: Matthew 25:34, "Come, ye blessed [of my Father, inherit the Kingdom] prepared for you [from the foundation of the world]." And that is a very great and innumerable multitude: Revelation 7:9, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes." Heaven being built designedly for these was built accordingly; it was built so as most conveniently to accommodate all this multitude: as a house that is built for a great family is built large and with many rooms in it; as a palace that is built for a great king that keeps a great court with many attendants is built exceeding great with a great many apartments; and as an house of public worship that is built for a great congregation is built very large with many seats in it.

4. When it is said, ["In my father's house are many mansions"], it is meant that there are seats of various dignity and different degrees and circumstances of honor and happiness. There are many mansions in God's house because heaven is intended for various degrees of honor and blessedness. Some are designed to sit in higher places there than others; some are designed to be advanced to higher degrees of honor and glory than others are; and, therefore, there are various mansions, and some more honorable mansions and seats, in heaven than others. Though they are all seats of exceeding honor and blessedness yet some are more so than others.

Thus a palace is built. Though every part of the palace is magnificent as becomes the palace of a king, yet there are many apartments of various honor, and some are more stately and costly than others, according to the degree of dignity. There is one apartment that is the king's presence-chamber; there are other apartments for the next heir to the crown; there are others for other children; and others for their attendants and the great officers of the household: one for the high steward, and another for the chamberlain, and others for meaner officers and servants.

Another image of this was in Solomon's temple. There were many mansions of different degrees of honor and dignity. There was the holy of holies, where the ark was that was the place of God's immediate residence, where the high priest alone might come; and there was another apartment called the holy place, where the other priests might come; and next to that was the inner court of the temple, where the Levites were admitted: and there they had many chambers or mansions built for lodging-rooms for the priests; and next to that was the court of Israel where the people of Israel might come; and next to that was the court of the Gentiles where the Gentiles, those that were called the "Proselytes of the Gate," might come.



And we have an image of this in houses built for the worship of Christian assemblies. In such houses of God there are many seats of different honor and dignity, from the most honorable to the most inferior of the congregation.

Not that we are to understand the words of Christ so much in a literal sense, as that every saint in heaven was to have a certain seat or room or place of abode where he was to be locally fixed. 'Tis not the design of the Scriptures to inform us much about the external circumstances of heaven or the state of heaven locally considered; but we are to understand what Christ says chiefly in a spiritual sense. Persons shall be set in different degrees of honor and glory in heaven, as is abundantly manifested in Scripture: which may fitly be represented to our imaginations by there being different seats of honor, as it was in the temple, as it is in kings' courts. Some seats shall be nearer the throne than others. Some shall sit next to Christ in glory: Matthew 20:23, "To sit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father."

Christ has doubtless respect to these different degrees of glory in the text. When he was going to heaven and the disciples were sorrowful at the thoughts of parting with their Lord, he lets them know that there are seats or mansions of various degrees of honor in his Father's house, that there was not only one for him, who was the Head of the Church and the elder brother, but also for them that were his disciples and younger brethren.

Christ also may probably have respect not only to different degrees of glory in heaven, but different circumstances. Though the employment and happiness of all the heavenly assembly shall in the general be the same, yet 'tis not improbable that there may be circumstantial difference. We know what their employment [is] in general, but not in particular. We know not how one may be employed to subserve and promote the happiness of another, and all to help one another. Some may there be set in one place for one office or employment, and others [in] another, as 'tis in the Church on earth. God hath set every one in the body as it hath pleased him; one is the eye, another the ear, another the head, etc. But because God has not been pleased expressly to reveal how it shall be in this respect, therefore I shall not insist upon it, but pass to make some improvement of what has been offered.

I. Here is encouragement for sinners that are concerned and exercised for the salvation of their souls, such as are afraid that they shall never go to heaven or be admitted to any place of abode there, and are sensible that they are hitherto in a doleful state and condition in that they are out of Christ, and so have no right to any inheritance in heaven, but are in danger of going to hell and having their place of eternal abode fixed there. You may be encouraged by what has been said, earnestly to seek heaven; for there are many mansions there. There is room enough there. Let your case be what it will, there is suitable provision there for you; and if you come to Christ, you need not fear that he will prepare a place for you; he'll see to it that you shall be well accommodated in heaven.

But II. I would improve this doctrine in a twofold exhortation.

1. Let all be hence exhorted earnestly to seek that they may be admitted to a mansion in heaven. You have heard that this is God's house; it is his temple. If David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah and in the land of Geshur and of the Philistines, so longed that he might again return into the land of Israel that he might have a place in the house of God here on earth, and prized a place there so much, though it was but that of a door-keeper, how great a happiness will it be to have a place in this heavenly temple of God! If they are looked upon as enjoying a high privilege that have a seat appointed them in kings' courts or in apartments in kings' palaces, especially those that have an abode there in the quality of the king's children, then how great a privilege will it be to have an apartment or mansion assigned to us in God's heavenly palace, and to have a place there as his children! How great is their glory and honor that are admitted to be of the household of God!

And seeing there are many mansions there, mansions enough for us all, our folly will be the greater if we neglect to seek a place in heaven, having our minds foolishly taken up about the worthless, fading things of this world. Here consider three things:

(1) How little a while you can have any mansion or place of abode in this world. Now you have a dwelling amongst the living. You have a house or mansion of your own, or at least one that is at present for your use, and now you have a seat in the house of God; but how little a while will this continue! In a very little while, and the place that now knows you in this world will know you no more. The habitation you have here will be empty of you; you will be carried dead out of it, or shall die at a distance from it, and never enter into it any more, or into any other abode in this world. Your mansion or place of abode in this world, however convenient or commodious it may be, is but as a tent that shall soon be taken down, but a lodge in a garden of cucumbers. Your stay is as it were but for a night. Your body itself is but a house of clay which will quickly moulder and tumble down, and you shall have no other habitation here in this world but the grave.

Thus God in his providence is putting you in mind by the repeated instances of death that have been in the town within the two weeks past, both in one house: in which death he has shown his dominion over old and young. The son was taken away first before the father, being in his full strength and flower of his days; and the father, who was then well and having no appearance of approaching death, followed in a few days: and their habitation and their seat in the house of God in this world will know them no more.

Take warning by these warnings of Providence to improve your time that you may have a mansion in heaven. We have a house of worship newly created amongst us which now you have a seat in, and probably are pleased with the ornaments of it; and though you have a place in so comely a house, yet you know not how little a while you shall have a place in this house of God. Here are a couple snatched away by death that had met in it but a few times, that have been snatched out of it before it was fully finished and never will have any more a seat in it. You know not how soon you may follow, and then of great importance will it be to you to have a seat in God's house above. Both of the persons lately deceased were much on their death-beds warning others to improve their precious time. The first of them was much in expressing his sense of the vast importance of an interest in Christ, as I was a witness, and was earnest in calling on others to improve their time, to be thorough, to get an interest in Christ, and seemed very desirous that young people might receive council and warning from him, as the words of a dying man, to do their utmost to make sure of conversion; and a little before he died left a request to me that I would warn the young people in his room. God had been warning of you in his death and the death of his father that so soon followed. The words of dying persons should be of special weight with us, for then they are in circumstances wherein they are most capable to look on things as they are and judge aright of 'em,--between both worlds as it were. Still that we must all be in.

Let our young people, therefore, take warning from hence, and don't be such fools as to neglect seeking a place and mansion in heaven. Young persons are especially apt to be taken with the pleasing things of this world. You are now, it may be, much pleased with hopes of your future circumstances in this world; [and you are now, it may be, much] pleased with the ornaments of that house of worship that you with others have a place in. But, alas, do you not too little consider how soon you may be taken away from all these things, and no more forever have any part in any mansion or house or enjoyment or happiness under the sun? Therefore let it be your main care to secure an everlasting habitation for hereafter.

(2) Consider when you die, if you have no mansion in the house of God in heaven, you must have your place of abode in the habitation of devils. There is no middle place between them, and when you go hence, you must go to one or the other of these. Some have a mansion prepared for them in heaven from the foundation [of the world]; others are sent away as cursed into everlasting burnings prepared for the [devil and his angels]. Consider how miserable those must be that shall have their habitation with devils to all eternity. Devils are foul spirits; God's great enemies. Their habitation is the blackness of darkness; a place of the utmost filthiness, abomination, darkness, disgrace and torment, O, how would you rather ten thousand times have no place of abode at all, have no being, than to have a place [with devils]!

(3) If you die unconverted, you will have the worse place in hell for having had a seat or place in God's house in this world. As there are many mansions, places of different degrees of honor in heaven, so there are various abodes and places or degrees of torment and misery in hell; and those will have the worst place there that [dying unconverted, have had the best place in God's house here]. Solomon speaks of a peculiarly awful sight that he had seen, that of a wicked man buried that had gone [from the place of the holy], Ecclesiastes 8:10. Such as have had a seat in God's house, have been in a sense exalted up to heaven, set on the gate of heaven, [if they die unconverted, shall be] cast down to hell.

2. The second exhortation that I would offer from what has been said is to seek a high place in heaven. Seeing there are many mansions of different degrees of honor and dignity in heaven, let us seek to obtain a mansion of distinguished glory. 'Tis revealed to us that there are different degrees of glory to that end that we might seek after the higher degrees. God offered high degrees of glory to that end, that we might seek them by eminent holiness and good works: 2 Corinthians 9:6, "He that sows sparingly [shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully]." It is not becoming persons to be over anxious about an high seat in God's house in this world, for that is the honor that is of men; but we can't too earnestly seek after an high seat in God's house above, by seeking eminent holiness, for that is the honor that is of God.

'Tis very little worth the while for us to pursue after honor in this world, where the greatest honor is but a bubble and will soon vanish away, and death will level all. Some have more stately houses than others, and some are in higher office than others, and some are richer than others and have higher seats in the meeting-house than others; but all graves are upon a level. One rotting, putrefying corpse is as ignoble as another; the worms are as bold with one carcass as another.

But the mansions in God's house above are everlasting mansions. Those that have seats allotted 'em there, whether of greater or lesser dignity, whether nearer or further from the throne, will hold 'em to all eternity. This is promised, Revelation 3:12: "Him that overcometh I will make him a pillar in the temple [of my God, and he shall go no more out]." If it be worth the while to desire and seek high seats in the meeting-house, where you are one day in a week, and where you shall never come but few days in all; if it be worth the while much to prize one seat above another in the house of worship only because it is the pew or seat that is ranked first in number, and to be seen here for a few days, how will it be worth the while to seek an high mansion in God's temple and in that glorious place that is the everlasting habitation of God and all his children! You that are pleased with your seats in this house because you are seated high or in a place that is looked upon honorable by those that sit round about, and because many can behold you, consider how short a time you will enjoy this pleasure. And if there be any that are not suited in their seats because they are too low for them, let them consider that it is but a very little while before it will [be] all one to you whether you have sat high or low here. But it will be of infinite and everlasting concern to you where your seat is in another world. Let your great concern be while in this world so to improve your opportunities in God's house in this world, whether you sit high or low, as that you may have a distinguished and glorious mansion in God's house in heaven, where you may be fixed in your place in that glorious assembly in an everlasting rest.

Let the main thing that we prize in God's house be, not the outward ornaments of it, or a high seat in it, but the word of God and his ordinances in it. And spend your time here in seeking Christ, that he may prepare a place for you in his Father's house, that when he comes again to this world, he may take you to himself, that where he is, there you may be also.

**1738; republished in 1820**  
**Jonathan Edwards (1703 – 1758), Calvinist Reformer**

**Not Only Higher Degrees Of Glory In Heaven, But Heaven Itself, Is Given In Reward For Holiness & Good Works Of Saints; God May Bestow Heaven's Glory Wholly Out Of Respect To Christ's Righteousness, & Yet Reward Man's Inherent Holiness In Different Ways  
Justification by Faith Alone**

**All of works in 10 Volumes (republished in 1819 or 1820)**

Volume 5:

(Excepts which discuss the likelihood that there are different degrees of glory in heaven)

I now proceed to the thing proposed, viz. To answer objections.

**Objection 1**

We frequently find promises of eternal life and salvation, and sometimes of justification itself, made to our own virtue and obedience. Eternal life is promised to obedience, in Rom. ii. 7. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life:" And the like in innumerable other places. And justification itself is promised to that virtue of a forgiving spirit or temper in us, Matt. vi. 14. "For, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." All allow that justification in great part consists in the forgiveness of sins.

**To this I answer**

1. These things being promised to our virtue and obedience, argues no more, than that there is a connection between them and evangelical obedience; which, I have already observed, is not the thing in dispute. All that can be proved by obedience and salvation being connected in the promise, is, that obedience and salvation are connected in fact; which nobody denies; and whether it be owned or denied, is, as has been shewn, nothing to the purpose. There is no need that an admission to a title to salvation, should be given on the account of our obedience, in order to the promises being true. If we find such a promise, that he that obeys shall be saved, or he that is holy shall be justified, all thru is needful, in order to such promises being true, is, that it be really so, that he that obeys shall be saved, and that holiness and justification shall indeed go together. That proposition may be a truth, that he that obeys shall be saved; because obedience and salvation are connected together in fact; and yet an acceptance to a title to salvation not be granted upon the account of any of our own virtue or obedience. What is a promise, but only a declaration of future truth, for the comfort and encouragement of the person to whom it is declared? Promises are conditional propositions; and, as has been already observed, it is not ibc thing in dispute, whether other things besides faith may not have the place of the condition in such propositions wherein pardon and salvation are the consequent.
2. Promises may rationally be made to signs and evidences of faith, and yet the thing promised not be upon the account of the sign, but the thing signified. Thus, for instance, human government may rationally make promises of such and such privileges to those that can shew such evidences of their being free of such a civty, or members of such a corporation, or descended of such a family; when it is not at all for the sake of that which is the evidence or sign, in itself considered, that they are admitted to such a privilege, but only and purely for the sake of that which it is an evidence of. And though God docs not stand, in need of signs to know whether we have true faith or not, yet our own consciences do; so that it is much for our comfort that promises are made to signs of faith. Finding in ourselves a forgiving temper and disposition, may be a most proper and natural evidence to our consciences, that our hearts have, in a sense of our own utter unworthiness, truly closed and fallen in with the way of free and infinitely gracious forgiveness of our sins by Jesus Christ; whence we may be enabled, with the greater comfort, to apply to ourselves the promises of forgiveness by Christ.
3. It has been just now shewn, how that acts of evangelical obedience are indeed concerned in our justification itself, and are not excluded from that condition that justification depends upon, without the

least prejudice to that doctrine of justification by faith, without any goodness of our own, that has been maintained; and therefore it can be no objection against this doctrine, that we have sometimes in scripture promises of pardon and acceptance made to such acts of obedience.

4. Promises of particular benefits implied in justification and salvation, may especially be fitly made to such expressions and evidences of faith as they have a peculiar natural likeness and suitableness to. As forgiveness is promised to a forgiving spirit in us; obtaining mercy is fitly promised to mercifulness in us, and the like: and that upon several accounts, they are the most natural evidences of our heart's closing with those benefits by faith; for they do especially shew the sweet accord and consent that there is between the heart and these benefits; and by reason of the natural likeness that there is between the virtue and the benefit, the one has the greater tendency to bring the other to mind; the practice of the virtue tends the more to renew the sense, and refresh the hope of the blessing promised; and also to convince the conscience of the justice of being denied the benefit, if the duty be neglected. Besides the sense and manifestation of divine forgiveness in our own consciences — yea, and many exercises of God's forgiving mercy, (as it respects God's fatherly displeasure,) granted after justification, through the course of a Christian's life — may be given as the proper rewards of a forgiving spirit, and yet this not be at all to the prejudice of the doctrine we have maintained; as will more fully appear, when we come to answer another objection hereafter to be mentioned.

### **Objection 2**

Our own obedience, and inherent holiness, is necessary to prepare men for heaven; and therefore is doubtless what recommends persons to God's acceptance, as the heirs of heaven.

#### **To this I answer**

1. Our own obedience being necessary, in order to a preparation for an actual bestowment of glory, is no argument that it is the thing upon the account of which we are accepted to a right to it. God may, and does do many things to prepare the saints for glory, after he has accepted them as the heirs of glory. A parent may do much to prepare a child for an inheritance in its education, after the child is an heir; yea, there are many things necessary to fit a child for the actual possession of the inheritance, yet not necessary in order to its having a right to the inheritance.
2. If every thing that is necessary to prepare men for glory must be the proper condition of justification, then perfect holiness is the condition of justification. Men must be made perfectly holy, before they are admitted to the enjoyment of the blessedness of heaven; for there must in no wise enter in there any spiritual defilement. And therefore, when a saint dies, he leaves all his sin and corruption when he leaves the body.

### **Objection 3**

Our obedience is not only indissolubly connected with salvation, and preparatory to it, but the scripture expressly speaks of bestowing eternal blessings as rewards for the good deeds of the saints. Matt. x. 42. "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward." I Cor. iii. 8. "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." And in many other places. This seems to militate against the doctrine that has been maintained, in two ways:

1. The bestowing a reward, carries in it a respect to a moral fitness in the thing rewarded to the reward; I he very notion of a reward being a benefit bestowed in testimony of acceptance of, and respect to, the goodness or amiableness of some qualification or work in the person rewarded. Besides, the scripture seems to explain itself in this matter, in Rev. iii. 4. "Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy." This is here given as the reason why they should have such a reward, "because they were worthy;" which, though we suppose it to imply no proper merit, yet it at least implies a moral fitness, or that the excellency of their virtue in God's sight recommends them to such a reward; which seems directly repugnant to what

has been supposed, viz. that we are accepted, and approved of God, as the heirs of salvation, not out of regard to the excellency of our own virtue or goodness, or any moral merit therein to such a reward, but only on account of the dignity and moral fitness of Christ's righteousness.

2. Our being eternally rewarded for our own holiness and good works, necessarily supposes that our future happiness will be greater or smaller, in some proportion as our own holiness and obedience is more or less; and that there are different degrees of glory, according to different degrees of virtue and good works, is a doctrine very expressly and frequently taught us in scripture. But this seems quite inconsistent with the saints' all having their future blessedness as a reward of Christ's righteousness: For if Christ's righteousness be imputed to all, and this be what entitles each one to glory, then it is the same righteousness that entitles one to glory which entitles another. But if all have glory as the reward of the same righteousness, why have not all the same glory? Does not the same righteousness merit as much glory when imputed to one as when imputed to another?

### **Response**

In answer to the first part of this objection, I would observe, that it does not argue that we are justified by our good deeds, that we shall have eternal blessings in reward for them; for it is in consequence of our justification, that our good deeds become rewardable with spiritual and eternal rewards. The acceptableness, and so the rewardableness of our virtue, is not antecedent to justification, but follows it, and is built entirely upon it; which is the reverse of what those in the adverse scheme of justification suppose, viz. that justification is built on the acceptableness and rewardableness of our virtue. They suppose that a saving interest in Christ is given as a reward of our virtue, or, (which is the same thing,) as a testimony of God's acceptance of our excellency in our virtue. But the contrary is true; that God's respect to our virtue as our amiableness in his sight, and his acceptance of it as rewardable, is entirely built on our interest in Christ already established. So that the relation to Christ, whereby believers in scripture language are said to be in Christ, is the very foundation of our virtues and good deeds being accepted of God, and so of their being rewarded; for a reward is a testimony of acceptance. For we, and all that we do, are accepted only in the beloved, Eph. i. 6. Our sacrifices are acceptable, only through our interest in him, and through his worthiness and preciousness being, as it were, made ours. I Pet. ii. 4, 5. "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Here being actually built on this stone, precious to God, is mentioned as all the ground of the acceptableness of our good works to God, and their becoming also precious in his eyes. So, Heb. xiii. 21. "Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." And hence are we directed, whatever we offer to God, to offer It in Christ's name, as expecting to have it accepted no other way, than from the value that God has to that name. Col. iii. 17." And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

To act in Christ's name, is to act under him as our head, and as having him to stand for us, and represent us to God-ward. The reason of this may be seen from what has been already said, to shew it is not meet that any thing in us should be accepted of God as any excellency of our persons, until we are actually in Christ, and justified through him. The loveliness of the virtue of fallen creatures is nothing in the sight of God, till he beholds them in Christ, and clothed with his righteousness.

1. Because till then we stand condemned before God, by his own holy law, to his utter rejection and abhorrence.
2. Because we are infinitely guilty before him; and the loveliness of our virtue bears no proportion to our guilt, and must therefore pass for nothing before a strict judge.
3. Because our good deeds and virtuous acts themselves are in a sense corrupt; and the hatefulness of the corruption of them, if we are beheld as we are in ourselves, or separate from Christ, infinitely outweighs the loveliness of the good that is in them.

So that if no other sin was considered but only that which attends the act of virtue itself, the loveliness vanishes into nothing in comparison of it; and therefore the virtue must pass for nothing, out of Christ. Not only are our best duties defiled, in being attended with the exercises of sin and corruption which precede, follow, and are intermingled with them: but even the holy acts themselves, and the gracious exercises of the godly, are defective. Though the act most simply considered is good, yet take the acts in their measure and dimensions, and the manner in which they are exerted, and they are sinfully defective: there is that defect in them that may well be called the corruption of them. That defect is properly sin, an expression of a vile sinfulness of heart, and what tends to provoke the just anger of God: not because the exercise of love and other grace is not equal to God's loveliness, for it is impossible the love of creatures (men or angels) should be so, but because the act is so very disproportionate to the occasion given for love or other grace, considering God's loveliness, the manifestation that is made of it, the exercises of kindness, the capacity of human nature, and our advantages (and the like) together. A negative expression of corruption may be as truly sin, and as just cause of provocation, as a positive. Thus if a worthy and excellent person should, from mere generosity and goodness, exceedingly lay out himself, with great expense and suffering save another's life, or redeem him from some extreme calamity; and if that other person should never thank him for it, or express the least gratitude any way, this would be a negative expression of his ingratitude and baseness; but it is equivalent to an act of ingratitude, or positive exercise of a base unworthy spirit; and is truly an expression of it, and brings as much blame as if he by some positive act had much injured another person. And so it would be, (only in a lesser degree,) if the gratitude was but very small, bearing no proportion to the benefit and obligation: as if, for so great and extraordinary a kindness, he should express no more gratitude than would have been becoming towards a person who had only given him a cup of water when thirsty, or shewn him the way in a journey when at a loss, or had done him some such small kindness. If he should come to his benefactor to express his gratitude, and should do after this manner, he might truly be said to act unworthily and odiously; he would shew a most ungrateful spirit. His doing after such a manner might justly be abhorred by all; and yet the gratitude, that little there is of it, most simply considered, and so far as it goes, is good. And so it is with respect to our exercise of love, and gratitude, and other graces, towards God; they are defectively corrupt and sinful, and, take them as they are, in their manner and measure, might justly be odious and provoking to God, and would necessarily be so, were we beheld out of Christ. For in that this defect is sin, it is infinitely hateful; and so the hatefulness of the very act infinitely outweighs the loveliness of it; because all sin has infinite hatefulness and heinousness; but our holiness has but little value and loveliness, as has been elsewhere demonstrated.

Hence, though it be true that the saints are rewarded for their good works, yet it is for Christ's sake only, and not for the excellency of their works in themselves considered or beheld separately from Christ; for so they have no excellency in God's sight, or acceptableness to him, as has now been shewn. It is acknowledged that God, in rewarding the holiness and good works of believers, does in some respect give them happiness as a testimony of his respect to the loveliness of their holiness and good works in his sight; for that is the very notion of a reward. But it is in a very different sense from what would have been if man had not fallen; which would have been to bestow eternal life on man, as a testimony of God's respect to the loveliness of what man did, considered as in itself, and as in man separately by himself, and not beheld as a member of Christ. In which sense also, the scheme of justification we are opposing necessarily supposes the excellency of our virtue to be respected and rewarded; for it supposes a saving interest in Christ itself to be given as a reward of it.

Two things come to pass, relating to the saints' reward for their inherent righteousness, by virtue of their relation to Christ.

1. The guilt of their persons is all done away, and the pollution and hatefulness that attends and is in their good works, is hid.
2. Their relation to Christ adds a positive value and dignity to their good works in God's sight.

That little holiness, and those faint and feeble acts of love, and other grace, receive an exceeding value in the sight of God, by virtue of God's beholding them as in Christ, and as it were members of one so infinitely worthy in his eyes; and that because God looks upon the persons as of greater dignity on this account. Isa. xliii. 4. "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable." God, for Christ's sake, and because they are members of his own righteous and dear Son, sets an exceeding value upon their persons; and hence it follows, that he also sets a great value upon their good acts and offerings. The same love and obedience in a person of greater dignity and value in God's sight, is more valuable in his eyes than in one of less dignity. Love is valuable in proportion to the dignity of the person whose love it is; because, so far as any one gives his love to another, he gives himself, in that he gives his heart. But this is a more excellent offering, in proportion as the person whose self is offered is more worthy. Believers are become immensely more honourable in God's esteem by virtue of their relation to Christ, than man would have been considered as by himself, though he had been free from sin; as a mean person becomes more honourable when married to a king. Hence God will probably reward the little weak love, and poor and exceeding imperfect obedience of believers in Christ, with more glorious reward than he would have done Adam's perfect obedience. According to the tenor of the first covenant, the person was to be accepted and rewarded, only for the work's sake; but by the covenant of grace, the work is accepted and rewarded, only for the person's sake: the person being beheld antecedently as a member of Christ, and clothed with his righteousness. So that though the saint's inherent holiness is rewarded, yet this very reward is indeed not the less founded on the worthiness and righteousness of Christ. None of the value that their works have in his sight, nor any of the acceptance they have with him, is out of Christ, and out of his righteousness; but his worthiness as mediator is the prime and only foundation on which all is built, and the universal source whence all arises. God indeed doth great things out of regard to the saints' loveliness, but it is only as a secondary and derivative loveliness. When I speak of a derivative loveliness, I do not mean only that the qualifications themselves accepted as lovely, are derived from Christ, from his power and purchase, but that the acceptance of them as a loveliness, and all the value that is set upon them, and all their connection with the reward, is founded in, and derived from Christ's righteousness and worthiness.

If we suppose that not only higher degrees of glory in heaven, but heaven itself, is in some respect given in reward for the holiness and good works of the saints, in this secondary and derivative sense, it will not prejudice the doctrine we have maintained. It is no way impossible that God may bestow heaven's glory wholly out of respect to Christ's righteousness, and yet in reward for man's inherent holiness, in different respects, and different ways. It may be only Christ's righteousness that God has respect to, for its own sake, the independent acceptableness and dignity of it being sufficient of itself to recommend all that believe in Christ to a title to this glory; and so it may be only by this that persons enter into a title to heaven, or have their prime right to it; and yet God may also have respect to the saints' own holiness, for Christ's sake, and as deriving a value from Christ's merit, which he may testify in bestowing heaven upon them. The saints being beheld as members of Christ, their obedience is looked upon by God as something of Christ's, it being the obedience of the members of Christ; as the sufferings of the members of Christ are looked upon, in some respect, as the sufferings of Christ. Hence the apostle, speaking of his suffering, says, Col. i. 24. "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh." To the same purpose in Matt. xxv. 35, &c. "I was an hungered, naked, sick, and in prison," &c. And so that in Rev. xi. 8. "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."

By the merit and righteousness of Christ, such favour of God towards the believer may be obtained, as that God may hereby be already, as it were, disposed to make them perfectly and eternally happy. But yet this does not hinder, but that God in his wisdom may choose to bestow this perfect and eternal happiness in this way, viz. in some respect as a reward of their holiness and obedience.

It is not impossible but that the blessedness may be bestowed as a reward for that which is done after that an interest is already obtained in that favour, which (to speak of God after the manner of men) disposes God to



bestow the blessedness. Our heavenly Father may already have that favour for a child, whereby he may be thoroughly ready to give the child an inheritance, because he is his child; which he is by the purchase of Christ's righteousness: and yet that the Father may choose to bestow the inheritance on the child in a way of reward for his dutifulness, and behaving in a manner becoming a child. And so great a reward may not be judged more than a meet reward for his dutifulness; but that so great a reward is judged meet, does not arise from the excellency of the obedience absolutely considered, but from his standing in so near and honourable a relation to God, as that of a child, which is obtained only by the righteousness of Christ. And thus the reward, and the greatness of it, arises properly from the righteousness of Christ; though it be indeed in some sort the reward of their obedience. As a father might justly esteem the inheritance no more than a meet reward for the obedience of his child, and yet esteem it more than a meet reward for the obedience of a servant. The favour whence a believer's heavenly Father bestows the eternal inheritance, and his title as an heir, is founded in that relation he stands in to him as a child, purchased by Christ's righteousness; though he in wisdom chooses to bestow it in such a way, and therein to testify his acceptance of the amiableness of his obedience in Christ.

Believers having a title to heaven by faith antecedent to their obedience, or its being absolutely promised to them before, does not hinder but that the actual bestowment of heaven may also be a testimony of God's regard to their obedience, though performed afterwards. Thus it was with Abraham, the father and pattern of all believers: God bestowed upon him that blessing of multiplying his seed as the stars of heaven, and causing that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, in reward for his obedience in offering up his son Isaac. Gen. xxii. 16 — 18. "And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations o'f the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." And yet the very same blessings had been from time to time promised to Abraham, in the most positive terms, and the promise, with great solemnity, confirmed and sealed to him; as chap. xii. 2, 3. chap. xiii. 16. chap. xv. 1, 4 — 7, fec.; chap. xvii. throughout; chap. xviii. 10, 18.

From what has been said we may easily solve the difficulty arising from that text in Rev. iii. 4. "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy;" which is parallel with that text in Luke xx. 35. "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead." I allow (as in the objection) that this worthiness does doubtless denote a moral fitness to the reward, or that God looks on these glorious benefits as a meet testimony of his regard to the value which their persons and performances have in his sight.

1. God looks on these glorious benefits as a meet testimony of his regard to the value which their persons have in his sight. But he sets this value upon their persons purely for Christ's sake. They are such jewels, and have such preciousness in his eyes, only because they are beheld in Christ, and by reason of the worthiness of the head they are the members of, and the stock they are grafted into. And the value that God sets upon them on this account is so great, that God thinks meet, from regard to it, to admit them to such exceeding glory. The saints, on account of their relation to Christ, are such precious jewels in God's sight, that they are thought worthy of a place in his own crown. Mai. iii. 17. Zech. ix. 16. So far as the saints are said to be valuable in God's sight, on whatever account, so far may they properly be said to be worthy, or meet for that honour which is answerable to the value or price which God sets upon them. A child or wife of a prince is worthy to be treated with great honour; and therefore if a mean person should be adopted to be a child of a prince, or should be espoused to a prince, it would be proper to say, that she was worthy of such and such honour and respect, and there would be no force upon the words in saying, that she ought to have such respect paid her, for she is worthy, though it be only on account of her relation to the prince that she is so.
2. From the value God sets upon their persons, for the sake of Christ's worthiness, he also sets a high value on their virtue and performances. Their meek and quiet spirit is of great price in his sight. Their fruits

are pleasant fruits, their offerings are an odour of sweet smell to him; and that because of the value he sets on their persons, as has been already observed and explained. This preciousness or high-valuableness of believers is a moral fitness to a reward; and yet this valuableness is all in the righteousness of Christ, that is the foundation of it. The thing respected is not excellency in them separately by themselves, or in their virtue by itself, but the value in God's account arises from other considerations; which is the natural import of Luke xx. 35. "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world," &c. and Luke xxi. 36. "That ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." 2 Thess. i. 5. "That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer."

There is a vast difference between this scheme, and what is supposed in the scheme of those that oppose the doctrine of justification by faith alone. This lays the foundation of first acceptance with God, and all actual salvation consequent upon it, wholly in Christ and his righteousness. On the contrary, in their scheme, a regard to man's own excellency or virtue is supposed to be first, and to have the place of the first foundation in actual salvation, though not in that ineffectual redemption, which they suppose common to all. They lay the foundation of all discriminating salvation in man's own virtue and moral excellency. This is the very bottom stone in this affair; for they suppose that it is from regard to our virtue, that even a special interest in Christ itself is given. The foundation being thus contrary, the whole scheme becomes exceeding diverse and contrary; the one is an evangelical scheme, the other a legal one; the one is utterly inconsistent with our being justified by Christ's righteousness, the other not at all. From what has been said, we may understand, not only how the forgiveness of sin granted in justification is indissolubly connected 'with a forgiving spirit in us, but how there may be many exercises of forgiving mercy granted in reward for our forgiving those who trespass against us. For none will deny but that there are many acts of divine forgiveness towards the saints, that do not presuppose an unjustified state immediately preceding that forgiveness. None will deny, that saints who never fell from a justified state, yet commit many sins which God forgives afterwards, by laying aside his fatherly displeasure. This forgiveness may be in reward for our forgiveness, without any prejudice to the doctrine that has been maintained, as well as other mercies and blessings consequent on justification.

With respect to the second part of the objection, that relates to the different degrees of glory, and the seeming inconsistency there is in it, that the degrees of glory in different saints should be greater or lesser according to their inherent holiness and good works, and yet, that every one's glory should be purchased with the price of the very same imputed righteousness,

### **I answer**

That Christ, by his righteousness, purchased for everyone complete and perfect happiness, according to his capacity. But this does not hinder but that the saints, being of various capacities, may have various degrees of happiness, and yet all their happiness be the fruit of Christ's purchase. Indeed it cannot be properly said that Christ purchased any particular degree of happiness, so that the value of Christ's righteousness in the sight of God, is sufficient to raise a believer so high in happiness and yet higher, and so that if the believer were made happier, it would exceed the value of Christ's righteousness; but in general, Christ purchased eternal life, or perfect happiness for all, according to their several capacities. The saints are as so many vessels of different sizes, cast into a sea of happiness, where every vessel is full; or all. But after all, it is left to God's sovereign pleasure to determine the largeness of the vessel; Christ's righteousness meddles not with this matter. Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6, 7. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism," &c. — "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." God may dispense in this matter according to what rule he pleases, not the less for what Christ has done: He may dispense either without condition, or upon what condition he pleases to fix. It is evident that Christ's righteousness meddles not with this matter; for what Christ did was to fulfil the covenant of works; but the covenant of works did not meddle at all with this.

If Adam had persevered in perfect obedience, he and his posterity would have had perfect and full happiness;

every one's happiness would have so answered his capacity, that he would have been completely blessed; but God would have been at liberty to have made some of one capacity, and others of another, as he pleased. — The angels have obtained eternal life, or a state of confirmed glory, by a covenant of works, whose condition was perfect obedience; but yet some are higher in glory than others, according to the several capacities that God, according to his sovereign pleasure, hath given them. So that it being still left with God, notwithstanding the perfect obedience of the second Adam, to fix the degree of each one's capacity by what rule he pleases, he hath been pleased to fix the degree of capacity, and so of glory, by the proportion of the saints' grace and fruitfulness here. He gives higher degrees of glory in reward for higher degrees of holiness and good works, because it pleases him; and yet all the happiness of each saint is indeed the fruit of the purchase of Christ's obedience. If it had been but one man that Christ had obeyed and died for, and it had pleased God to make him of a very large capacity, Christ's perfect obedience would have purchased that his capacity should be filled, and then all his happiness might properly be said to be the fruit of Christ's perfect obedience; though, if he had been of a less capacity, he would not have had so much happiness by the same obedience; and yet would have had as much as Christ merited for him. Christ's righteousness meddles not with the degree of happiness, any otherwise than as he merits that it should be full and perfect, according to the capacity: And so it may be said to be concerned in the degree of happiness, as perfect is a degree with respect to imperfect; but it meddles not with degrees of perfect happiness. This matter may be yet better understood, if we consider that Christ and the whole church of saints are, as it were, one body, of which he is the head, and they members, of different place and capacity: Now the whole body, head and members, have communion in Christ's righteousness; they are all partakers of the benefit of it; Christ himself the head is rewarded for it, and every member is partaker of the benefit and reward. But it does by no means follow, that every part should equally partake of the benefit, but every part in proportion to its place and capacity; the head partakes of far more than other parts, and the more noble members partake of more than the inferior. As it is in a natural body that enjoys perfect health, the head, and the heart, and lungs, have a greater share of this health, they have it more seated in them, than the hands and feet, because they are parts of greater capacity; though the hands and feet are as much in perfect health as those nobler parts of the body. So it is in the mystical body of Christ, all the members are partakers of the benefit of the head; but it is according to the different capacity and place they have in the body; and God determines that place and capacity as he pleases; he makes whom he pleases the foot, and whom he pleases the hand, and whom he pleases the lungs, etc. 1 Cor. xii. 18. "God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." God efficaciously determines the place and capacity of every member, by the different degrees of grace and assistance in the improvement of it in this world. Those that he intends for the highest place in the body, he gives them most of his Spirit, the greatest share of the divine nature, the spirit and nature of Christ Jesus the head, and that assistance whereby they perform the most excellent works, and do most abound in them.

**1739 (English Publication Date)**

**Rev. Dr. Thomas Burnet (1635-1715), British Theologian**

**Of The Resurrection Of The Dead; And In What State They Will Be After They Are Risen, And What Sort Of Bodies They Will Have**

**Treatise Concerning the State of Departed Souls Before and At and After the Resurrection**

Written originally in Latin by the late Rev. Dr. Thomas Burnet, Master of the Charter-House, Author of the "Theory of the Earth." Translated into English by Mr. Dennis. The Second Edition, Corrected. London: 1739

**Chapter VII - Of The Resurrection Of The Dead; And In What State They Will Be After They Are Risen, And What Sort Of Bodies They Will Have.**

THUS far we have already gone; but the Chapter of the greatest Consequence, and the most important Concern is still remaining, concerning the Resurrection of the Dead, and in what Condition they will find themselves after they are risen; in the handling which we shall follow our usual Method: In the first Place,

we shall speak to the Thing itself, and afterwards to the Modes and Adjuncts of it, and that according to the Light we have receiv'd either from the sacred Writings, or from the Nature of the Things themselves.

As for the Thing itself, nothing is more clearly revealed than that in the whole Christian Doctrine: Both the Jews and the Gentiles had likewise some Idea of a future Resurrection, but an Idea that was general and confus'd. The former believ'd that the whole World would be reviv'd, and that every Individual of Mankind would, together with the World, be renew'd and reviv'd; and nothing is more commonly found than that among the Stoicks and the Platonicks: Nor was it only found among the Grecian Philosophers, but originally among those of the Eastern Nations, Egyptians, Chaldeans, Persians. Theopompus, in Laertius, says of the Magi, "That Men liv'd or would live a second Life, according to the Doctrine of the Magi."

As for what relates to the Jews, Moses in his Law taught them nothing expressly, either concerning the Resurrection of the Body, or the Immortality of the Soul; yet I make no Doubt but that both these were known to Moses and to some the Sages, instructed and by him, and conscious of the secret Doctrine. Afterwards this Doctrine was delivered Conjecturally, by some of the sacred Canonical Writers more clearly, and at length by Daniel the Prophet more perspicuously. But yet this Doctrine of Salvation was not to shine out with a full Meridian Glare, nor to be compleat in all its Parts, nor accomplished in all its Numbers, till the Days of the Messiah.

The Jews, for the most part, confine the resurrection to the Just, and to Israelites. Again, they seem to mean the first Resurrection to a terrestrial Life, and to have no further Notion of celestial Bodies. Some of their Rabbins suppose, likewise, that they are to rise again not only with the same Bodies, but in the same Cloaths also: But they confine all this to the Land of Canaan only, and say, that the Bodies of such Israelite as have died in foreign Countries shall return Home through some subterraneous Caverns, or at least that the Bone Luz shall do so; and from thence, as from its Seed, the whole Body shall grow up again.

In this, then, we Christians triumph, upon this joyful Message, that Death being conquer'd, and the infernal World overcome, we shall be brought and restor'd to Light, and to the Enjoyment of a blissful Immortality; not in the coarse Cloathing of these Carcases which now we carry about us, but in heavenly Bodies; nor living and conversing upon this Dunghill, where we at present languish, but above, in the Brightness of aetherial Regions, in the charming Seats and Society of Angels, through endless Ages happy. Lift up your Head, then, O ye Christians! raise your Minds and Thoughts to the Skies!

And since we have these Promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God (2 Corinth. 7:1).

Having succinctly made these Remarks, let us now with all our Diligence explore upon what Passages of sacred Scripture, upon what Authority divine, this so exalted Hope of the Christians, this animating, this inspiring Hope, is founded and depends.

In the first Place, Christ, himself often asserted that Men after Death would rise again, and often promised it to his; and affirm'd that the Power of doing it was in himself, as Lord of Life, and of Death: And that he was not unable to raise up others, he plainly demonstrates, in that he was able to raise up himself from the Dead. First he maintain'd the Resurrection against the Sadducees, and maintain'd it by the strongest Argument that could be drawn from the Mosaick Writings, which alone, by Persons of that Sect, were held authentick and canonical: Then he promises Rewards in "the Resurrection of the Just," to those who are Benefactors to the Needy and the Infirm, from whom in this Life they can expect no Compensation. But to his Disciples, and to those who lose every Thing that they had in this World, in order to become such, he promises Things, "at their second Birth," or "at their Resurrection," which are greater and more conspicuous. Besides he openly and clearly affirms that Dominion over Life and Death is in him, and that he, by his own Power, by his own Voice, will cause the Dead to arise from their Graves. First of all, in the Beginning of the Revelations, where in these Words he speaks to St. John:

I am the First and the Last; I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the Keys of Hell and of Death. (Rev. 1:17-18)

In the next Place, in the Gospel of the same St. John, he several Times says the same Thing, Chap. vi. ver. 40.

And this is the Will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting Life: And I will raise him up at the last Day (John 6:40).

In the next Place, in the same Gospel of St. John, he says to Martha.

I am the Resurrection, and the Life: He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die (John 11: 25).

And lastly, in the fifth Chapter of the same Gospel, you will find both these in Conjunction:

As the Father hath Life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have Life in himself. And hath given him Authority to execute Judgment also, because he is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this, for the Hour is Coming, when all that are in the Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth; they that have done Good, to the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil, to the Resurrection of Damnation (John 11: 26-27).

All these Things being taken from the Mouth of Christ himself, abundantly prove the future Resurrection of the Dead. But Faith is animated and confirmed when Facts corroborate Words; and he has given us many Examples, that he is able to perform what he hath promis'd us. Therefore Christ, when he was here upon Earth, did not only cause others to rise from the Dead, which I must confess was formerly done by the Prophets before him, but he likewise raised up himself from the Dead, after he had been crucify'd, dead, and buried; for, taking off the Bands of Death on the third Day, the Soul fled Back to its sacred Relicts, and inspir'd them with immortal Life.

'Tis in this that we Christians glory, in this Victory thus extorted from the last and most potent Enemy, from the King of Terrors. Did ever any of the Grecian Sages, or of the Oriental Magi, did ever any of the Philosophers of what Name or Nation soever, did ever any of the renown'd Legislators, or lastly, any of the sacred Prophets rise from the Dead, lay down his Life, and resume it? Was ever any of those victorious over Death, and return'd to the Living? No, only this our Captain, this our God, led Death and Hell in Triumph: And 'tis from this Conqueror only that we expect both a joyful Deliverance from Death, and a blissful Immortality.

Nor did this Resurrection from Death happen to Christ, as to one who never thought of it, who never hoped for it, who never in the least expected it, and as an Action performed by another's Power; He not only knew that this would happen, but he foretold it both to his Disciples and others, and foretold that it would happen within three Days after Mark his Death.

He said to the Jews, Destroy this Temple, and in three Days I will raise it up again. But he spoke of the Temple of his Body (John 2:19)

Says the interpreting Apostle. And his Accusers afterwards brought this Saying as a Crime against him. And the chief Priests and Pharisees remembring this, desired of Pilate that the Sepulchre might be guarded, &c. which was accordingly done. Besides, Christ had said something like this to the Jews before, when they desired from him a Token Of his divine Mission:

As Jonas was three Days and three Nights in the Body of the Whale, so will the Son of Man be three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth (Matt. 12:40).

This is sufficiently plain, and the Angel reproaches the Women who came to seek the Body of Christ in the Sepulchre, after he was risen, with the Forgetfulness of those Things:

He is not here but is risen: Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, the Son of Man must be delivered into the Hands of sinful Men, and be crucified, and the third Day rise again: And they remembered his Words, as likewise did his Disciples (Luke 24:6-8)

Nor did he only by Signs and Parables, but very often by express Words, foretel both his Death and his Resurrection, and that each of them would be spontaneous.

Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my Life, that I might take it again; No Man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have Power to lay it down, and I have Power to take it up again (John 10:18).

Then he says afterwards:

A little while and ye shall not see me; and again a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father (John 16:16).

Which he afterwards shews is meant of his Death, and of his second Coming.

And this Power that he had, when he pleased to use it, of preserving his Life safe and inviolable, appeared as clear as the Meridian Sun in a bright Day, when his Enemies coming upon him, he all of a sudden rendered himself invisible, and them confounded and impotent. Nay, by the Virtue of his Look alone, by the very radiant Light of his Countenance, he terrify'd and dispirited those who came with a Design to destroy him. Lastly, in his Transfiguration upon the holy Mountain, he converted himself wholly into a vital Flame, as it were, into a refulgent Body, of Angelick Form, or rather of divine Glory. By which Transformation of his Body, he sufficiently shew'd, that he had Life in himself, and that it was in his Power, as often as it was his Pleasure, to trample up'on Death, and to swallow up all Mortality. And let me add, since 'tis to my Purpose, that in this his Glorification, bringing down Moses and Elias from Heaven, both living, and both immortal, he, in them, gave us Pledges and Examples of our own Immortality, and our future Resurrection; which appeared more openly afterwards, when upon the Resurrection of Christ, divers of the Saints rising together from the Dead with him, appeared to many in Jerusalem.

Lastly, That I may put an End to this Discourse, Christ did not only rise from the Dead, but he ascended likewise into Heaven. After he had gotten a Victory he triumph'd: And being carried in a radiant Cloud, as it were, in a triumphal Chariot, his Disciples beholding him with Astonishment, and Troops of Angels attending him, he returned to his ancient Seat, to what was his Country from all Eternity, and to God the Father. This is the only true Apotheosis, which the ancient Caesars, and the Heroes of old, and others renown'd in the Heathen World for their surpassing Merit, their Fortitude, and their Wisdom; all of them in vain affected. And now, since Christ our Saviour has said, and has done all this, both among the Living and the Dead, and reigns at length in the Heaven of Heavens endued with a glorious Body, 'Tis but just that We should believe what he has taught, and promised us concerning our own Resurrection to be certain, established, and unchangeable.

Having thus compendiously laid before you the Sayings, and the Actions of Christ, which relate to our Resurrection, the Apostolical Doctrine of the Resurrection follows concerning the same Subject, which being agreeable to what has been already said, is something more diffuse, and comprehends several Heads: But principally let us observe this, that the Resurrection of the Body is never attributed by the Apostles to natural

Causes, or natural Power, but always to divine Operation; and very frequently to Christ our Lord, whom alone we have hitherto made the Author of this admirable Work. In that solemn Dissertation of St. Paul, concerning the future Resurrection of the Body, he makes Christ the Author of our Resurrection, both in the Beginning, Middle, and End of his Discourse; to which he gives so strict a Connexion with the Resurrection of our Lord, that they both must be granted or denied together: If Christ, says he, be preached that he rose from the Dead, how say some among you that there is no Resurrection of the Dead? where he supposes our Resurrection to be the undeniable Consequence of the Resurrection of Christ.

But then, says he, on the other Side, If there be no Resurrection of the Dead, then is Christ not risen: And therefore he very justly, in the Beginning of this Discourse, proves the Resurrection of Christ by Abundance of Testimonies, as the Foundation of his Doctrine and Institution concerning our own Resurrection.

Besides, he places the Root of all celestial Life in Christ, as in Adam the Root of all Mortality, whom, therefore, he makes the Type of Christ:

For as in Adam all Men die, so in Christ shall all he made alive (1 Cor. 15:22).

whom, therefore, he says, was made a quickning Spirit. Lastly, by the same Jesus Christ, he insults over Death and Hell, now conquer'd both, and disarm'd:

O Death! where is thy Sting? O Grave! where is thy Victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the Victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. For he had said before, For he must reign till he hath put all Enemies under his Feet: The last Enemy that shall be destroy'd, is Death (1Cor. 15:55)

But Death cannot be destroy'd but by an universal Resurrection.

Nor is it only in this Chapter, but in others, as often as Occasion offers itself, that he teaches us that the Cause and Origin of our Resurrection is founded in that of Christ, and that he, by his Resurrection, was constituted Lord of the Living and of the Dead, and of the future Judgment that is to succeed the Resurrection:

For ye are dead, and your Life is hid with Christ in God; but when Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in Glory (Col. 3:3-4).

Says the same Apostle to the Colossians, Chap. iii. ver. 3, 4. And he says like wise to the Philippians:

For our Conversion is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashion'd like unto his glorious Body, according to the Working whereby he is able to subdue all Things to himself (Phil. 3:20).

These Testimonies of the Apostles require some farther Consideration: In the first Place then we must observe, that the Apostles, in their Preachings to the Jews and Gentiles after Christ was ascended, always began with this Assertion, that Christ was risen from the Dead: From whence they established the Christian Religion on a double Foundation, That Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah; and likewise, what there was to be a future Resurrection from the Dead. While Jesus was upon Earth, he proved himself to be the Messiah by his Miracles, and the concurring Testimonies of the Prophets: But when he was risen from the Dead, and had ascended up into Heaven in the Sight of the Apostles, they thence took a new Argument to demonstrate, both that the same Jesus was the Messiah, and likewise farther, that the Hopes of Christians concerning a future Resurrection and eternal Life, were firmly founded on him; Hence in the Acts of the Apostles we find, that this Topick was always instilled upon by the first Apostolical Preachers of the Gospel, in all their Sermons.

I should be tedious if I should here produce more Passages (especially since they are sufficiently known,) to prove from Christ our Head, the First-born of the Dead, the first Fruits of those that Sleep (1Cor. 15:20.) to prove, I say, that from his Influence and his Power the Hope of our Resurrection depends; nor yet does it so far depend upon Christ, that it does likewise depend originally upon God the Father. Both Christ and his Apostles Often affirm that, It depends also in some Manner upon the Holy Ghost, and both concur in this divine Operation. So the Apostle to the Romans teaches us:

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the Dead dwell in you, he, that raised up Christ from the Dead shall also quicken your mortal Bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8:11).

Nor do I at all wonder, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, would, in some manner, co-operate in the Resurrection of the Dead, since 'tis like a new Creation, when numberless Souls are all at once, from an invisible State, brought forth into Light, as it were, from nothing, and all of them re-invested with Bodies of their several Kinds; nay, the Souls themselves have, as it were, a Regeneration, a new Life, and a new World, and all Things around them new: And therefore the Apostle does, with a mighty Emphasis of Words, set forth all the mighty Power of God, as employed and exerted in producing this wonderful Work (Eph.. 1:19).

Hitherto we have set forth the Certainty or Stability of our Resurrection, and the efficient Causes of it from the sacred Writings: And all These are clearly reveal'd. Let us now proceed to Things that are less clearly and less expressly determin'd. And here the Question first offers itself which is propos'd by the Apostle, viz. With what Sort of Bodies Men shall rise again? How are the Dead raised up? or with what Body do they come? That we may answer this Question, and discover the Qualities of that Body with which we are to be cloath'd at the Resurrection, we must observe, in the first Place, what Powers and what Qualities the sacred Writers attribute to such a Body. Upon thus allowing These, which, upon the Testimony of the Scripture, we know belong to those Bodies, we are to enquire farther what other more particular Qualities, by a just Reasoning, may be deduced from them, and which may more nearly and intimately discover the Nature and physical Constitution of those Bodies. Lastly, we must consult the Nature of Things, which must be call'd in to our Aid, when we are enquiring into corporeal Beings, that we impute nothing, through our Ignorance, to the sacred Oracles, that is incongruous or absurd.

But that we may act compendiously, that Question of the Apostle, With what Bodies are we to arise? seems chiefly to include two Things: First, with what Body? that is, whether with an organical Body, and a Body like that which at present we carry about us; or whether with a Body that is inorganical, and of another Form, and another Order from that which we have at present. But secondly, with what Body? that is, whether with a gross and closely compacted Body, such as we now have, or with a thin, a loose, and a light one, resembling Air or Ether. One of These doubtful Points, you see, respects the Form of our future Body, and the other the Matter; and if we can give a good Account of both These, we shall, I presume, give a satisfactory Answer to the propounded Question.

Now 'tis from the sacred Writings that we must bring the Answer to both Parts of the Question; and not only from this Chapter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, but from every Passage where either Christ or his Apostles explain the Conditions of those Bodies which we shall enjoy in the Heavens. Of These Conditions some are general and common, which can discover nothing certain or definitive in this kind: Others are special and proper, which may be call'd Characters, or Characteristical Tokens; to which, if we diligently attend, they will bring us to a Discovery of the Form or the Matter of the Bodies of the Beatified. We will, as the nature of the Subject requires, divide These Characteristical Tokens into two Orders; the former of which will answer the first Part of the Question, and the latter the second Part. The four following sacred Characteristical Tokens seem to discover and to give us a View of the Form of our immortal Body, whether it is to be organical or inorganical.



First, it will have no Occasion for either Belly or Edibles; secondly, of Flesh and Blood it will not consist; thirdly, it will be a Body not made with Hands; and therefore fourthly, it will be a Body by which we shall be like to the Angels. Each of These four Characters must be examin'd apart from the rest, that we may be able to discern what Validity each of them has, how much is implied in it, and how far it extends.

As for the first, the Apostle speaks thus concerning it; Meats are for the Belly, and the Belly for Meats; but God shall abolish both it and them. But when will he abolish them? Not in this Life; therefore in the Life to come: Not in this mortal Body; therefore in the glorious and immortal Body. But if that Body will want a Belly, it will consequently want those Entrails, those Vessels, and all those Parts which are contain'd in the Cavity of that Belly. But all These being subtracted, what Sort of Body will remain, Why, a Body that is whose Parts are separated by empty Space; in short, a Body altogether imperfect, if we regard the Nature of an organical Body. And then, the Parts which are under the Belly will either be wanting, or will be of no Use; of which we shall say more hereafter. Lastly, the Thighs, the Legs, and Feet, are the necessary Instruments of Walking, and Walking is perform'd upon a Substance that is itself immoveable. But since in the Air, or in the Heavens, there is no immoveable Substance to tread on, there is neither Pavement, nor Porch, nor Gallery; there local Motion will be perform'd not after the Manner of Walking, but in the same Manner in which the Angels move. These lower Parts of the Body then will be all of them together abolish'd, as useless and superfluous.

Besides, where there is no Food, there can be no Nutrition; but several Faculties and several Organs were made on Purpose to be subservient to Nutrition, which must likewise be abolish'd, when our Food is: Such are the Organs of Taste, of Chewing and Swallowing; the Organs of Conception, of Sanctification, and those of Distribution; and not a few of the Glands are useful to Nutrition or Secretion. Now what organick Body can bear the Loss of so many Parts! and yet the Body which we are to have must endure it all, if we have rightly calculated. These numerous Parts, then, being thus separated, or cut off from the Body, let us next consider what we are to determine concerning Flesh and Blood, whether they too are like to perish together with those which are mention'd before.

After the Apostle had treated of the Qualities of blessed Bodies, at the End of that Discourse he adds;

But I say unto you, Brethren, that Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom. of God (1Cor. 15:50)

The Apostle says absolutely they cannot. There is, it seems, some Repugnancy between the celestial State and the Conditions of Flesh and Blood; and therefore there is a Necessity that the Body, with which the Soul is invested in Heaven after the Resurrection, should be without Flesh, and without Blood.

But you will say, perhaps, that Flesh and Blood, in this Expression of the Apostle, are not to be literally understood, but mystically, or allegorically, as they denote the Works of the Flesh, or moral Purity and Impurity. To which I answer, first, that this is said without any Proof, and not only without any Proof, but against the receiv'd Rule of Interpreting; by which we are never to depart from the Letter, unless we are urg'd by Necessity from the Nature of the Thing, and of the Subject Matter; but here is no such Necessity. Besides, the rest of the Characteristical Marks are so agreeable to this, and so nearly related to it, (as will clearly appear by what is to follow,) that we are rather on the other Side urg'd by Necessity, a Necessity of retaining the literal Sense: For the Words that follow in the same Verse sufficiently shew, that Flesh and Blood are to be understood physically, and not morally; for that which follows is,

Neither doth Corruption inherit Incorruption (1Cor. 15:40).

Corruption is there understood physically; and the Apostle designs that we should understand this our corruptible Body; and by Incorruption an incorruptible State.

But, perhaps, you will attempt to elude the Force of this Answer another Way; you will say, perhaps, that Flesh and Blood, such as we have at present, cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven; but that another Sort of Flesh and Blood, such as we are to have after the Resurrection, may inherit it. But to answer effectually to this, the Apostle no where at this Rate distinguishes between two Kinds of Flesh and Blood, the corruptible Kind, and the incorruptible. He, indeed, mentions several Kinds of Flesh, as of Men, of Beasts, of Fish, and of Fowls, and all These are alike corruptible; but he no where makes mention of Flesh that is incorruptible, tho' a fair Occasion offers itself. He no where uses this Distinction among several others, Corruptible Flesh is one Thing, and Flesh incorruptible another Thing. On the contrary, he seems to suppose, or to take it for granted, that all Flesh and Blood are corruptible, and consequently lays down an universal Proposition, without Limitation or Distinction, Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, that is, a Body compos'd of Flesh and Blood: Corruption, in the latter Part of the Verse, answers exactly to Flesh and Blood in the former Part; and Incorruption in the latter Part, to the Kingdom of God in the former Part. They mingle Heaven and Earth together who at this Rate confound Corruptible and Incorruptible. Incorruptible Blood seems to me to be what Logicians call a Contradiction in adjecto: For the Stamina of the Blood are of a very dissolvable Texture and Mixture, and when they are dissolv'd, Corruption or Putrefaction follows. And the same Thing may be said of Flesh, which is nothing but Blood and similar Juices coagulated. But we shall say more of this Matter anon, when we treat of the Blood and the glorious Body of Christ.

These Things, in the mean while, being thus discuss'd, it appears to me to be sufficiently evident, that the Saying of the Apostle, that Flesh and Blood are incapable of possessing the Kingdom of Heaven, ought to be understood as it is pronounced, literally and universally; and that consequently our celestial and incorruptible Bodies will be void of Flesh and Blood, and likewise of all Organs and all Parts that are compos'd of Flesh and Blood; But if not only Blood is wanting, but the whole Frame and Structure of Flesh, nothing will remain but a sapless Skeleton, depriv'd of all the Ornament, the Beauty, and the Majesty of a human organick Body.

Hitherto we have prov'd, from the sacred Writings, that the Bodies of Saints in Heaven are not organical, with regard to their several Parts; now let us consult other Characteristical Marks that regard and comprehend the whole Body: As when our celestial Body is said by the Apostle to be “not made with hands”; and when, in regard to that Body, we are said to be “not made with hands”. As to the first, the Apostle, in that Passage to the Corinthians, forms a Comparison, and, as it were, an Antithesis, between the Body which we have at present, and that which we shall have hereafter in the Heavens. The Question is, therefore, what is his Meaning? or how that Word is to be interpreted? If you render it verbatim, “not made with Hands”, from that there will be no Antithesis between the Body which we are to have, and that which we have at present; for this latter is by no means made with Hands, nor by any human Art, but has its Source from liquid Seed; and from a minute Drop grows to a greater Mass, and to an admirable Frame, by a Force internal, and as it were divine, without the Assistance of any Hand, or the Co-operation of any Art of Man. Secondly, if you render it which seems to have a more extensive Signification, neither by this Means will you preserve the Antithesis or the Distinction from our present Body, which is equally, with the other, inartificial, it being natural both in its Rise and Increase: But yet the Body which we have at present, in another Regard, has the Appearance of an artificial Body, or of a Body mechanically fram'd, that is, as far as it is compos'd of numerous Parts of various Matter, aptly articulately join'd together, and, as it were, coagulated. This Way you constitute a mechanical or organical Fabrick, which may be said to be “made with Hands;” and according to this Analogy, “not made with hands” and “inorganical” have one and the same Meaning; by which Interpretation the Antithesis is preserved between the two Kinds of Bodies, that which we have at present, and the celestial; and we conclude, that the Bodies of the Blessed in Heaven are Bodies inorganical.

But tho' in this Passage of the Apostle the foresaid Antithesis is not both Ways express'd, yet in another Place both Parts of the Opposition or the Comparison are express'd: As in the Saying of Christ (Mark 14:58); “the Temple made with Hands,” is oppos'd to “the temple not made with Hands;” and Christ by both means his own Body, and calls that which he had when he was here upon Earth, “made with Hands,” and the other “not

made with Hands;" in which Comparison the foresaid Antithesis can hardly be explain'd any other Way than we have explain'd it above. And the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, Chapter 9 confirms this Explication, where he dwells upon this Similitude of the Tabernacle, to which he tacitly here alludes. And as Christ names the Temple, the Apostle calls the Tabernacle, or the Sanctuary, "made with hands", (Ver. 24.) to which our terrestrial Body answers. Then he calls the celestial Body of Christ "not made with hands" (Ver. n.) and adds, by Way of Exposition, that is to say, "not of this Building, or this Structure, but of a different Form from this terrestrial and organick Body." But concerning this Word, and this Character, we have sufficiently spoke.

The only remaining Characteristical is taken from the Equality upon which the Blessed in Heaven shall be with the Angels. Christ says to the Sadducees, that the Sons of the Resurrection shall be "like to the Angels", which, at first View, seems only to regard Marriages and Copulations, yet not to the Exclusion of other Things: So far from it, that Christ seems rather to have taken that Occasion to deliver a more general Sentence; by which the Equality of the Sons of the Resurrection with the Angels, both may and ought to be further extended: And it is actually further extended by St. Luke, who after this Manner delivers this Saying of Christ:

But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that World, and the Resurrection from the Dead, neither marry, nor are given in Marriage; neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the Angels (Luke 20:36).

From These Words it appears to me to be evident, first, that the Angels have Bodies; then, that we shall have such Bodies as the Angels have, that is, inorganical Bodies.

The Sons of the Resurrection are the Sons of God, says Christ (Luke 20:36), as the Angels are called. I am not ignorant that the Expression, "Sons of God", is, in some Sense, to be applied to the Saints in this Life, namely, as they have received the Spirit of Adoption, and the certain Hope of a future Inheritance and Glory: But when 'tis spoken of a future Life, it seems to denote the Angelical State, according to this Saying of Christ here and in other Places (Matt. 5:9; John)

As to the first, if that Equality upon which the Blessed shall be with the Angels, consists only in the spiritual Part of each of them, and not in their Bodies; then, our Bodies may be mortal after the Resurrection, notwithstanding this Equality. But we are told by Christ, that by reason of this Equality we can die no more: This Equality, then, must regard the Bodies of each, or the corporeal Part of them; for we die, or are mortal, only with respect to the Body, whether in this Life or in the Life to come: Besides, this Immortality, or Equality with the Angels, concerning which Christ instructs us, are Privileges that accrue to us by arid after the Resurrection; but the Soul has been always immortal, from its Creation; and that Immortality that comes to us by and after the Resurrection, is the Immortality of the Body. 'Tis in this Respect, that we are equal to the Angels; for, in short, we would be like to the Angels rather before than after the Resurrection, if the Angels had not Bodies.

This St. Austin openly asserted: "Our Bodies," says he, "after the Resurrection, shall be such as are the Bodies of Angels;" at the Words, "Thou hast delivered my Soul from the lowermost Hell" And upon Psalm 110 not far from the Beginning, he calls our heavenly Body "an Angelical Body." Tertullian's Phrase is "Angelic Flesh" (de Refurr. Cam. e. S.6). And again, he calls it "a Change to an Angelical Substance" (Lib. iii. centra Marc. c. ult.) Lactantius calls it "a transformation into the Likeness of Angels" (Lib. vii c. 26). You may consult at your Leisure more Places of St. Austin that speak the same Sense, "of the Bodies of Fallen Angels, and those that are not fallen;" and others of like stature.

That the Angels are not naked spiritual Substances, but clothed with Bodies of their own Kind and Order, seems to be demonstrable to me from this, that they are to constitute the Attendance, and the Guard of Christ, upon the glorious Day of his Coming. They must of Necessity, then, be visible, and clothed with Bodies,

and those of a more noble Order, that they may augment and accomplish the Majesty and the Magnificence of that celestial Pomp. Angels usually appear cloathed in bright Bodies. See the Places in Gerard. Tom. 9 f. 659. about the Middle. And what St. Jude says of them, that they left their proper Habitation, (ver. 6) may denote either their Bodies, or their corporeal Places.

Nor will you, I believe, presume to say, that they will have Bodies at that Time, but Bodies which they will borrow, compos'd of Air for that Occasion only; Bodies to be thrown off, and again dispers'd when the Pomp of the Spectacle is over: I believe you will hardly suffer this to be said, that Christ, indeed, will return with innumerable Attendance, but an Attendance of Phantoms only, with a thousand thousand transitory and fugitive Shadows, and idle empty Visions, and that such Angels as These in Masquerade surround the Throne of God (2 Cor. 40)

Besides, when in the sacred Writings 'tis said, that Satan sometimes transforms himself to an Angel of Light, that Metamorphosis supposes that an Angel of Light has some outward Form, and some visible Species, by which he is known and distinguished from the others. But that, be it what it will, he cannot possibly have unless he has a Body. And as for the evil Angels in general, when they are capable of Pain and Torment by Means of corporeal Fire, and are destin'd to suffer it, 'tis evident from this, that those degenerate Spirits have their Bodies, whatever those Bodies are. Besides, on the other Side, 'tis impossible there can be any Society, any Commerce, between the Good and the Holy Angels, and Saints, and beatified Spirits, unless both the one and the other are in some Manner visible and incorporated.

Lastly, Give me leave to ask one Question; Can any one of a sound understanding, and who has a just Estimation of the Works of God? can such a one upon considering the Thing seriously, believe sincerely, and from his Soul, that the Celestial and Etherial Regions, vast as they are, and almost boundless, can be without any visible intelligent Creature, without any Animal indued with Reason, except a few human Souls? What Wilds, what Solitudes, what, next to infinite Deserts, must such a one suppose that there are in the Nature of Things, which Space the good and the great God, wanted neither Power nor Goodness to replenish with proper Inhabitants? But if you are of Opinion with us, that Angels have Bodies proper to their Kind and Order, not, indeed, organical Bodies, (for what have Angels to do with Bones, with Joints, with Bowels, with Stomach, and with the Frame and Fabrick of Members?) but lucid and etherial ones, such as several of the Fathers were of Opinion that they had, as we have observed in another Place; and if you grant that ours will be like to These Angelick Bodies; from this Hypothesis Honour will redound to God the Creator of the Universe, to Heaven its Ornaments, its Majesty, and Magnificence, and Armies of illustrious Inhabitants, to us a Society and eternal Commerce with Angels, and an Equality, and Resemblance, and Relation to them, both by glorious Endowments of Body and Mind, and by blissful Immortality.

Hitherto we have answered the first Part of the Question propounded by the Apostle, which regards the Form of our immortal Bodies: Let us now proceed to the second Part, which comprehends the Matter of them, and the Qualities of that Matter.

Here, therefore, the Enquiry is to be, what Kind of Body we shall enjoy in the Heavens, whether a thick or solid one, like that which we carry about as at present, or a thin, a light, a refulgent, and a transparent one, like Light, or Ether, or Matter a-kin to the Heavens. In examining this Part of the Question, let us proceed in the same Method: that we used. If the first Part, by those sacred Characters, Of Tokens that are founded in the sacred Writings. But the Body of the Blessed in Heaven, is called by St. Paul, celestial, Spiritual, potent, glorious, and conformable to the glorious Body of Christ. When 'tis called celestial, that denotes the Matter of which 'tis composed: For as the Body which we have at present consists of terrestrial Matter; so the Body, which is called celestial, will consist of celestial Matter; or, as the Body of Adam was framed of Dust, or of terrestrial Clay; so, on the contrary, the Bodies of the Sons of God will be formed of celestial Matter, or Matter modify'd like it.

They shall also bear the Image of the heavenly. With respect to the Body in this Life, we are made like to Adam; and with respect to the Body in the other Life, we are made like to Christ. But if our celestial Body is to have the same Qualities or Modifications with the celestial Matter, then this Enquiry only remains, viz. what is the Nature of celestial Matter, or after what Manner is it modify'd? To which I answer, that 'tis not hard, nor solid, like Glass, or .Chrystal, or Ice, as some of the Ancients dreamt, but that 'tis as pure and thin, as the finest Air or Ether: And, consequently, our celestial Bodies will be of the same Nature.

Secondly, our celestial Body is called by the Apostle a spiritual Body: So it either signifies something void of all Matter, in which Signification it can be meant of no Body whatever; or it signifies some light and thin Body, like Wind, or Air, or Vapour: in which Sense likewise it is us'd by the Hebrews, and Spiritus Spirit, by the Latins, as when the thinner Parts or Particles of our Blood are call'd Spirits, whether they are animal or vital. Nor does that Word seem to me to be taken otherwise, when our Celestial Body is call'd a Spiritual Body, provided you add this as by Consequence, that the heavenly one will be more vivacious than this mortal Body, and that Man, who will be then made to an enlivening Spirit, will have the Power of preserving his own Body without Meat, or Drink, or Sleep, or those other Things which the animal Body of Adam wanted for its Support.

Thirdly, the Celestial Body is call'd potent and active: the Carcass is sown in Weakness, and it is raised in Power. The Power of the Body consists in Motion, or in the Power it has to move itself and other Things; that which moves itself from Place to Place easily and swiftly, is call'd powerful; and if besides it has the Force of moving other Bodies, it is on that Account thought the more powerful. But 'tis here to be observ'd, that a Body whose Parts are quiet, and adhere one to the other, hath no Power of its own of moving itself; for Motion among Bodies is produc'd only by Motion, or by a Body mov'd. There is, therefore, a Necessity that a Body to be active must have its Parts in Motion, as 'tis in Air, Wind, Flame, and Light. Indeed, hard and coherent Bodies, which suffer themselves to be bent, and are call'd elastick, resist, and recover their former Situation, and that with a great deal of Force: But then the Power of moving does not proceed from the hard Body, but from some other subtle Matter in Motion inclos'd in the hard Body. Besides, in Machines which are compos'd partly of Matter which is hard and firm, and partly of that which is fluid or volatile, the solid may be mov'd by the spirituous Parts, and the whole Compound be moved together, or any particular Part of it, as may be seen in the Motion of our own Bodies, or of any particular Member of them. But if within the hard Bodies there is no Matter in Motion, nor moveable Matter, neither its own nor foreign, it remains motionless in itself, and can never be mov'd, unless by external Force.

Now if These Things are rightly affirm'd and determin'd by us, it follows, that the Body which we are to have in the Heavens may be active and lively, it must not consist of a sluggish and spiritless Matter, as is the Matter of concrete Bodies, or Bodies whose Parts are coherent to one another, but of a Substance light, and vivid, and volatile; that so, in Obedience to the Command of the Mind, it may be easily carried to any Part, may pass through other Bodies, and may, at its own Pleasure, rarify or condense itself: In fine, the united Force of the Parts or Particles of which such a Body consists, must be exceedingly powerful; and if they are all directed the same Way, and to the same Object, they will penetrate or throw down every Thing that stands in their Way, like a Storm, or the Lightning of Thunder.

And here give me leave to add, that we ought not to wonder that it mould be in the Power of the Soul to guide and direct the Parts of this spirituous Body which Way soever it pleases; when even in this gross and heavy terrestrial Body, it sends forth the Spirits and the thinner Juices every Way into the Nerves and Muscles, according to the absolute Pleasure and Command of its own Will: And when all this spirituous Body is nothing but a Frame of congregated Spirits, and of the noblest Matter, 'tis but highly reasonable that we sould grant to a glorified Soul a plenary Power over such a Body; a Power of impelling, retaining, or guiding and directing its Parts which Way soever it pleases.

The fourth Character follows, by which the Bodies of the Blessed are styl'd glorious. That Word denotes something more excellent than Beauty only, or than Proportion of Parts, viz. a certain Light or Refulgency;

nor can Matter or Body, be it ever so beautiful, appear glorious, unless 'tis illustrated with Light and Radiancy. Besides, the Word "Glory," wherever in the sacred Writings 'tis spoke, either of natural Bodies, or of Divine or Angelick Appearances, almost always denotes something resplendent and illustrious, as will immediately more fully appear. In the mean while, you see that in this very Chapter Mention is made of the Glory of the Stars, which consists in Light, and that in order to explain to us the Glory of our celestial Bodies. Lastly, the Prophet Daniel, discoursing of the Condition of the Righteous after the Resurrection, to lay it before us, has Recourse to the same Example of Stars, but applies that Example more strongly. Says he:

Many of those that now sleep in the Dust of the Earth will awake; some of them to Life eternal, and others to eternal Contempt and Reproach: And the Wise shall shine like the Splendor of the Firmament; and they that instruct many to Righteousness, like Stars to Millions of Ages (Daniel 12:2).

Christ mark'd the same State, the same Time, and the same Glory, when he said:

Then shall the Righteous shine forth like the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father (Matt. 13:43).

T'is evident that the same Glory is describ'd by the Prophet, by Christ, and by the Apostle, and that that Glory is a Participation of Light and Splendor.

But the Question may here be ask'd, Whether this Light and this Splendor are inherent in glorified Bodies? or whether they come from abroad, and are only reflected or transmitted, as in Gems or polish'd Metals, or in other solid Bodies? And yet, methinks, this too might be determin'd by the Examples brought from the Sun and the Stars. However, we shall examine this more fully in the following Character, by which our celestial Body is said to be form'd after the Manner of the glorious Body of Christ. In the mean while, this remains fix'd and establish'd, that the Bodies of the Blessed in Heaven are, in some measure, lucid and refulgent, and by consequence glorious.

And now comes the last and the most illustrious Character, of the Formation of our celestial bodies after the glorious Body of Christ. This Character confirms the former, and besides discovers to us, that the Light which those glorified Bodies emit, is inherent in them, and dwells in them, and proceeds from an internal Principle, as from an exhaustless Fountain: For Christ, when he was on the Earth, in his Transfiguration, render'd himself all Brightness, not by reflecting a borrowed Light, but from himself he emitted that Virtue which caused him to overflow with Glory, and to be immers'd in a Deluge of Light: His Face did shine as the Sun, and his Raiment was white as the Light: So says the Evangelist.

Then after his Resurrection he appeared in several Shapes, (Mark 16:2, Luke 24:16, John 20:15, C.f John 21:5.) render'd himself visible or invisible according to his Pleasure (Luke 24:31), and twice enter'd the Houses where his Disciples were, though the Doors were shut. and yet he appeared with Bones and with Flesh to his doubting Disciples, that he might convince them of the Truth of his Resurrection. And thus he shewed, by These several Tokens, that it was in his Power to resolve his Body into the thin and the volatile, and to reduce it at his Pleasure into a Body solid, and of adherent Parts.

Clement of Alexandria says (Strom. 6. f. 649), "For he eat not for the sake of his Body, which was sustain'd by divine Virtue, but left those he appeared to should entertain false Notions of him, as we find afterwards that some actually did, supposing him to have been no more than a Ghost or Apparition. Origin: "He ate after his Resurrection, and drank, and appeared cloathed, and offer'd himself to be felt, to convince his doubting Disciples of the Reality of his Resurrection; but yet he plainly discovers the Nature of his aerial and spiritual Body, by entering into the Room while the Doors were shut, and by his vanishing out of Sight at the Breaking of Bread."

There are be sides quoted, as of the same Opinion, many others. But it may be doubted now an incorruptible Body could receive the Impression of the Nails, and be touch'd by mortal Hands. But let not this shock thee; for this was by Permission only, by way of Condesension.) For a Body so thin and fine as to come in when the Doors were but, must be void of all gross Substance. But he shewed himself in that Manner for the Proof of the Resurrection.. St. Austin (de Civ. Dei), "We must believe, that the Brightness of the Body of Christ at his Resurrection, was rather hid from the Eyes of the Disciples, than really wanting in itself: For the weak Sight of Man could not have been able to have beheld so glorious a Form with that Stedfastness as was necessary for him to be known by. He would not be touch'd (John 20:17.) because It was not in a tangible State, being then return'd from the Dead."

Lastly, When he ascended into Heaven, with the Swiftness of a winged Angel, mounting to his native Seat, what was his Body? what was his Vehicle? It was light and rapid, as the fiery Chariot, in which Elias was formerly carried, when he ascended alive into Heaven. In like manner, when Christ was seen by St. John in the Isle of Patmos, His Eyes were as a Flame of Fire, and Feet like to fine Brass, as if they burned in a Furnace; as the Son of Man was seen (Dan. x.5) by the Prophet Daniel before. And lastly, he is at length to return in the same glorious, refulgent, flaming Form; otherwise he would hardly be visible both Night and Day a lost in the sublime Sky, to those who inhabit the Earth: Nay, even the Glory of the Father, with which 'tis said he is to appear, is this very refulgent Form, as the Father, or the Ancient of Days, is describ'd by the same (Dan. vii.) Prophet, with a luminous and flaming Majesty.

And to come to a Conclusion of this Point, I only desire to add, that the Glory of God, which is call'd by the Hebrews Sheichinah, and which is the majestical Presence of God, has always the Appearance of Light, or Flame, or of a resplendent Cloud; as in the Journeying out of Egypt, and in the Holy of Holies; and the same Thing which is called the Glory of God, is term'd likewise a Cloud, or a lucid Cloud (Num. 12:5, Num. 16:19, 42; Matt.17:5; 2 Pet. 1:17) and in many other Places in both Testaments, it appears, that the Glory of God, or his glorious Presence, is always shewn in some lucid, flaming, or fiery Matter; but the Body of Christ was the most excellent Residing Place of this Shechinah, of this divine Glory, and, as it were, the Sanctum Sanctorum in which it shone out most brightly; to which also the sacred Authors are often wont to allude, (Job. 1:14. Heb. 9:11;. Rev. 21:3). These Things being thus explain'd, it seems to be determin'd, that the glorious Body of Christ which he has in the Heavens, is like Flames, like .Ether, or like liquid Light, and that consequently our celestial Body will be of no dissimilar Matter, since 'tis to be conformable to his. And indeed, if we consult Reason and Philosophy, any other Kind of Matter can scarce subsist or sustain itself in the Heavens, and the ethereal Regions, where all Things are serene and pure, every Thing most fine and subtle. Lastly, since in the Rank and Order of Bodies, or in material Nature, we know nothing more excellent than Light or Flame, 'tis but just that we determine, that the glorious Body of Christ, and ours in Proportion, must consist of These till we find something that is more excellent and surpassing.

Perhaps, it may be here objected, that thus to explain the Glory of the Body of Christ in the Heavens would be foreign neither to Reason nor the sacred Writings, if it were not an Obstacle to the received Doctrine of the Flesh and Blood of Christ that are still remaining in his celestial Body: To which I answer, that the Fathers either had different Sentiments, or remain'd doubtful concerning this Point of the Flesh and Blood of the celestial Body of Christ. 'Tis very well known that all the Disciples of Origen deny it, and philosophize quite after another Manner. Besides, with the Fathers of the second Nicene Synod, among the Definitions and the Heads of the Constantinopolitan Council, (which is called the Council of the Iconoclasses or the Image-Breakers, which upon hearing them read over again, they approv'd of, was this:

Whoever does not confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, after his assuming the rational Nature and intellectual Flesh, is let down with God the Father, and that he will so likewise return, with paternal Majesty, to judge the Quick and Dead, not indeed with Flesh, but neither incorporeal; so that he may be seen of those by whom he was pierc'd; and that he remains God without the Grossness of Flesh, let him be accursed.

That Christ was set down at the Right Hand of his Father, and that he would at length hither return; but that he 'would not return in the Flesh, and yet not without a Body, that is, a subtle ratified Body: For it follows, that he may be seen by those who pierced him, and may remain God without the Grossness of the flesh, Can any Thing be more plain than this? For it must be observ'd, that These Words, which chiefly regard the Point of which we are treating, are the very Words of Gregory Nazianzen, speaking of the same Matter, viz. in his Fortieth Oration, towards the End, he says this concerning Christ. That the third Day he returned to Life, and ascended into Heaven; from whence he will return illustrious and glorious, to judge the Quick and the Dead; viz. no longer incarnated, and yet not wanting a Body, but having a Body more august and more divine, and such a Body as none but the Son of God can have; that he might both be seen by those who pierced him, and might remain a God without any corporeal Mass, or any carnal Grossness; or rather, by aliening These Doctrines as their own, they do themselves Credit and Honour. In vain the Popish Doctors labour to wrest These Words, to a metaphorical or figurative Sense, viz. to signify not the Substance of Flesh, but its Affections and Infirmities; but the Words which follow, as well in the said Councils as in Gregory Nazianzen; which in the Councils are, That he may remain a God without the Grossness of the Flesh; and in the Father, that God may remain without any corporeal Mass, without any fleshy Grossness: These Words, I say, plainly discover, that the Word is here taken physically, and according to its specifick Nature, as 'tis opposed to a thin and liquid Matter; and 'tis in this Sense, as you may plainly see, that Flesh is denied to be in the Body of Christ, by the Votes and Consents of These two celebrated Councils.

Lastly, I said that some of the Fathers were doubtful as to this Point, which is universally known by the Answer of St. Austin to .Concentius, who had propos'd this Question to him, Whether now the Body of Christ has Bones and Blood, and the other Lineaments of Flesh in it. To which Question, after that St. Austin has given a general and partial Answer, he adds:

Let not Faith be wanting, and no Doubt will remain, unless we ought to enquire concerning the Blood of Christ; because when he said, Feel and see, for a Spirit has not Flesh and Bones, he did not add Blood. Let not us, therefore, add to our Inquiry what he did not add to his Answer; and, if you please, let the Question have this compendious End, or else, perhaps, our more troublesome Enquirer, taking occasion from this mention of Blood, may press us further, and ask, if Blood, why not Phlegm, why not yellow and black Choler? of which four Humours the Physicians agree, that the Nature of Flesh is compos'd: But whatever any one adds, let him beware of adding Corruption, that he may preserve the Soundness and Chastity of his Faith.

Here, you see, St. Austin remains cautious and doubtful, and Consentius docile, but yet doubtful. Some, indeed, talk more boldly and grossly concerning the glorious Body of Christ. This I deny not; but some Things, at present, being balanced against others, let us proceed, if you please, on our Subject: For whatever has been determin'd, either by Councils or Fathers, it must yield to Reason and Scripture.

Secondly then, I say, or rather repeat from what was said before, that Flesh and Blood cannot, according to the Apostle, inherit the Kingdom of God. Their Words, if they are literally taken, and in their proper Signification, there is an end of the present Dispute, by the Assertion of our Lord himself: But that they ought to be received so in this Place, according to the received Laws of Interpreting, if I am not mistaken, has been above sufficiently demonstrated.

Thirdly, 'Tis repugnant both to Reason and the Nature of Things, that Flesh and Blood can be incorruptible: As the Body of Christ is now, so will our Body be hereafter in the Heavens. But you will, perhaps, answer, that Flesh and Blood, indeed, are not incorruptible in their own Nature, but that they may be render'd incorruptible, their specifick Nature being preserv'd and remaining. This is what I deny; yes, in this Part we differ: And lest Deceit should be lurking in Generals, let us, if you please, open the Matter succinctly, that the State of the Question may appear the more manifestly. Every Kind of Body has its Properties; of which some are accidental and mutable, others are essential and unchangeable, which being destroy'd or alter'd, that Portion of Matter will cease to be a Body of the same Kind and Nature which it was of before, but passes into



another Class or Order of Bodies. For Example; When the Herbs which we eat are converted into Flesh and Blood, they are no longer Herbs, though the same Matter remains, but Flesh and Blood, Bodies of quite another Kind and another Nature. On the other Side, when Flesh and Blood are, in their Turns, converted into Herbs and Grass, which often happens when the Ground grows fat by the Blood of slaughter'd Bodies, thus alter'd, they cease to be Flesh and Blood. When Christ, in the Marriage of Cana, converted Water into Wine, the same Matter remain'd, but differently modified; and by reason of those new Modifications, lost both the Name and the Nature of Water.

Tell me then plainly, and leave the Sophister behind you, what Alteration do you require should be made in the Parts or Particles of Flesh and Blood, that from a corruptible Matter they may become incorruptible, and yet preserve the Nature of Flesh and Blood? Or, if you had rather, answer this Question: What are the Properties, what are the Conditions of Flesh and Blood, which you affirm to be essential to both, and from both inseparable? Yes, what are the Properties and the Conditions, which being preserved, Flesh and Blood remain? and which being destroyed, Flesh and Blood must either perish with them, or must pass into another Class of Bodies? If you answer, that that is unknown to you, then you confess that you know not whether that can be done, which yet you affirm is done, which seems to be the Part of a rash and a headstrong Man: Yet still let us try if, by some other Expedient, we can bring latent Truth to the Light. Tell me, then, what are the Principles, what are the Stamina of which Blood is compos'd? You know what are the Principles of Blood, which all receive and acknowledge, viz. Salt, Sulphur, Spirit, Earth, and Water. But 'tis equal to me whether you take These or other, provided they are known, determin'd, and terrestrial. In the mean time, These Things being thus laid down, I ask you, Is it your Opinion that These Parts and These Principles will remain in your Celestial Blood? Do you believe that the Body of Christ in Heaven is compos'd of Salt, Sulphur, Water, and Earth? Unless your Celestial Blood retains These Stamina, These fundamental Principles, it will be no longer Blood, unless equivocally and catechrestically, because it will not have the Substance of Blood; and if it retain These, it will not be a Body celestial and incorruptible.

For here we are to observe, that this Matter, this Substance of the Blood being thus laid down, the Form of it is to be compos'd of the due Mixture of these Parts and Principles: But now imagine what Mixture or Texture you please, it will be dissolvable; nay, it will be actually dissolv'd and dissipated by the celestial Matter surrounding it, and intermix'd with it, like Wood or Straw in our terrestrial Fire. 'Tis true, indeed, by means of Power divine, it may be preserv'd incorrupted, as may the Blood that we now have, or as the young Men formerly were in the Babylonian Furnace; but still it will be in its own Nature corruptible, provided 'tis compos'd of the same Elements, however mix'd, of which our Blood is constituted: And what we have said of Blood will hold good in proportion of Flesh likewise; so that there will be no Occasion for going over the Argument again, to shew the same of this latter. It will be sufficient to observe, that if Softness and Humidity remain, Corruptibility will likewise remain; but if it becomes hard and dry, it will then take the Nature of a Stone, or of Glass; or, at least, it will referable Mummy dried and hardened in the burning Sands of Arabia or Egypt. But it will be needless to dwell any longer on Things which are as repugnant to Reason, as they are to Faith.

In the mean time, the Summary and Conclusion of what has been said upon this Subject is this, That the glorious Body of Christ in the Heavens does not consist of any jointed Frame of Bones, of Flesh, and of Blood, Or of any of the Humours or Entrails of this present terrestrial Body, but that 'tis of a more excellent Matter, of a higher Nature, and Purity, and Perfection: That I may say all in a Word, it consists of Matter entirely Celestial, with respect both to its' Substance and Accidents. Lastly, the external and visible Glory of this Celestial Body will consist properly in this, That it will be refulgent, and by its own Powers illustrious; I say, by its own Rays, and not by any borrowed Light, either transmitted or reflected, but living and innate, like a Source of living Water. And of this refulgent Glory Christ gave a Specimen from Heaven, when he spoke to Saul, and did, by the Flaming of his Rays, as it were by Lightning, throw him prostrate on the Ground, blinded, and amaz'd, and confounded, says the Apostle:

The glorious Body of Christ pour'd out and diffus'd its Light, a Light more bright and more powerful than the Meridian Rays of the Sun. (Compare Acts 9:17, 27, Acts 22:6. and Acts 26:13).

This seems to me to be the proper Habit and State of the glorious Body of Christ; yet notwithstanding all this, we are willing to allow that it is, and always was in the Power of Christ to change his whole Body, or any Part of his Body, into whatever Form or whatever Temperament he pleas'd. When he was here upon Earth he walk'd upon the Sea, and it gave no way to his light Body. He was forty Days without Meat and without Drink, and had Power to render his Body impassive. He render'd it, likewise, thin, thick, heavy, light, dark, lucid, visible, or invisible, according to his Sovereign Pleasure: Much more has he now Power over his own Body in the Heavens, and can convert the Substance of it, that is obedient to his Commands, into Blood or any other Juice, into Phlegm or any other Concretion, according to his divine Will, and therefore fore the Dispute is not concerning that Point, nor concerning the Power of Christ, either over the external Elements, or over his own Body, but concerning his proper State, and his Form, that is said to be glorious and celestial: That, I say, is neither bony, nor fleshy, nor sanguinary, but a Mass of liquid Light, and of Air that glitters with its Radiency, like the brighter Stars of Heaven; as is most agreeable to his divine Dignity, and those etherial Regions where he chiefly resides.

Thus have I treated with all the Brevity, and all the Perspicuity, that I possibly could, of the Matter and Form of the Body of Christ in Heaven, and also of our own Bodies, which are to be made like unto his, by his divine Power and Influence. We have found upon Examination, that each of these is inorganic and inconcrete: And tho' this Examination has been founded upon Characters and Tokens drawn from the sacred Writings, and adjusted to the Nature of Things, yet are we so accustomed to gross Bodies, constituted of Flesh and Bones, and a Frame of solid Members, that we are scarce able to conceive any other Kind of animated Bodies, or to give our Assent to any Proofs whatever of them. But whoever is either moderately conversant in the Writings of the ancient philosophers, or has read what the Christian Fathers philosophically write concerning Angels and Demons, will without Difficulty get free from that Prejudice. Therefore I will presume to advise them, that they would first diligently enquire, whether Angels have Bodies? and if they have, what sort of Bodies theirs are? As for the First, you have the Suffrage and Consent of the ancient Fathers, and of the Grecians especially to that Opinion, that the Angels have Bodies, as we have shewn in another Place. Then what the Bodies of Angels are, you will learn from the same Grecian Fathers; and in several Places of St. Austin, among the Latins, as in the treatise de Gen. ad Lit. in his Epistles, in the Treatise de Civitate Dei, and in several other Places. You will find that they all teach us, that those Bodies are thin as the Air, or the pure Ether; but that the good Angels have the purer, and the grosser the evil ones. This Doctrine of the Fathers being received, and their, as it were, secondary Authority, (for the primary one is that of the sacred Scripture, and of Reason that bears Witness to it), that vulgar Prejudice will disappear and vanish, that there is one only Kind of animated Bodies, viz. the organical, and that which consists of concrete Matter, of Flesh, and of nervous Members, like our terrestrial Bodies. But there is another Genius of Bodies, of a celestial Kind and Order, such as the Bodies of Angels are, or such as ours will be, when we shall be like to the Angels. The gross, heavy, sluggish Bodies, such as we have at present, are in the lowest Class of Bodies, which immortal Minds, and rational Nature inhabit. And those which consist of a light, subtle, and moveable Matter, are a much nobler sort of animated Bodies, and are readier for Motion or for Dispatch in all the Actions, either of the Mind or the Body. Nay, even in this terrestrial Body, the thin, the subtle, and the fluid Part, which we call Spirits, is the proper Vehicle of the Soul, as the most nearly ally'd to it, These it commands, and these are the Instruments which it makes use of to move the Members of the Body: And the Affections and Operations of the Mind, depend upon the Subtilty, or the Grossness, the Plenty or the Want, the regular or irregular Motion of the Spirits, and are accordingly more or less powerful and vigorous. This System then and Collection of Spirits, and of thin and spiritous Matter, is the Seat of the Soul, and its primary and intimate Body; and this Covering of Skin and Flesh which we wear, is only used as a Shell or a Casket for the surer Preservation of it. Away then with that vulgar ridiculous Dotage, repugnant both to Philosophy, and to Theology, viz. that without the Trunk of a Body, and the Entrails which belong to it, no Body can be a fit Habitation for Souls, or for any spiritual Nature. A Spirit, says Christ, has not Flesh and Bones. He does not say that a Spirit is soft.

Certainly, if a Spirit had been without any kind of Body, it had been more ready for Christ to have said, and had been as much to the Purpose:

A Spirit has not a Body, as you see that I have.

Yet this he did not say, but:

A Spirit has not Flesh and Bones, you see that I have (Luke 24:39).

That is, a Spirit has not a gross, visible, and palpable Body, such as mine appears to be, both to your Sight and Touch. Lastly, the Philosophers in defining that Body, which they say good Men will have in a future State, or in Heaven, make use of the very same Words and Epithets, and Phrases, as the Apostle does in describing our future celestial Body. Paul calls this Body we are to have, a celestial or eternal one in the Heavens: They in like Manner oppose it to a terrestrial one. St. Paul calls it immortal and incorruptible; the Philosophers use Words of the same Signification. The Apostle compares it to the Stars; they call it “spiritual body”. He stiles it a lucid and glorious Body; they “a spiritual body”. In short, both describe it by the same common Epithet. 'Tis not to be questioned but that the same Kind of Bodies is meant on both Sides. But 'tis well known, that the Philosophers did not design a gross Body, mix'd up with Blood, much less any kind of hard organical Machine; but a “spiritual body,” as they call it, composed of a rarefy'd active form of Matter; so that this Body may be always of a like Nature with the Place, where the Souls are to reside; an Opinion which they are often repeating.

**1740**

**Jonathan Edwards (1703 – 1758), Calvinist Reformer**

**All Christians Should Follow His Example & Should Not Content Themselves With Thought That They Have Goodness Enough To Carry Them To Heaven, But Should Earnestly Seek High Degrees Of Glory; For Higher Degrees Of Glory Are Promised To Extraordinary Labors For God, For No Other Reason, But That We Should Seek Them**  
**The Character of Paul an Example to Christians**

In those earnest labors which he performed, he had respect to the recompense of the reward. He did it for an incorruptible crown. 1 Cor 9:25. He sought a high degree of glory, for he knew the more he labored the more he should be rewarded, as appears from what he tells the Corinthians. “He that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully.” And 1 Cor. 3:8, “Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.” That he had respect to that crown of glory, which is Master had promised, in those great labors and sufferings, is evident from what he says to Timothy, a little before his death. 2 Tim. 4:7, 8, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” All Christians should follow his example in this also. They should not content themselves with the thought that they have goodness enough to carry them to heaven, but should earnestly seek high degrees of glory. For the higher degrees of glory are promised to extraordinary labors for God, for no other reason, but that we should seek them.

**1748**

**Charles Louis de Villette (1700 - 1769), Minister of French Huguenot Church of St. Patrick in Dublin, Ireland**

**Il Y Aura Pour Nous Dans La Vie À-Venir Differens Degrez De Bonheur; La Récompense Assignée À Chacun Répondra Exactly Aux Soins, Que Chacun Aura Pris, Aux Efforts, Que Chacun Aura Faits, Suivant Le Nombre Des Talens, Qui Lui Auront Été Confiez**  
**Essai sur la Felicite de la Vie a Venir (An Essay on the Felicity of the Life to Come)**

A work appeared in Dublin, in 1748, entitled An Essay on the Felicity of the Life to Come, by C. L. de Villette, Minister of the French Church of St. Patrick in that city. It was a book of four hundred and forty pages, and was conducted by way of dialogue. In the latter part, the question concerning eternal punishment is introduced, the negative of which this author defends. Whether he did not believe in annihilation, is a question to which we can give no answer. "There is" said he, "much reason to believe, that during the two or three first ages of Christianity, the annihilation of the impenitently wicked was the generally received doctrine. They went even further than this. Every body knows that the great Origen admitted the restitution of the damned, without excepting the Devil. It has happened in more than one instance, that the errors of the Fathers have been received, while we have rejected their sound doctrines." (The modern history of Universalism: from the era of the Reformation to the Present Time - Page 169, Thomas Whittemore - 1830)

**XI & Dernier Dialogue**

**Theocrite:**

Vous vous souvenez, sans doute, mes Amis, que j'ai à présent à r'assembler les principaux traits du tableau dispersez cà & là; A mettre ainsi tout à la fois sous les yeux ces merveilleux objets. Ceci ne sera donc qu'une Récapitulation, un extrait, de toutes mes Observations, & Réflexions, précédentes. Je me flatte que ce Tout ensemble fera plus d'effet; Ou du moins qu'il fera quelque plaisir au Lecteur en lui rappelant les endroits les plus interessans, & en les lui présentant dégagés de toute discussion.

Ici bas il y a de fâcheuses infirmités, des désavantages réels, attachés à notre corps. Ces infirmités, ces désavantages, viennent avec nous au Monde, & ne nous quittent qu'avec la Vie.

Nos Facultés corporelles, nos Sens, ont des imperfections. Il en résulte nécessairement divers inconveniens positifs.

Enfin nous sommes sujets aux maladies, aux douleurs, à la décadence: Notre Corps s'use, se déränge, se dissout: Nous mourons: Cela est inévitable.

Les fâcheuses infirmités, les désavantages inséparables de notre Constitution présente, sont—Les désagrèables suites de la Nourriture, & le Sommeil.

Les Effets de ces Infirmités sont frequens, incommodes: Le sommeil est une espèce de mort périodique, une interruption à la Pensée, & au Sentiment.

Nos Facultés corporelles, quand nous les comparons aux Facultés du même Genre dans d'autres Animaux, & surtout quand nous considérons le degré de perfection, auquel le Créateur pourroit porter ou ces mêmes Facultés, ou des Facultés analogues, nous paroissent d'une imperfection bien-humiliante.

Les inconveniens positifs, qui résultent de cette imperfection, & de la nature des Etres, qui nous environnent, ont lieu presque à toute heure. Nous nous mouvons avec lenteur & Nous ne saurions nous transporter un peu loin sans embarras, sans lassitude: Pour employer utilement notre souplesse, notre agilité, notre force, il faut que nous subissions des travaux, des peines, que l'on peut souvent appeller des Maux.

Nos Sens aussi sont bien défectueux: Il est des Saisons, des tems, & bien des heures, où l'Art ne sauroit suppléer à plein au défaut de la lumière du Soleil; Et souvent cette lumière, qui nous est si utile éblouit, affoiblit, nos yeux. La nécessité, où nous nous trouvons de réparer par notre industrie ce qui manque à nos

Facultez, & à nos Sens, démontre leur imperfection, & nous fait désirer quelque chose d'analogue, qui ne soit point sujet à toutes ces incommoditez.

Si le Goût, & l'Odorat, nous fournissent un grand nombre d'agréables Sensations par la multiplicité des favorables objets, qui les excitent, il arrive souvent que des objets contraires produisent un effet opposé. La disposition présente des choses amène de pareils desagrémens inévitablement, Si frequemment. Mais ce ne sont la que des riens en comparaison des Maladies, des Douleurs, de la Décadence de notre Corps, de sa Mortalité. Voilà les grands Maux, qui, sans l'addition d'aucun autre Mal peuvent faire de ce Monde présent une Vallée de misères.

Dans le Ciel nous serons affranchis de toutes ces infirmités naturelles, que j'ai appellées de fâcheuses sujétions. Les Viandes sont pour le Ventre, & le Ventre est pour les Viandes; Mais Dieu détruira l'un & l'autre, dit St. Paul.

S'il faut supposer des moyens de conserver, de réparer, de perfectionner, nos corps immortels, ces moyens seront, sans doute, si aisez, si prompts, si commodes, qu'on ne pourra les regarder comme des inconveniens: Peut être même seront ils si agréables qu'ils entreront dans le composé de notre Béatitude.

Le sommeil alors loin de nous être utile deviendrait en quelque sorte une usurpation des droits de l'Immortalité: Ce seroit autant de retranché sur une délicieuse existence. Nos corps donc, quoique délicatement, ou finement, organizez, subsisteront dans le même état, ou se r'établiront très promptement, & se perfectionneront de plus en plus, sans avoir besoin pour cela d'un usage embarrassant de quelque matière externe, ou d'aucun intervalle de repos.

Nous pourrons nous transporter d'un lieu à un autre avec une facilité, & une vitesse, qui peut être surpassera tout ce que nous connoissons ici bas de la Faculté Locomotive: Nous aurons les moyens les plus commodes, & les plus nombreux, pour vaincre la résistance des Corps. Telles seront, en un mot, notre agilité, notre adresse, & notre force, que nos travaux d'alors n'auront que ce doux degré de peine, qui dans bien des cas fait du travail un plaisir.

Nous aurons des Sensations de toutes les espèces, non seulement de celles qui servent principalement à nous procurer la connoissance des objets, mais aussi de celles, qui ne servent qu'à nos plaisirs: Il y en aura de semblables, ou analogues, à celles d'ici bas: Celles là seulement en seront retranchées, qui ne sont faites que pour la vie présente; et apparemment en leur place le Créateur en substituera un grand nombre d'autres, dont nous ne pouvons à présent avoir aucune idée.

Il faudra nécessairement, par exemple, que nous ayons un Sens analogue à la Vue. Mais, sans doute, il sera tout autrement parfait que notre Vue d'à présent; & ce qu'il y aura alors de semblable, ou d'analogue, à la lumière de ce monde, sera invariable, éternel. A des Créatures, qui ne dorment jamais, il ne faut point de nuit. Ce sera une lumière pure, égale, d'un éclat perpétuel, & dont nos yeux pourtant, alors faits exprès pour elle, ne seront ni éblouis, ni fatiguez. De même à l'égard de l'Ouïe, nous aurons aussi un sens analogue: Ce qui aujourd'hui nous procure le doux sentiment, & l'agréable idée, des sons accordans, harmonieux, ne doit point être détruit. Par la munificence infinie du Très-haut tout ce qui est si noble, si beau, si convenable à des Etres, qu'il a douez d'Intelligence, qu'il a rendus susceptibles de tant de sentimens exquis, sera infailliblement augmenté, perfectionné.

Quant aux sensations de toute autre espèce, nous serons environnez d'objets propres à les exciter. Tout inférieurs que de pareils plaisirs nous paroîtront alors à des plaisirs plus dignes de l'excellence de notre nature, ils ne laisseront pas que d'aider à compléter notre bonheur.

Ces Sensations, quelque nombreuses, quelque variées, qu'elles puissent être, n'ébranleront point l'admirable constitution de nos corps célestes.

Outre le plaisir, qu'elles nous seront par elles mêmes, elles serviront à donner prise, pour ainsi dire, à une multitude de ces aimable attentions, de ces soins obligeans, qui cimentent, qui animent, l'affection mutuelle.

Toujours soumises à notre Entendement épuré, Hors de toute concurrence avec nos Goûts Moraux; Purgées de tout leur venin, loin de nous jeter encore comme ici bas dans de honteux écarts, elles ne feront que répandre un doux assaisonnement sur nos généreuses actions, multiplier, diversifier, les agrémens de la Société.

Outre ce que je viens de dire des Sensations, il est à remarquer qu'il y a un état, qui n'a du rapport à aucun de nos Sens en particulier, mais qui les favorise tous: C'est cet état d'une aise complete, où l'on se trouve lorsqu'on jouit d'une santé entière, & qu'aucune intempérie de l'air, aucun Infecte, aucun des corps, qui environnent le nôtre, ne nous causent la moindre incommodité, & qu'au contraire tout conspire à nous flatter, à nous plaire: C'est plus qu'une simple tranquillité: Ce n'est pas du moins une tranquillité fade: Encore que l'on ne fasse pas attention à tel, ou tel, objet qui pourrait frapper agréablement quelqu'un de nos sens en particulier, on goûte un plaisir général, qui sans être vif a quelque chose de bien doux.

Nous devons supposer dans le Ciel un état analogue, mais très supérieur, à toute situation de cette nature, que l'on peut acquérir dans le monde présent.

Les Maladies, les Douleurs, la Décadence de notre corps, & sa Mortalité, sont les grands Maux de la vie terrestre, des Maux, dont toute notre sagesse ne peut nous garantir: & ces Maux-là nous en serons entièrement délivrez.

Aujourd'hui les Maladies, les Douleurs, traversent fréquemment nos plus agréables, nos plus utiles occupations, nos plaisirs les plus chéris. Alors plus de ces tristes obstacles, plus de ces affligeantes interruptions: Nous serons entièrement à nous mêmes: Nous serons possesseurs à plein de tous nos Biens.

A présent l'affoiblissement inévitable de nos Facultez, de nos Sens, nous réduit à un état de langueur, d'ennui. Alors dans une jeunesse éternelle; & à la faveur d'un accroissement continuel de nos Facultez, & de nos Goûts, nos plaisirs s'affermiront, & seront toujours de nouveaux progrès en vivacité, & en étendue.

Ce que j'ai dit jusqu'à présent se rapporte tout à ces Avantages, ces Biens, ou ces Plaisirs, que je nomme Avantages, & Plaisirs, du Corps pour les distinguer de ceux qui supposent les Affections Morales, & la Reflexion. Ces derniers, que je nomme particulièrement les Biens, ou les Plaisirs, de l'Ame, sont d'un tout autre Ordre, d'un tout autre Prix. Ainsi notre Ame dans le Ciel auprès de notre bon Dieu parmi les saints glorifiez va nous présenter cette partie du tableau, qui est infiniment plus auguste, & plus effrayante, que l'autre.

Avant que de l'étaler il est nécessaire de vous y préparer par quelques observations qui seront comme des règles pour la placer dans son jour.

Quand on compare avec quelque exactitude les plaisirs Intellectuels, & Moraux, avec ceux des Sens on est surpris de trouver que ces derniers sont un si petit article de notre Félicité qu'à peine méritent ils d'être mis en ligne de compte; & (ce qui est bien singulier, bien digne de remarque) le sort de leur valeur, la seule chose, qui rend un grand nombre d'hommes si assollez de ces foibles plaisirs, c'est qu'en mille occasions ils servent de mobile aux plaisirs Intellectuels, & Moraux. En général les prodigieux écarts, où les hommes se jettent, les honteux excès, auxquels ils s'abandonnent, ont pour cause, non les Sens, comme on se le figure, faute d'observer les choses avec attention, mais la plus excellente de nos Facultez, celle de l'Agence, & les plus beaux Sentimens, savoir, le désir de s'élever, les affections généreuses, sociales. Les Libertins se trompent sur les Objets de leur Félicité: C'est par les plaisirs Intellectuels, & Moraux, que même les plus abrutis la

cherchent sans s'en apercevoir. Les plaisirs des Sens sont par eux mêmes si peu capables de la leur procurer que les y réduire seroit les plonger dans un état déplorable.

Ainsi la perte de ces sortes de plaisirs, s'il falloit les perdre, devoit peu nous toucher, n'etoit qu'entre les mains de la sagesse ils deviennent des Instrumens, ou, comme je les ai déjà appellez, des occasions, des Mobiles, de plusieurs sentimens dignes de nous, dignes même des Habitans du Ciel. Certainement ce sont les plaisirs Intellectuels, & Moraux, qui forment les grandes sources, la Base, l'Essentiel, de notre béatitude.

C'est sur ce pied-là que nous devons considerer notre état dans le séjour de l'Immortalité: C'est avec cette favorable prévention que nous devons y envisager les Biens de l'Ame.

Commençons par les plaisirs Intellectuels

Les idées de ces plaisirs sont renfermées dans les idées générales Rapprendre, de savoir. Ce sont, & ce seront éternellement, des actes volontaires de notre Intelligence. Une science infuse ne nous contenteroit point.

Sans l'assaisonnement de l'Agence, ou du Moi, nous ne goûterions que très imparfaitement, très foiblement, le plaisir de satisfaire notre curiosité, ce vif désir de connoître, qui est né avec nous.

Les divers inconveniens, qui dans ce Monde-ci troublent, dérangent, l'acquisition des Connoissances, & en retardent les progrès, seront bannis du Ciel. Là les travaux nécessaires ne seront point rebutans par le trop de labeur: Là nos Facilitez, Talens, secours, auront toujours une exacte proportion avec l'objet, qu'il s'agira de découvrir. Là une ferme espérance de réussir dans nos curieuses entreprises nous facilitera les choses à ce point précis, où l'Etude, même l'Etude la plus appliquée, devient un plaisir: Là rien contre notre gré n'interrompra le cours de nos occupations: Là pour fournir à notre avide curiosité, à cet appétit dévorant qui renaît sans cesse, nous entreverrons dans le vaste Magasin de l'Univers, dans les profondeurs de l'infini, des provisions qui ne pourront jamais être épuisées: Là enfin aussi assurez d'une durée éternelle que nous le serons de l'existence de notre Créateur, & même de la nôtre, nous n'aurons pas à craindre qu'aucun obstacle dans l'univers puisse jamais borner cette admirable carrière de magnifiques connoissances, & de rapides progrès.

L'Etre suprême est, & sera toujours, le premier, le grand objet de nos Méditations.

Ici bas nous ne le voyons qu'obscurément: Mais alors nous le verrons face à face; Oui nous le connoîtrons avec une force, une facilité, une netteté de conception, infiniment supérieures à tout ce que le plus sublime génie peut espérer ici bas de la plus longue Etude. Les attributs de Dieu; & puis les merveilles innombrables de la création; La conduite de la Providence; Les grands desseins du Très-haut, tous ces objets si beaux, si variez, si grands, & dans l'Etude desquels nous sentons ici bas à tout moment la foiblesse de notre Intelligence, se montreront dans tout leur éclat: En Dieu, & par lui, nous verrons ce qu'à présent oeil ne sauroit voir; Nous entendrons ce qu'à présent oreille ne peut ouïr; Notre âme recevra ce qu'à présent elle ne peut recevoir.

Cette vaste connoissance ne s'arrêtera point à une glorieuse spéculation. Le sentiment de l'admiration, quelque vif que vous le fumes posiez, sera peut-être un des moindres .de ces sentimens délicieux, que nos découvertes exciteront en abondance.

En voilà assez sur les plaisirs Intellectuels. Je passe aux autres plaisirs de l'Ame.

Il y a de tous nos sentimens trois sources générales; Dieu — Nos semblables — & nous mêmes.

A l'aspect de l'immense thresor de plaisirs, dont Dieu nous aura mis en possession, notre admiration multipliée à l'infini nous agitera de mille mouvemens de reconnoissance, & d'amour. Par le souvenir du

Passé ces obscuritez, ces Maux, sans nombre qui m'avoient tant de fois confondu, tourmenté, & qui ne pourront plus subsister que dans ma mémoire, serviront admirablement à relever le prix de mon bonheur, à m'en donner une jouissance exquise: Tout, jusqu'à cette sévérité apparente, qui nous étonne, & nous inquiète, tant sur la terre, tout dans la conduite passée de notre Père céleste, nous découvrira clairement, démonstrativement, qu'il n'y avoit que des soins généreux, des traits d'une prudence consommée, des moyens d'une subtilité à présent inconcevable, pour nous guider, nous engager, nous puiser, insensiblement à la béatitude, & pour animer nos plus doux sentimens à ce degré précis, au dessus duquel il manqueroit quelque chose à la félicité, dont nous sommes, ou pouvons devenir, susceptibles. Le retour à Dieu à chaque article de cette précieuse revue élèvera dans notre âme des ravhTemens, dont à présent nos plus heureuses expériences dans la piété ne peuvent nous donner qu'une légère idée.

Si nous étions toujours Sages, & Vertueux, nous goûterions très purement de cette vie la joye d'aimer notre bon Dieu; Mais les plus avancez dans la sanctification ont toujours divers reproches à se faire: La honte, & la frayeur, voilà principalement ce qui refroidit ce glorieux amour, & mêle beaucoup d'amertume à ses ineffables douceurs.

Dans le Ciel ce grand obstacle sera détruit: Dieu ayant une dernière fois, & pour toujours, mis arrière de lui toutes nos folies, toutes nos iniquités; Ayant accepté notre sincère repentance, & nos foibles efforts, voudra bien au moment de notre entrée dans le séjour de sa gloire prévenir par tous les témoignages de son affection paternelle tout ce qui pourvoit encore nous troubler: Il ne nous laissera pas le temps (pour ainsi dire) de r'amener dans nos âmes des sentimens douloureux, que sa bonté infinie veut bannir aux siècles des siècles

De nos réflexions sur le Passé nous procéderons naturellement à envisager le sort, qui nous est réservé dans l'Avenir; & de tout ce qui nous sera arrivé dans ce monde, mais surtout de notre bonheur d'alors, nous déduirons à-coup-feûr des conséquences prophétiques: Délectable anticipation des degrez de gloire, & de félicité, que nous ne posséderons pas encore.

Etre ainsi dans le port du valut c'est une situation, dont nous ne pouvons guère à présent concevoir tous les charmes parce qu'ici bas il n'y a rien qui en approche.

Placez auprès de Dieu; Honorez de son approbation; Ravis de son amour pour nous, & du nôtre pour lui, nous verrons par tout naître la félicité & pour nous, & pour nos semblables: Tout nous r'amènera à lui en nous traçant par tout les soins continuels de sa bonté. Nous verrons en lui, & dans l'aspec de toutes choses, le grand plan d'une Béatitude universelle; D'une Béatitude qui s'étend, qui croît, incessamment.

Selon la belle, & juste, expression de St Paul, Dieu sera Tout en Tous. Lui, qui a formé nos coeurs, qui en connoît tous les replis, tous les mouvemens, qui seul par conséquent sait en faire jouer à plein tous les respects, quel concours de plaisirs n'y portera-t-il pas! Quelle variété, quelle delicasie, quelle véhémence, ne créera-t-il pas dans nos heureux sentimens! Soit en se montrant, à nous à visage découvert, ou en nous parlant bouche à bouche, c'est à dire en se communiquant à nous sans réserve à proportion de notre capacité; Soit en donnant occasion à notre liberté, à notre Intelligence, à nos affections, de s'exercer selon nos souhaits, & pour notre plus grand Bien: Il remplira notre âme entière Elle sera comme inondée de la joye, que répandra dans tout l'Univers sa présence adorable: Tout ce qu'il y a de plus doux, de plus ravissant, dans l'Admiration, dans la Reconnoissance, dans l'Amour, dans la Confiance, dans l'espérance, ou plu stot l'assurance de voir un jour accomplis tous les généreux désirs, que forme Un coeur magnanime, un coeur plein de l'affection fraternelle; Dans la contemplation d'une diversité infinie d'Objets, de Biens, tous tôt, ou tard, à notre portée, tous faits pour nous, tous propres à contribuer par quelque endroit à nos plaisirs & Enfin dans l'idée d'un accroissement de grandeur, & de félicité, à jamais, tout cela nous le posséderons, nous le goûterons, sans mélange, & avec une vivacité, une force de sentiments, que nous n'avons point, & ne pouvons avoir, ici bas.

Nos Semblables, ou d'autres Créatures Intelligentes, forment une seconde source de nos sentimens.



Nous sommes faits pour la Société Sans elle les autres agrémens de la vie deviendraient insipides. Mais dans ce monde-ci les Travers d'esprit, les Vices, des autres, & nos propres Défauts, dérangent, corrompent, nos Tendens naturelles. La plupart perdent presque l'idée du plaisir pur d'aimer: Encore plus laisse-t-on dépérir celui de désirer le Bien d'autrui sans autre vue que ce Bien-là.

Mais ceux-là même qui se font presque tout refferrez dans leur propre Individu, & laissent languir dans une profonde léthargie leurs affections généreuses, & sociales, ceux-là même les réveilleraient, leur donneraient bientôt une vigueur inconnue, si tout à coup ils se corrigeoient eux mêmes, & trouvoient en même tems tous les autres hommes devenus réellement estimable, & aimables. Ce sera-là notre cas dans le Ciel: Nous serons assurez de rencontrer dans chacun des Bienheureux précisément toutes les dispositions, toutes les affections, que nous voudrions qu'on eût pour nous. Nous portons tous en nous mêmes un désir naturel d'être estimez, & aimez: & là nous serons assurez de l'être: Le réciproque y sera infaillible.

Ici bas un conflit d'intérêts & Une multitude d'incidens, de mesentendus, d'obscuritez par rapport aux sentimens d'autrui envers nous; De difficulté dans nos affaires; En un mot, une infinité de circonstances, détruisent une affection mutuelle, ou la rendent foible, partielle; La bornent a un petit nombre d'Objets.

Là toutes les circonstances favoriseront cette douce affexion. Fortifiée par nos progrès en Connoissances, en Vertus, en aimables Sentimens; Animée par la présence de notre Père céleste, notre Père commun; Encouragée par tous les motifs imaginables; Libre de tout empêchement; A l'abri de toute froideur, elle sera pour tous les Habitans du Ciel plus ferme, plus touchante, que ce l'est aujourd'hui celle que nous avons pour un Ami intime. Nous aimerons un nombre innombrable d'Amis sans que l'un dérobe rien aux sentimens, qui seront dus à l'autre.

Je ne dis pas que nous les aimerons tous également: Cela n'est pas nécessaire: Aussi ne pensé-je pas que les amitié particulières soient bannies du Ciel. Si nous aimions tendrement ici bas des Personnes dignes de l'attachement d'un coeur plein de piété, & de vertu, espérance de les rejoindre après la mort, & de les aimer bien mieux que nous ne faisons; Mieux que d'autres avec qui nous n'avions point eu de liaisons, ne sera apparemment anéantie que comme le seront dans le sens de St Paul. la Foi, & la Connoissance, c'est à dire qu'elle ne finira que par la jouissance de ce que nous espérons.

La prè-eminence de quelques Etres, celle même de plusieurs de nos semblables; Les Talens, les Goûts particuliers & Certaines circonstances, & des Convenances singulières, ces Convenances qui sont si liantes, mettront nécessairement dans notre union fraternelle les varietez, qu'on observe aujourd'hui dans une Société d'Elite; Mais les diffèrens degrez de nos tendres sentimens envers les Bienheureux n'en altéreront ni la réalité ni la pureté, ni même la vivacité.

Il viendra peut-être dans l'esprit à bien des Gens que cette prè-eminence, cette supériorité de Talens, Se de Qualitez, ces Convenances singulières, dont je viens de parler, ne manqueront pas d'introduire, comme cela arrive si frequemment, si inévitablement, ici bas, les cruels sentimens de la Jalousie, de l'Envie. Non: Ils seront bannis du Ciel absolument, & pour jamais.

Chacun y sera content de son sort: Chacun l'aura se réjouir sincèrement de la béatitude d'autrui envisagée même comme supérieure: Loin d'en gémir en secret nous la serons réellement servir à notre propre félicité; Chacun ainsi s'appropriera en quelque sorte tout le bonheur du Ciel. — On ne peut se représenter que bien imparfaitement l'abondance, & la diversité, de plaisirs dont cela seul enrichit le séjour de l'immortalité; & ce vaste thresor, il n'y a que les célestes Vertus de l'Humilité, & de la Charité, qui puissent le former, & l'ouvrir.

Dans ce paisible séjour, parmi un nombre infini de Concitoyens, plus de craintes, plus de soupçons: Après cela plus de peine, plus de nécessité d'un concours de circonstances, pour travailler ces charmantes liaisons de nos coeurs: Au premier abord, de plein fault, à la seule vue d'un Habitant du Ciel, nous voilà mêlez,

confondus: Nous ne sommes tous qu'un coeur, & qu'une âme: Par tout on s'empresse réciproquement à se procurer des plaisirs: Par tout on cherche à jouir, & on jouit aussitôt, de celui de s'entr'aimer.

Combien ce doux sentiment ne se renouvellera-t-il point! & puis que de feu, que d'attention, que de délicasie, que de sagacité, que de soins obligeans, pour éviter ce qui pourroit déplaire; Pour augmenter à l'envi notre félicité, toi la mienne, moi la tienne; Pour varier nos plaisirs!

La troisième source de nos sentimens est renfermée en nous mêmes.

La Liberté est un avantage inestimable: Elle seule peut produire cette satisfaction, sans laquelle les plus grands Biens perdroient presque tout leur prix. De là vient que les plaisirs Actifs sont infiniment supérieurs aux plaisirs Passifs. L'Agence, en un mot, est absolument nécessaire pour constituer un bonheur assorti à l'Etre Intelligent;

A égard de cette excellente prérogative, & de tous ses précieux effets, notre situation dans le ciel l'emportera au delà de toute comparaison sur tout ce qu'il peut y avoir ici bas de plus favorable, de plus heureux.

Arrêtons nous un moment à confiderer un plaisir pur, & sublime, que nous ne pourrions goûter si nous étions pas libres: C'est celui de l'Approbation de soi-même.

Le souvenir est une espèce de restitution du Passé. Rien de plus affreux que de se trouver dans une misère, vers laquelle on ne souvient que l'on s'est volontairement acheminé depuis longtems, & dans laquelle on vient de se plonger. Quel que soit le tourment qu'on endure, le plus fort du supplice vient toujours des justes reproches, que l'on le sait. & dans une situation heureuse, qu'on a amenée de loin par des soins, des travaux, pleins de circonspection, de prudence, d'assiduité, & de courage, ce qu'il y a de plus doux procède toujours de l'approbation de soi même.

Telle est notre sensibilité à ce qui est Beau, Bon, Raisonnable, qu'indépendamment des effets de nos choix, & de nos actions, nous retentons beaucoup de douleur, ou de plaisir, selon la conduite, que nous avons tenue.

Tel encore, par une conséquence naturelle, tel est le pouvoir de cette influence de l'approbation de soi-même qu'elle adoucit les plus grands Maux.

Enfin si attrayante est la gloire, si délicieux le plaisir, de s'estimer, de se louer, soi-même que quand nos Maux sont des suites de nos Vertus, comme cela arrive quelquefois parmi les désordres du Monde présent, alors en quelque forte ils changent de nature, ils cessent d'être des Maux; Oui, souvent, par exemple, il est vrai au pied de la lettre que par les louanges de la conscience ceux, que les autres hommes ont la fureur de persécuter pour la Droiture, c'est à dire à cause de leur candeur, de leur probité, de leur piété, sont actuellement heureux. Leurs souffrances sont absorbées dans leurs plaisirs: Ils ne les regardent plus même comme des souffrances: Ce sont de précieux moyens de leur développer à eux mêmes toute l'excellence de leurs âmes, d'y établir une vive, & solide, joye.

Au Ciel quelle satisfaction, quelle douceur, de repenser dans notre esprit les diverses tentations, que nous aurons surmontées, les divers Maux, que nous aurons soufferts, pour suivre constamment la route de cette félicité, que nous venons enfin d'atteindre!

Après cela plus de Maux: Nous posséderons à plein les fruits de nos soins, & de nos efforts: Plus de mélanges amers: Cette approbation de nous mêmes, qui n'étoit quelquefois, ou même ordinairement, qu'une consolation dans nos calamitez, deviendra un plaisir pur, & charmant.

Sur la terre, hélas! nous le connoissons mal, ce divin plaisir, parce-que nous ne travaillons point assez à acquérir tout entier.

Dans le Ciel ce ne sera pas seulement par rapport au Passé que nous pourrons sans réserve nous livrer à cette touchante joye: Nous l'anticiperons dans un à-venir éternel, bien assurez par avance de la conserver inviolablement, & de l'augmenter de plus en plus.

Ah! nous ne pouvons imaginer que fort confusément le ravissant bonheur, qui résultera de la confiante approbation de nous mêmes dans cette illustre Assemblée des Saints, où notre plus ardent désir sera toujours de nous avancer de gloire en gloire jusqu'à la parfaite stature de Christ.

Outre les heureux Sentimens, les plaisirs sans nombre, qui découleront des trois sources, que je viens d'indiquer, il y aura encore dans le Ciel bien des avantages, qui ne contribueront pas peu à compléter notre béatitude: Nous y aurons des occupations, toutes agréables, toutes dignes de nous.

Le sort de notre application, & de nos travaux, aura pour but de nous instruire nous mêmes, de nous perfectionner de plus en plus, & d'instruire aussi, de perfectionner, de rendre plus heureux, tous ceux qui seront au dessous de nous, ou à qui nous pourrons devenir utiles. Nous préférons cette Occupation-là à tout autre plaisir: Exercez à sacrifier des sensations, qui ne seront alors qu'une addition, un surabondant, à notre félicité, nous profiterons avec plaisir de l'occasion de les sacrifier aux sentimens généreux. De pareils sacrifices relèveront les charmes divins de ces beaux sentimens, de ces nobles travaux.

Une autre Occupation, qui tiendra le premier rang après les plus nécessaires, & qui même à quelques égards se mêle, se confond avec elles, c'est celle de louer Dieu, de chanter ses merveilles. Les Anges, & les Saints glorifiez, nous sont représentés dans l'Ecriture comme s'employant à cela continuellement.

Comme eux, avec eux, occupez premièrement à sentir une profonde admiration, une joye ineffable, certainement nous le serons aussi à tirer des copies d'une infinité de célestes objets A rassembler, à r'approcher de nous par mille ingénieuses peintures ce qui dans l'Univers nous aura paru le plus auguste, le plus touchant; A exposer ainsi aux yeux d'Autrui de magnifiques idées, & transmettre dans leur coeur des sentimens exquis.

Après cela les occupations inférieures, celles auxquelles on ne songe que quand on s'est suffisamment attaché à quelque plus grande affaire, celles-là aussi aboutiront toutes à des plaisirs, ou en seront elles mêmes, aussi bien que les plus importantes, sans autre différence que la nature, ou le degré, du plaisir.

Sur la terre Dieu nous donne l'avantage de créer en quelque sorte des objets en employant l'industrie, dont il nous a douez, & les matériaux, qu'il nous fournit.

Dans le Ciel nous aurons encore, sans doute, ce noble privilège, & nous l'aurons avec toute la supériorité, qu'y mettra celle de nos facultez, & des objets.

Il ne s'agira plus ni de labourage pour avoir du pain, ni d'édifices, ni de métiers, pour se garantir des injures de l'air. L'air, ou ce qu'il y aura d'analogue, aura toujours une température convenable à nos corps incorruptibles: Mais par tout, où l'art pourra embellir la Nature Partout, où l'attention, & l'étude, pourront nous procurer des découvertes curieuses, & utiles; Par tout, où la pénétration, les soins, & les travaux, pourront multiplier, perfectionner, les objets de nos Sens, dans tous ces lieux, dans toutes ces occasions-là nous mettrons la main à l'oeuvre avec cette satisfaction extrême qui accompagnera toutes nos entreprises: & tous nos compagnons de félicité concourront avec nous à faire d'admirables ouvrages.

Il y a quelques avantages qui sont impliquez, ou marquez distinctement, en plusieurs endroits de cet Essai; Mais qui méritent bien quelques réflexions à part. Je les envisage ici, & vais les présente, sous l'idée d'Accelloires à notre bonheur céleste.

Un premier, & grand Accelloire c'est notre Tranquillité, notre seûreté. Toutes larmes seront essuyees: Il n'y aura plus ni deuil ni tri, ni travail. Nos larmes seront essuyées: .-- Cela ne signifie pas seulement Nous serons confiiez; Mais toutes les sources de nos pleurs seront tariées.

Ici bas l'idée de notre mortalité, & de notre assujettissement aux douleurs corporelles, nous accompagne par tout. C'en est assez pour avilir, souvent même pour anéantir, les plaisirs de la fleur de nos jours.

Dans le Ciel plus rien à craindre ni des Élemens, maladies contagieuses, bêtes féroces, tremblemens de terre, ou autres bouleversemens de la nature, ni même de ces Ennemis, qui sont incomparablement plus nombreux, plus formidables, plus cruels, c'est & dire rien à craindre des autres Hommes, Là ils seront tous nos tendres Amis.

Peu de Gens peut être conçoivent bien toute la grandeur du plaisir d'une parfaite Seûreté; & cela parce qu'est impossible; d'en jouir sur la terre. Il y a bien dans la vie présente une tranquillité actuelle; Mais ce n'est pas, ce ne sauroit être celle, dont il s'apt, une tranquillité raisonnée.

Celle d'ici bas ne peut tenir un moment contre la réflexion. Dez que nous y pensons, nous la trouvons si mal appuyée qu'aussitôt. Nous la perdons, & ne pouvons la recouvrer qu'en cessant d'y réfléchir.

Dans le Ciel au contraire notre tranquillité s'affermira par nos méditations. La Raisson, la Vertu, la profonde connoissance que nous aurons de Dieu, notre ardent amour pour lui, notre affection mutuelle, banniront à pur, & à plein, toutes sortes d'inquiétudes: Ainsi pour établir une parfaite tranquillité nous n'aurons pas même besoin de cette constitution nouvelle, de ces favorables circonstances, qui concourront à nous rendre immortels, & invulnérables, ou nous mettront en état de prévenir, ou de réparer d'abord, le plus petit dérangement.

A l'idée de notre propre seûreté il faut joindre l'idée de la seûreté des Personnes qui nous seront chères, c'est à dire de tous les Habitans du Ciel. Il faut y joindre aussi l'idée de la seûreté de tous les objets utiles à notre bonheur.

Si heureusement constituez, si sages, & si bons, & vivant avec des Etres ou supérieurs, ou semblables à nous, par les affections généreuses, & sociales, nous serons à l'abri non seulement des grands revers, des pertes considérables; Mais même nous ne serons plus exposez à ces bizarreries, ces travers, qui troublent ici bas notre commerce avec les autres hommes: Sorte de seûreté beaucoup plus estimable qu'on ne la croiroit d'abord.

Il y a des inconveniens, qui semblent devoir naturellement accompagner la grandeur de notre béatitude; L'excellence de nos facultez, & les faveurs extraordinaires, que Dieu nous prodiguera. Mais certainement ils n'auront pas lieu: Non — Nous n'aurons point de dangereuses agitations: Notre vie sera une sérénité éternelle, une tranquillité délicieuse, qui toute parsemée des sentimens les plus vifs n'en sera pourtant point dérangée; & malgré l'irrésistibilité morale des motifs à persister dans les dispositions, les habitudes, qui seront notre bonheur, nous conserverons le privilège toujours essentiel d'être véritablement Agens, le plaisir du Moi, celui de l'approbation de soi-même: Autre seûreté d'un prix infini.

Un autre grand Accessoire c'est celui du progrès: Progrès dans toutes les qualitez avantageuses tant du corps que de âme

Ces deux Accessoires—Celui de la seûreté contre toutes sortes de dangers, & d'inconveniens, & celui du Progrès, sont si nécessaires à notre bonheur que sans eux les plus grands Biens deviendroient en partie des sources de Maux.

Sans la sûreté plus ces Biens seraient dignes de notre attachement, plus deviendrait affligeant le mal qui résulteroit de cette privation. Cela est évident.

A égard du progrès on peut de même par un moment de réflexion se convaincre de sa nécessité pour nous rendre parfaitement heureux. Si je désire de élever vers la perfection, & que la possibilité du progrès me soit refusée, n'est il pas certain que je serai rongé de ce désir? & conçoit on que je puisse m'empêcher de le former?

Un état fixe ne convient point à La Créature Intelligente. Les désirs sont essentiels à son bonheur: Sans eux le sort le plus doux deviendrait bientôt insipide. L'Espérance est toujours un Bien inestimable.

Dans le Ciel nous désirerons, nous espérons; Mais au lieu qu'ici bas souvent nos désirs sont fougueux, & qu'une juste crainte de ne pouvoir les satisfaire les change souvent en autant de douleurs, là ils n'auront que ce degré d'ardeur qui leur donne de la vivacité; & l'assurance de les contenter un jour en sera autant d'agréables sentimens.

N'avoir plus à redouter ces Maux de l'Esprit, qui viennent de nos péchez, c'est encore un excellent accessoire à notre félicité.

De tous les Maux de l'Ame les plus affreux, les plus insupportables, sont certainement ceux, que l'on désigne par les Remords de la Conscience. Ils impliquent la honte, l'indignation, les regrets, & les frayeurs.

Ici bas nous sommes environnés de ces dangereux Ennemis de notre Ame, que l'on nomme des Tentations, Quelque allures que nous nous tenions de la victoire, nous avons encore à combattre: Nous sommes exposés à la surprise: Nous vivons dans les larmes. Quelle charmante paix donc, quelle aimable tranquillité, quand telles seront nos heures circonstances, telles nos forces spirituelles, qu'au lieu de tentations à craindre nous ne trouverons plus dans les objets que de quoi donner un doux exercice à nos Vertus!

Voilà les principaux objets du tableau de la Canaan céleste Il finit par les traits suivans, qui en donnent une idée générale: L'Age d'Or, les Champs Eliées, le jardin d'Eden, nous présentent des images bien riantes, bien effrayantes. Cependant on se tromperoit fort si on se figuroit qu'elles ressemblent beaucoup à notre Paradis. L'Homme ici bas, même dans état d'innocence, & avec toute l'approbation du Très-haut, ne pourrait être qu'au berceau de sa grandeur, & de sa félicité Il faut à tous les Etres créer une Enfance, une Discipline.

Si l'on suppose que dans le Ciel le premier grade des plus petits de ses Habitans ne sera pas à plusieurs égards extrêmement supérieur à ce qu'il pourroit y avoir de plus pur, de plus désirable, dans un jardin d'Eden, on supposera peut être vrai.

Mais dans un petit nombre de siècles nous nous élèverons si haut au dessus de tout ce que l'on peut concevoir de plus glorieux, & de plus aimable, dans un Paradis terrestre qu'il ne peut nous servir seulement à deviner ce que nous serons.

Tout ce que l'on sait ici bas qui n'a aucun rapport à notre état futur, je veux dire qui ne sauroit directement, ni indirectement, détruire quelque disposition contraire à celles, qu'il faut contracter pour être admis dans le séjour des saints glorifiés, ou nous faire acquérir, ou fortifier, quelque disposition nécessaire pour être heureux, ou plus heureux, dans la vie à-venir, tout cela dis-je, avec le succès le plus favorable n'aboutit qu'à nous procurer quelque petit Bien, quelque petit plaisir. De ce que vous le possédez en vérité je vous dis que vous avez reçu votre salaire; & je vous demande: Etes vous bien content? Cela remplit il votre âme? Votre joye est elle durable? Est elle seulement pure pendant qu'elle subsiste? Ne vous souvenez vous pas que de cette nuit votre âme pourrait vous être redemandée? Ne sentez vous pas au sort même de la jouissance de ce Bien, que vous avez tant désiré, & dont la recherche vous a peut-être occupé fort long tems, ne sentez vous pas que vous auriez pu employer vos soins, votre travail, beaucoup plus utilement?

Un pas vers le Ciel vaut mieux que mille démarches, qui n'ont pour but que la Fortune, & les plaisirs mondains. S'amasser des trésors au Ciel c'est là véritablement s'enrichir. Mêler la Vertu à tout ce que l'on fait; Ne la point perdre de vue, même dans vos récréations, c'est avancer chemin vers la solide félicité; C'est même en l'attendant jouir d'un bonheur préférable à tout autre bonheur de la vie présente

Il y a une vérité Théologique, ou Morale, que j'ignorois, ou dont je n'étois pas persuadé: On me la communique: On me la prouve clairement: J'en aperçois d'abord les heureuses suites. C'est un grand gain. Où faut il aller: De quels moyens faut il se servir pour faire des profits si réels, si considérables?

Il y a une sage réflexion, qui ne m'est pas venue dans l'esprit: Je la lis, ou je l'entens: Elle me frappe & Elle me touche vivement: Je désire plus ardemment que je ne saisois de devenir meilleur: J'y vais travailler sur-le-champ: Je le fais déjà en prenant la résolution de le faire: Je le fais avec un ^ele extraordinaire: Je réussirai; Cela est sûr: L'heureux événement! La précieuse réflexion! Où est ce Qui est ce, qui m'en suggèrera d'autres comme celle-là? Est il des spectacles, des Assemblées mondaines, des parties de plaisir, qui puissent entrer en concurrence avec elle?

J'ai fait voir qu'il y aura pour nous dans la Vie à-venir differens degrez de bonheur.

La récompense assignée à chacun répondra exactement aux soins, que chacun aura pris, aux efforts, que chacun aura faits, suivant le nombre des talens, qui lui auront été confiés. Il est vrai que par cette disposition il arrivera que celui, à qui le seigneur avoit confié dix talens, possédera une gloire, une félicité, supérieure à celle du serviteur, qui n'en avoit reçu que cinq. Les choses ne sauroient être autrement. Cette inégalité est absolument nécessaire pour l'harmonie, pour le plus grand Bien, de l'Univers pris dans son Tout. Mais dans un sens chacun sera également heureux, c'est à dire que chacun sera heureux à proportion de sa situation, & de sa capacité. Il le sera parfaitement s'il s'est parfaitement prévalu des avantages, qui lui avoient été accordés. D'où il arrivera souvent que, selon l'expression de notre Sauveur, les premiers seront les derniers, & les derniers seront les premiers: Ceux-là ne se sauveront que comme par feu, & seront placez aux dernière places du dernier rang, qui ayant reçu de Dieu les plus heureuses dispositions, les circonstances les plus avantageuses, les plus encourageantes, n'auront pas porté leurs Vertus à un degré approchant de celui qu'ils pourvoient atteindre; Pendant que Tel, qui est aujourd'hui confondu avec la foule, méprisé des Grands, & dont l'aimable coeur n'est presque connu, & prisé, que de Dieu seul, se trouvant revêtu de la robe de nocce la plus magnifique aux yeux du Juge suprême, recevra ordre de s'asseoir au haut bout de la table avec Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob.

Dieu pardonne abondamment, cela est certain: Il sauvera un grand nombre d'hommes bien imparfaits, sans contredit. Les nombreux dangers, auxquels on est exposé; La foiblesse de la Chair, & du Sang; Les fréquentes distractions, que les affaires humaines causent inévitablement; Divers malheurs de Tempérament, & de Circonstances; Tout cela fournira des excuses, que notre bon Père céleste dans Ses compassions infinies voudra bien accepter: Il nous recevra en grâce: Ou (pour parler conformément à une probable hypothèse, dont j'ai fait mention,) supposé que notre état à-venir soit principalement une suite naturelle des Dispositions que nous aurons contractées sur la Terre; Que les récompenses arbitraires, ou proprement ainsi nommées; ne fassent qu'une partie de notre félicité céleste, il n'en est pas moins vrai qu'à cause des obstacles, qui ici bas se sont opposés à notre sanctification, la petitesse, ou la lenteur, de nos progrès dans la Vertu ne nous exclurra point de la Béatitude. Non: De quelque façon que l'on conçoive l'oeconomie à-venir, la maxime suivante demeure certaine: Pourvu que le Coeur soit bon; Que nous ayons les qualités Morales absolument requièes, diverses fautes de surprise, de négligence, de foiblesse, ne nous seront pas juger indignes être aggregez à l'assemblée des Bienheureux; Ou ne rendront pas notre admission parmi eux incompatible avec leur béatitude, & la nôtre, & par conséquent n'obligeront point le Seigneur à nous la refuser.

C'est pourquoi, pour le dire en passant, avancer que les Payens d'un coeur honnête, & bon, qui n'étant pas dans des circonstances à pouvoir embrasser l'Evangile, l'ont ignoré, ou l'ont rejeté, n'entreront pas dans le Royaume des Cieux, c'est faire voir que l'on ne connoît ni la bonté de Dieu, ni l'ouvrage de notre Rédemption par Jésus Christ.

Je ne saurois marquer ici quelles sont ces qualitez Morales absolument requises. Je dirai seulement en général que de toutes les dispositions la plus essentielle, sans laquelle le séjour de l'immortalité devient inaccessible, c'est d'aimer sincèrement la Vertu. Voilà une doctrine bien consolante: Elle prévient toutes les frayeurs que nous causeroit l'idée des foiblessès humaines.

Mais voudriez vous vous en prévaloir & Voudriez vous en abuser, jusqu'à diminuer, ou ralentir, les progrès que vous pourriez faire dans la sanctification? Ah! pensez bien: Ne confondez point: N'avoir pas la sage émulation, la noble ambition, d'aspirer au plus haut grade & Se laisser aller à une certaine mollesse dans nos efforts; Etre sujet à des inadvertences dans nos soins & un mot, négliger sa sanctification jusqu'à un certain degré; Tout cela se concilie avec espérance de ne pas périr; Mais ce n'est qu'à condition que tout cela ne procède que d'une pesanteur de l'Esprit; D'une indolence naturelle, & des distractions, que les affaires de la vie présente rendent inévitables & Ou des surprises, et occasionnent le tempérament, & les circonstances. Car si cette bassette âme, si cette mollesse dans nôt efforts, si ces inadvertences dans nos soins, procèdent de trop d'attachement aux objets du monde & Si cette conduite est sensiblement volontaire, & sur tout si elle est préméditée, vous méritez une exclusion absolue.

Mais quand même dans ce cas si peu gratiable on ne s'attireroit pas infailliblement les horreurs de l'exclusion, pourroit on considérer un moment sans se couvrir d'ignominie que pour jouir quelques jours d'un vil Bien, d'un faux Bien, d'un phantôme de Bien, qui ne vaut pas le plus foible sentiment de la piété, on se relègue soi même parmi ce qu'il y a de plus obscur, de moins heureux, dans le Royaume céleste? Celui qui sème chichement recueillira aussi chichement. & faire une perte, ou manquer un profit, par rapport aux Biens du Ciel c'est une perte immense, & peut être une perte irréparable; Car quels que puissent être les progrès, que nous ferons dans la suite, cette distance fatale, que nous aurons laissée entre le Poind, où nous nous trouverons, & celui, où nous aurions pu parvenir, savons nous si nous la regagnerons jamais?

Oh! la Proposition étoit bien claire pour ceux qui avoient entendu ses discours; Il avoit eu occasion de faire voir que si les Médiants étoient reçus dans le Ciel il ne pourraient y être heureux eux mêmes, & troubleraient le bonheur de tous ses Habitans: De sorte que pour établir une Béatitude universelle, pure, & durable, il faut de toute nécessité que Dieu éloigne du séjour des Immortels tous les Pêcheurs obstinez: — On peut avoir les qualitez morales absolument requises; & quelque foibles, & lents, que soient les progrès dans la sanctification, on conserve Tes bonnes dispositions; On les perfectionne peu à peu: Ainsi cette lenteur, cette foiblesse, de nos progrès, n'empêchent pas qu'on ne puisse dans le ciel jouir soi même d'un degré de bonheur, & contribuer à celui des autres; Ou du moins s'abstenir d'y causer le moindre désordre.

**Fin**

**1755**

**John Wesley (1703 – 1791): English Arminian Reformer**

**There Is Inconceivable Variety In Degrees Of Reward In Other World; Let Not Any Slothful One Say, If I Get To Heaven At All, I Will Be Content; Such A One May Let Heaven Go Altogether**

**Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament**

Published in 1755, revised 1790 (Re-published 1850)

## **Revelations XX:9**

A great multitude—Of those who had happily finished their course. Such multitudes are afterward described, and still higher degrees of glory which they attain, after a sharp fight and magnificent victory, chap, xiv, 1; xv, 2; six, 1; xx, 4. There is an inconceivable variety in the degrees of reward in the other world. Let not any slothful one say, If I get to heaven at all, I will be content such a one may let heaven go altogether. In worldly things men are ambitious to get as high as they can. Christians have a far more noble ambition. The difference between the very highest and the lowest state in the world, is nothing to the smallest difference between the degrees of glory.

## **1756; 1822 (American Publication)**

**William Law (1686-1761), English cleric and theological writer**

### **Whilst We Are Labouring After Christian Perfection, We Are Labouring For Eternity, Building To Ourselves Higher Stations In Joys Of Heaven A Practical Treatise on Christian Perfection**

(First American Edition Published in Portsmouth in 1822)

Thirdly, Another motive to induce you to aspire after Christian 'perfection, may be taken from the double advantage of it, in this life, and that which is to come. The apostle thus exhorts the Corinthians, wherefore my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know, that our labour will not be vain in the Lord. This is an exhortation founded upon solid reason; for what can be so and reasonable, as to be always abounding in that work which will never be in vain? Whilst we are pleased with ourselves, or pleased with the world, we are pleased with vanity, and Our most prosperous labours of this kind are, as the Preacher saith, but vanity of vanities, all is vanity. But whilst we are labouring after Christian perfection, we are labouring for eternity, and building to ourselves higher stations in the joys of heaven. As one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead: we shall surely rise to different degrees of glory, of joy and happiness in God, according to our different advancements in purity, holiness, and good works.

No degrees of mortification and self-denial, no' private prayers, no secret mournings, no instances of charity, no labour of love will ever be forgotten, but all treasured up to our everlasting comfort and refreshment. For though the rewards of the other life are free gifts of God; yet since he has assured us, that every man will be rewarded according to his works, it is certain, that our rewards will be as different as our works have been. Now stand still here a while, and ask yourself, whether you really believe this to be true, that the more perfect we make ourselves here, the more happy we shall be hereafter. If you do not believe this to be strictly true, you are but children in the knowledge of God and of religion. And if you do believe it to be true, is it possible to be awake, and not aspiring after Christian perfection? What can you think of, what can the world show you, that can make you any amends for the loss of any degree of virtue? Can any way of life make it reasonable for you, to die less perfect than you might have done? If you would now devote yourself to perfection, perhaps you must part with some friends, you must displease some relations, you must lay aside some designs, you must refrain from some pleasures, you must alter your life; nay, perhaps you must do more than this, you must expose yourself to the hatred of your friends, to the jest and ridicule of wits, and to the scorn and derision of worldly men. But had you not better do and suffer all this, than to die less perfect, less prepared for mansions of eternal glory? But indeed, the suffering all this, is suffering nothing.

For why should It signify any thing to you, what fools and madmen think of you? And surely it causes no wrong or rash judgment, to think those both fools and mad, who condemn what God approves, and like that which God condemns. But if you think this too much to be done, to obtain eternal glory, think on the other hand, what can be gained instead of it. Fancy yourself living in all the ease and pleasure that the



world can give you, esteemed by your friends, undisturbed by your enemies, and gratifying all your natural tempers. If you could stand still in such a state, you might say that you had got something; but alas! every day that is added to such a life, is the same thing as a day taken from it, and shows you that so much happiness is gone from you; for be as happy as you will, you must see it all sinking away from you; you must feel yourself decline; you must see that your time shortens apace; you must hear of sudden deaths; you must fear sickness; you must both dread and desire old age; you must fall into the hands of death; you must either die in the painful, bitter sorrows of a deep repentance, or in a sad, gloomy despair, wishing for mountains to fall upon you, and seas to cover you. And is this a happiness to be chosen? Is this all that you can gain by neglecting God, by following your own desire, and not labouring after Christian perfection? Is it worth your while to separate yourself from God, to lose your share in the realms of light, to be thus happy, or I may better say. to be thus miserable, even in this life? You may be so blind and foolish, as not to think of these things s but it is impossible to think of them without labouring after Christian perfection. It may be you are too young, too happy, or too busy to be affected with these reflections'; but let me tell you, that all will be over before you are aware; your day will be spent, and leave you to such a night as that which surprised the foolish virgins. And at midnight there 'Kits a great cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. The last hour will soon be with yon, when you will have nothing to look for, but your reward another life; when you will stand with nothing but eternity before you, and must begin to be something that will be your state for ever. I can no more reach heaven with my hands, than I can describe the sentiments that you will then have; you will then feel motions of heart that you never felt before; all your thoughts and reflections will pierce your soul, in a manner that you never before experienced; and you will feel the immortality of your nature by the depth and piercing vigour of your thoughts. You will then know what it is to die; you will then know, that you never knew it before, that you never thought worthily of it; but that divine thoughts are as new and amazing, as that state which follows them.

Let me therefore exhort you to come prepared to this time of trial; to look out for comfort, whilst the day is before you: to treasure up such a fund of good and pious works, as may make you able to bear that state, which cannot be borne without them.

Could I any way make you apprehend, how dying men feel the want of a pious life; how they lament time lost, health and strength squandered away in folly; how they look at eternity, and what they think of the rewards of another life, you would sooth find yourself one of those, who desire to live in the highest state of piety and perfection, that by this means you may grow old in peace, and die in full hopes of eternal glory.

**1756 (London and Boston)**

**John Gill (1697 – 1771), British Baptist Calvinist Theologian**

**The Glorious State of the Saints in Heaven**

**Works of John Gill**

To describe this glorious state I confess is a task fitter for an angel than a man or for a glorified saint in heaven than for a poor, frail, mortal, sinful creature on earth. However, I shall make an attempt, though it be but a feeble one, under the direction and guidance and with the assistance of the sacred scriptures.

First, By observing those images by which the heavenly glory is represented; images which are taken from things the most grand and striking, of the greatest worth, value, and esteem among men.

### **1. It Is Represented By A House**

But such an one as is not to be found any where on earth, a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Corinthians 5:1). It is not of this building, or of man's; it is built by him that built all things; it is a house whose builder and maker is God, and not man. There have been many men that have been famous for their skill in architecture and many fine buildings have been erected by them which have

perpetuated their memory to many ages such as the temple built by Solomon, rebuilt by Zerubbabel, and repaired by Herod; concerning which the disciples said to Christ, Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here (Mark 13:1)!

But, alas, what were those buildings to this we are speaking of! They were the holy places made with hands which were the figures of the true. This the true holy places themselves, not made with hands (Hebrews 9:23); not with the hands of men, but with the hands of God; not an erection of men's works, but the effect of divine grace, the pure, free-grace-gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. This house is in the heavens, and is opposed to the earthly house of our tabernacle; to these houses of clay which have their foundation in the dust; and it is called our house which is from heaven (2 Corinthians 5:2), being entirely of an heavenly kind and nature, and it is eternal. Some men build their houses here on earth in such manner, that they fancy they will continue forever to all generations (Psalm 49:11), but these, either through length of time, fall to decay, or are demolished by an enemy, or consumed by fire, or tumbled down by an earthquake; but this heavenly house always abides, and all the apartments in it are everlasting habitations (Luke 16:9): to which may be added, that this is Christ's Father's house, in which are many mansions (John 14:2); not only which he has built, but in which he dwells, and where he will have all his children; and it is our Father's house as well as Christ's, which makes it still more endearing. And a roomy one it is; there are many mansions, dwelling-places of rest, peace and joy in it; many, for the many ordained to eternal life; for the many justified by the obedience of Christ; for the many for whom his blood was shed for the remission of sins; for the many sons he brings to glory; yea, here is room enough for the innumerable company, chosen, redeemed, and called out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation.

## **2. It Is Called An Inheritance**

This enlarges the idea: for though, with some an inheritance may be but a single house, a mean cottage, a small pittance yet with others, it is an assemblage of wealth and riches: it consists of many houses, farms, estates, and possessions, of gold and silver, jewels and precious stones. Heaven is often spoken of as an inheritance, in allusion to the land of Canaan, which was distributed by lot for an inheritance to the children of Israel. Hence, says the apostle, in whom, speaking of Christ, we have obtained an inheritance, or a lot (Ephesians 1:11); an inheritance by lot; not that it is a casual thing, since it follows, being predestinated according to the good purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; but because every saint has his lot, part, and portion in it; for it is an inheritance of the saints in light, and among all them which are sanctified (Colossians 1:12; Acts 20:32). There are many things in which Canaan and the heavenly glory agree, I have not time to attend to now, but only would observe, that the Israelites were brought into the possession of their inheritance, not by Moses, but by Joshua; so the saints are brought to heaven, not by the works of the law, or their obedience to that, but by Jesus, the great captain of their salvation.

Heaven is also called an inheritance, in allusion to inheritances among men, which are not acquired by labor and diligence, nor purchased with money, but bequeathed by relations and friends, and are transmitted from father to son. So the heavenly glory is not obtained by the works of men, though they naturally think they must do some good thing to inherit eternal life; nor is it to be purchased. If a man would give all the substance of his house for it, it would utterly be contemned: it is bequeathed, to saints by their heavenly Father, whose good pleasure it is to give them the kingdom (Luke 12:32). And this he gives by will, by testament, and which comes to them by, upon, and through the death of the testator Jesus Christ. And it solely belongs to children, if children, then heirs (Romans 8:17); not to servants, no not the ministering spirits, who minister for them who shall be, or rather who are heirs of salvation, or shall inherit it (Hebrews 1:14); much less to the children of the bondwoman, or to strangers; only to those who are predestinated to the adoption of children, or are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

This is an inheritance which is incorruptible, whereas all earthly inheritances are corruptible things; but this cannot be corrupted by any thing, by sin, or anything else. And none but incorruptible persons shall enjoy it. It is undefiled and will ever remain so and none that defileth, or is defiled shall ever possess it. It fadeth not

away, nor the glory of it, as earthly inheritances through length of time do. It is reserved in the heavens, safe and secure for all the heirs of it and they are kept by the power of God for it (1 Peter 1:4). It is an eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:15) out of the possession of which the right heirs will never be ejected.

### **3. The Glory Of The Saints In Heaven Is Expressed By A City**

This still more enlarges the idea of it. [It is] a city whose builder and maker is God, and so infinitely beyond any thing of this kind on earth; a city which has foundations (Hebrews 11:10), more than one, the everlasting love of God, the unalterable covenant of grace, and the rock of ages, Jesus Christ; so that it stands firm and immovable and cannot be shaken and thrown down, as some cities of late have been by earthquakes: here no city is continuing, but in length of time falls to ruin; but this always abides. The glory of it cannot be expressed and described by men; the description of the city of the new Jerusalem seems to be hyperbolical and to exceed belief; the figures by which it is set forth are bold and strong; as that its wall is of jasper, its foundations precious stones, its gates of pearl, and the streets thereof of pure gold, transparent as glass (Revelation 21:18-21); and yet as bold and strong as these figures are, they fall short of setting forth the true and real grandeur of it.

### **4. The Heavenly State Is Signified By A Kingdom**

This carries the idea of it higher still and gives a more exalted notion of it. Saints are kings, not titular and nominal ones; they have a kingdom now which cannot be moved and which lies in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Hebrews 12:28; Romans 14:17); and they are heirs of another, a kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world; a kingdom and glory, or a glorious kingdom, to which they are called and fitted for in effectual vocation; an everlasting kingdom, into which they will be introduced when time shall be no more with them (Matthew 25:35; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Peter 1:11); a kingdom that has all the regalia belonging to it.

The glory of this state is sometimes expressed by a crown, and is called a crown of life, even of eternal life and will be enjoyed forever; a crown of righteousness, which will be given by the righteous judge in a way of righteousness and according to the rules of justice; a crown of glory that fadeth not away; not like the garlands or crowns given to conquerors in the Olympic games, to which the allusion is, which were made sometimes of flowers and herbs, that soon withered away; they ran, they strove to obtain a corruptible crown, we an incorruptible one (Revelation 2:11; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4; 1 Corinthians 9:25).

The same is also expressed by a throne, another ensign or emblem of the glory of a kingdom; a throne of glory, or a glorious throne to which the saints are raised from the dunghill (1 Samuel 2:8) to sit upon and inherit, even the same throne Christ himself sits upon; for, says he, to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne (Revelation 3:21). How glorious and magnificent must this state be!

### **5. It Is Set Forth By Everything That Is Pleasing And Grateful To The Mind Or Striking To The Senses And By Such Things As Exceed All The Enjoyments Of Them In This World**

Here the saints will sit down with Christ at his table and drink new wine with him in his Father's kingdom. Here they will pluck and eat of the fruit of the tree of life which stands in the midst of the paradise of God; that tree of life which bears twelve manner of fruits, yielded every month, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. Here they will drink of the river of divine pleasure that pure water of life proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb (Luke 22:18, 30; Revelation 2:7; 22:1-2).

Here they will see what eye hath not seen, hear what the ear hath not heard, nor have entered into the heart of man (1 Corinthians 2:9). The eye of man has seen many things on earth very grand and illustrious and what have been very entertaining to it, but it never saw such objects as will be seen in heaven. The ear of man has heard and been entertained with very pleasing sounds, very delightful music, vocal and instrumental, but it never heard such music as will be heard in heaven. The heart of man can conceive of more than it has either seen or heard, but it never conceived of such things as will be enjoyed in the world above.

Secondly, Our conceptions of the heavenly glory, at least of the greatness of it, may be aided and assisted by considering the epithets given unto it.

### **It Is Represented As An Unseen Glory**

As consisting of things not seen (2 Corinthians 5:8) which are eternal; which faith and hope for the present have only concern with: faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). We have not so much as a glimpse of this glory but by faith; and hope is waiting for it as something yet unseen: “hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? but if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it” (Romans 8:24, 25).

### **This Glory Is Also Future**

Nothing as yet enjoyed is that; it is something to come, greater than ever has been possessed in this world; it is a glory that shall be revealed; it is grace, or that glory to be which is the perfection of grace, that is brought unto us, at the revelation of Christ when the saints shall appear with him in glory. At present, it does not appear what they shall be, but when he shall appear, they shall be like him, and see him as he is (Romans 8:18; Colossians 3:4; 1 John 3:2).

### **Moreover This Glory Is An Incomparable One**

There is nothing in this world to be compared to it. All the wealth, riches and grandeur of it are trifling and empty things in comparison of it. The apostle has a strange expression at first sight upon this subject: “I reckon,” says he, “that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). One would rather have thought he should have said, that all that can be desired and enjoyed in the present state are not to be compared or made mention of with the glory of the other world. But he instances in the sufferings of the saints, the purest part of their services, if they may be called so; and asserts that these are far from being meritorious of this glory, fall infinitely short of it, there being no proportion between them and that; they are light afflictions, this a weight of glory; they are for a moment, this eternal; and this is what supports the saints in their suffering circumstances and makes them choose affliction with the people of God, and to esteem reproach for Christ’s sake greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, having respect to the recompense of reward (Hebrews 11:25-26); which is of grace, and not of works; and causes them to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, for the sake of Christ, knowing that they have in heaven a better and an enduring Substance (Hebrews 10:34).

### **Likewise This Glory Is Always The Same**

The glory of this world passes away, but the glory of the world to come never will: is it a crown of glory? It is a never-fading one. Is it an inheritance? It is an inheritance that fadeth not away. When kingdoms, crowns and scepters are no more, and all that is great and glorious in this world, this will endure; for it is eternal glory (1 Peter 5:10). The God of all grace calls his people to [this] and will put them in the possession of [it]. The epithet is joined to all the images by which it is expressed. Is it a house? Is it eternal in the heavens? Is it a city? It is what continues forever. Is it a kingdom? It is an everlasting one. It is a being forever with the Lord and which raises and aggrandizes the idea of it.

Thirdly, We may obtain some further knowledge of the glory of heaven by considering what will be the enjoyment of the saints, both in the separate state of the soul before the resurrection and in its state with the body after it.

### **1. In Its Separate State Before The Resurrection**

The soul of a saint as soon as separated from the body, as has been observed, will be immediately with Christ, and happy; it will enter into and enjoy the presence of God and Christ. And if the gracious presence of God is so desirable by his people now that they choose not to go any where without it, but say with Moses, “if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence” (Exodus 33:15); if this gives more joy and gladness than the increase of all worldly enjoyments; what will the glorious presence of the Lord be, in which

presence is fullness of joy and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore (Psalm 16:11), not to be conceived of? If the presence of Christ in his church is such as makes his tabernacles amiable and a day in his courts better than a thousand (Psalm 84:2, 10) elsewhere; if the enjoyment of him by his disciples at his transfiguration upon the mount was such as caused them to say, it is good for us to be here (Matthew 17:4); how glorious and happy must it be, to be forever with him in a state where there will be no more a separation from him nor interruption of communion with him? For in this state, the separate soul shall enjoy uninterrupted communion with Father, Son, and Spirit. If fellowship with the Father and with the Son causes saints now to exult and glory when they enjoy it; and if the communion of the Holy Ghost is so desirable and is prayed and wished for now, what will all this be in a state of perfection? If to sit with Christ at his table, when our spikenard sends forth the smell thereof and to be brought into Christ's banqueting house, where his banner over us is love (Song of Solomon 1:12; 2:4), under which we sup with him, and he with us, are so exceeding delightful and entertaining now; what will it be to sit down with him at his table in his kingdom and glory?

To which may be added, that there will be in this state not only communion with God, but conformity to him. Saints will be like him, as well as see him. If every view of the glory of Christ by faith is assimilating now and changes into the same image from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:18); what will a full view of him, a clear sight of him, do? Then will the great end of predestination, to be conformed to the image of the Son of God (Romans 8:29), be completely answered with respect to the soul; which in all its powers and faculties will bear a resemblance to Christ and be wholly swallowed up in him.

Its understanding will have a clear and unclouded discernment of him. The bias of the mind will be wholly towards him. The will will be entirely submitted to him. The affections will be in the strongest manner set upon him and things above; and the memory will be fully stored with divine and heavenly things. There will be nothing irregular and disagreeable in the soul in its motions, thoughts, and actions.

Besides all this, there will be a converse in this separate state with angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. How angels communicate their thoughts to and converse with each other, we know not; but no doubt they have ways and means by which they do and in the same way can communicate and converse with the souls of men, spirits like themselves; and these also one with another, which will be a considerable branch of the happiness of this separate state: in which also there will be perfect knowledge in the soul; perfect knowledge of God in his attributes, persons, and works, so far as a creature is capable of; perfect knowledge of the Son of God in his person, offices, and grace; perfect knowledge of the blessed Spirit; perfect knowledge of angels; perfect knowledge of one another, of which more hereafter; perfect knowledge of the providences of God, which have been intricate and obscure here, but now will be manifest; perfect knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel, of the mysteries of grace. Now we know and prophecy but in part, but then shall we know as we are known (1 Corinthians 13:9, 12).

There will be also perfect holiness. The soul will be entirely free from the being of sin as well as from the guilt and pollution of it. It will be wholly delivered from the body of sin and death, under which it now groans, and be without spot, or blemish, or any such thing – No sinful thought, no impure desire, nor any evil inclination or bias in it. And so there will be perfect peace of mind: if perfect peace is given to such as believe now, much more hereafter the end of such will be peace; when they die they enter into it, even into the joy of their Lord (Psalm 37:37; Isaiah 57:2; Matthew 25:21), which will be full, everlasting, and without interruption.

## **2. At The Resurrection There Will Be A Glory Upon The Body As Well As Upon The Soul**

A glory equal to that of the sun, moon, and stars. This body, which is sown in the earth in corruption; a vile body, corrupted by sin, and now by death, and laid in corruption and dust, shall be raised in incorruption (1 Corinthians 15:41-44, 53, 54); no more to be corrupted by sin, or by diseases, or by death. This corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, and death shall be swallowed up in victory; an entire conquest being obtained over it: and what is sown in dishonor and has lost all its beauty

and glory and become nauseous and fit only to be the companion of worms shall be raised in glory; in the utmost perfection, beauty, and comeliness, fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ, and shine like the sun in the firmament of heaven. And what is sown in weakness, having lost all its strength and carried by others to the grave, shall be raised in power; strong and hale, able to subsist without food and to move itself from place to place, and will attend the service of God and the Lamb without weakness and weariness. There will be no more complaint of this kind: the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak (Matthew 26:41); and what is sown a natural body, or an animal one, which while it lived was supported with animal food, and when it died, died as animals do, shall be raised a spiritual body; not turned into a spirit, for then it would not have flesh and bones, as it will have; but it will subsist as spirits do, without food, and the like, and no more die. Then it will be no encumbrance to the soul, as now, in spiritual services, but aiding and assisting to it in them, and be fitted for spiritual employments and to converse with spiritual objects; and thus will it continue forever.

3. In this conjunct state, when soul and body will be united together, there will be a fresh accession of glory to the whole man and new enjoyments possessed in a more large and sensible manner.

#### **A. There Will Be What Is Commonly Called The Beatific Vision**

Which though in part enjoyed before, will be now enlarged and will be both intellectual and corporal, according to the diversity of objects it will be concerned with.

(1) There will be the vision of God: now we walk by faith, then by sight; we shall see his face in righteousness, yea face to face, and even see him as he is (2 Corinthians 5:7; Psalm 17:15; 1 Corinthians 13:12; 1 John 3:2); not his essence and nature, so as to comprehend it; but shall have a clear and unclouded apprehension of his perfections and glory. We shall see God in all his persons; we shall see the Father of Christ and ours, who loved us with an everlasting love; who chose and blessed us with all spiritual blessings in his Son; who made a covenant with him and us in him, ordered in all things and sure; who laid help on him the mighty One, and sent him in the fulness of time, to be our Redeemer and Savior.

We shall see the Son of God himself, who became our surety, and is the Mediator between God and man; who assumed our nature, suffered and died in our room and stead; who rose again, ascended to heaven, is set down at the right hand of God, and will judge the world in righteousness. We shall see the glory of his divine person, with the eyes of our understanding fully enlightened and his glory as mediator of which we have little knowledge now, but then we shall have a clear understanding and discernment of it; yea in our flesh shall we see God, as Job says (Job 19:26, 27), and with our corporal eyes behold the glory of Christ's human body. We shall see that beautiful face that was once besmeared with sweat and blood, shine like the sun in its full strength; and those blessed temples that were crowned with thorns, crowned with glory and honor; and him whose hands and feet were pierced with nails, and covered with gore blood, holding the scepter of his kingdom, or walking in stately majesty, or sitting on his throne of glory.

We shall see the blessed Spirit, who convinced us of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and was our quickener and comforter; who led us into truth, and took of the things of Christ and showed them to us; who witnessed to our spirits that we were the children of God, and often assisted us in our prayers to him; was the earnest of our inheritance, and by whom we were sealed unto the day of redemption. We shall see him who began, and carried on, and perfected the work of grace in us; and that with the greatest pleasure and thankfulness.

(2) Saints will see all the holy angels in their shining forms, ranks, and orders; those thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers made by Christ, and subject to him: we shall see those sons of God, those morning-stars that sung together when the foundation of the earth was laid; those ten thousands of holy ones that made such a considerable figure in the apparatus at mount Sinai, when from the Lord's right hand went a fiery law; that multitude of the heavenly host that descended at Christ's incarnation, and sung "glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will to men;" that numerous company of them that attended our Lord at his ascension, and will be with him when he comes a second time to judge the world in righteousness. We

shall see them bowing their heads while they adore the divine being and celebrate the perfections of his nature and clapping their wings while the heavenly arches resound their praises [with] those of glorified saints.

(3) The saints will see and know one another in this perfect state. The question was asked Luther a little before his death, whether we should know one another in the other world? To which he answered, by observing the case of Adam who knew Eve to be flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, whom he had never seen before how did he know this? Says he, by the Spirit of God, by revelation; so, added he, shall we know parents, wives, children, in the other world, and that more perfectly. Besides, how did the apostles know Moses and Elias on the mount with Christ whom they had never seen before but by revelation? So the saints shall know one another in heaven; how otherwise can those whom gospel-ministers have been the instruments of their conversion and edification be their “joy and crown of rejoicing at the last day?” And indeed it seems necessary to the felicity of society to know one another; we are never quite free and easy in company when a stranger is in it we know not.

And it will undoubtedly give a pleasure not to be expressed to see and know those persons as then we shall. There we shall see the first man that was in the world, the head and representative of all mankind, and the figure of him that was to come, with Eve the mother of all living; we shall see this happy pair in a more exalted station than when in a state of innocence in Eden’s garden. There we shall see the first martyr whose blood was shed in the cause of religion, who by faith in the sacrifice of Christ, at that distance from it, offered a more excellent one than his brother.

There we shall see the man that saw two worlds, the old world that then was, and the present world that now is; who built an ark for the saving of himself and family, when the world of the ungodly was swept away with the deluge. There we shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with the rest of the patriarchs, both before and after the flood; and sit down with them in the kingdom of heaven. There we shall see Moses the meekest of men by whom the Lord did such wonders in the land of Ham and in the fields of Zoan, the lawgiver of Israel, who led them through the Red Sea and wilderness, to the border of Canaan’s land. There we shall see the man after God’s own heart, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, striking his harp to a higher note, to a better tune and to better purpose than when here on earth. There we shall see the evangelic prophet Isaiah, with the rest of his brethren the prophets, who prophesied beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

There we shall see the forerunner and harbinger of Christ who prepared his way by preaching and baptizing and who so clearly pointed him out as “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.” There we shall see the apostles of Christ, the companions of our dear Redeemer, who heard his doctrines, saw his miracles, and were witnesses of his sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven; and were the instruments of spreading the Gospel through the several parts of the world and sealed it with their blood. There we shall see the wondrous man that was caught up into the third heaven, who heard words unspeakable, not lawful for a man to utter; who preached the gospel from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum and was the means of converting so many thousands of souls and of planting so many churches in the Gentile world. There we shall see all the confessors and martyrs of Jesus that have been in all ages; yea, “the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven;” the bride the Lamb’s wife, with the glory of God upon her; even the whole innumerable company of the chosen, redeemed, and called ones, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands.

## **B. As In This State There Will Be An Enjoyment Of All That Is Good So A Freedom From All That Is Evil**

There will be an entire deliverance from sin; the saints will no more groan, being burdened with it; the Canaanite will be no more in the land; or such sins and corruptions in the heart which are now thorns in the flesh and pricks in the eyes and sides of good men. There will be no more a pricking briar, or grieving thorn, through the heavenly land or any temptations of Satan to disturb and molest; the people of God will be out of

the reach of his fiery darts. He found ways and means to get into the earthly paradise, to seduce our first parents: but he will never be able to get into the heavenly paradise; he is cast out and fallen from thence and will never reassume his place any more there. Nor will wicked men any more oppress them, there the wicked cease from troubling (Job 3:17); nor will their ears be offended any more with their oaths and blasphemies, or grieved with their filthy conversation; they will then be shut up in the pit of destruction and a vast chasm, a great gulf fixed between them, so that there will be no passing from one to the other. Nor will there be any afflictions attending the saints in this state. They will now be come out of great tribulations and shall hunger and thirst no more nor be annoyed and distressed with any outward calamity whatever. There will be no more pain or sorrow, diseases and death; nor will there be any inward distresses; no more fightings without, or fears within (2 Corinthians 7:5), about their state and condition; no more doubts nor questioning, nor misgivings of heart, nor unbelief; no more darkness and desertion, but “everlasting joy shall be upon them and sorrow and sighing shall flee away;” and there will be nothing but perfect rest, ease and peace.

### **C. The Employment Of The Saints In This State Deserves Notice And Will Be No Small Part Of Their Happiness**

As their bodies will be raised and united to their souls, they will spend the happy hours and days of eternity in conversing with each other, in sitting, walking, and talking together about divine, spiritual, and heavenly things, and that in an audible manner. What language they will speak is not for us to say; it is highly probable, since tongues will cease (1 Corinthians 13:8), that the jargon of speech introduced at Babel will be no more, but that one language will be spoken by all, but what that will be, cannot be determined; perhaps a language more pure, more perfect, more elegant, more refined than ever was spoken by man on earth the saints will now be employed in serving the Lord continually, not by preaching, or hearing, or reading, or praying, or attending on ordinances as now, which will be no more, but in praising the Lord for all the benefits of his grace and goodness; they will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb; the songs of electing, redeeming, justifying, adopting, calling, sanctifying, and persevering grace; and this will be their work throughout an endless eternity.

#### **1757 Publication Date**

**John Conybeare, D.D. (1692-1755) Episcopal Bishop of Exeter**

**Sermon on 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:2: Different Degrees of Happiness in a Future State**

**No Text Available**

#### **1758**

**Jonathan Edwards (1703 – 1758), American Calvinist Reformer**

**The Different Glory Of The Sun, The Moon And The Stars Represents The Different Glory Of Christ And The Glorified Saints**

**New England Stone Carving And Its Symbols (Allen I. Ludvig, 1975)**

In Puritan New England, with its abiding concern for things not of this world and its distrust of forms and ceremonies, one art flourished: the symbolic art of mortuary monument stonemasons. This carefully researched, beautifully illustrated work was the first to consider this art in depth as a meaningful aesthetic-spiritual expression. It is reissued for today's readers, with a new preface outlining changes in the field since the book appeared in 1966.

The use of sun orbs and stars had a rather specific meaning on the gravestone. Jonathan Edwards said:

The different glory of the sun, the moon and the stars represents the different glory of Christ and the glorified saints.



**1758 (Teubingen)**

**Johann Friedrich Cotta**

**Dissertatio Historico-Theologica Prior de Diversis Gradibus Gloriam Beatorum (Historico-Theological Dissertation on the Diverse Grades of Blessed Glory)**

**No Text Available**

**1758 (Latin)**

**Emanuel Swedenborg (1688 – 1722), Swedish Mystic and Theologian**

**Heaven (excerpts)**

**Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell**

**Translated by John Ager**

**Heaven is Divided into Two Kingdoms**

20. As there are infinite varieties in heaven, and no one society nor any one angel is exactly like any other, there are in heaven general, specific, and particular divisions. The general division is into two kingdoms, the specific into three heavens, and the particular into innumerable societies. Each of these will be treated of in what follows. The general division is said to be into kingdoms, because heaven is called "the kingdom of God."

21. There are angels that receive more interiorly the Divine that goes forth from the Lord, and others that receive it less interiorly; the former are called celestial angels, and the latter spiritual angels. Because of this difference heaven is divided into two kingdoms, one called the Celestial Kingdom, the other the Spiritual Kingdom.

22. As the angels that constitute the celestial kingdom receive the Divine of the Lord more interiorly they are called interior and also higher angels; and for the same reason the heavens that they constitute are called interior and higher heavens. They are called higher and lower, because these terms designate what is interior and what is exterior.

23. The love in which those are, who are in the celestial kingdom is called celestial love, and the love in which those are who are in the spiritual kingdom is called spiritual love. Celestial love is love to the Lord, and spiritual love is love towards the neighbor. And as all good pertains to love (for good to any one is what he loves) the good also of the other kingdom is called celestial, and the good of the other spiritual. Evidently, then, the two kingdoms are distinguished from each other in the same way as good of love to the Lord is distinguished from good of love towards the neighbor. And as the good of love to the Lord is an interior good, and that love is interior love, so the celestial angels are interior angels, and are called higher angels.

24. The celestial kingdom is called also the Lord's priestly kingdom, and in the Word "His dwelling-place;" while the spiritual kingdom is called His royal kingdom, and in the Word "His throne." And from the celestial Divine the Lord in the world was called "Jesus," while from the spiritual Divine He was called "Christ."

25. The angels in the Lord's celestial kingdom, from their more interior reception of the Divine of the Lord, far excel in wisdom and glory the angels that are in His spiritual kingdom; for they are in love to the Lord, and consequently are nearer and more closely conjoined to Him. These angels are such because they have received and continue to receive Divine truths at once in their life, and not first in memory and thought, as the spiritual angels do. Consequently they have Divine truths written in their hearts, and they perceive them,

and as it were see them, in themselves; nor do they ever reason about them whether they are true or not. They are such as are described in Jeremiah:

I will put my law in their mind, and will write it in their heart. They shall teach no more everyone his friend and everyone his brother, saying, Know ye Jehovah. They shall know Me, from the least of them even to the greatest of them (31:33, 34).

And they are called in Isaiah:

Taught of Jehovah (54:13).

That the "taught of Jehovah" are those who are taught by the Lord He Himself teaches in John (6:45, 46).

26. It has been said that these angels have wisdom and glory above others for the reason that they have received and continue to receive Divine truths at once in their life. For as soon as they hear Divine truths, they will and do them, instead of storing them up in the memory and afterwards considering whether they are true. They know at once by influx from the Lord whether the truth they hear is true; for the Lord flows directly into man's willing, but mediately through his willing into his thinking. Or what is the same, the Lord flows directly into good, but mediately through good into truth. That is called good which belongs to the will and action therefrom, while that is called truth that belongs to the memory and to the thought therefrom ...

27. Because of this difference between the angels of the celestial kingdom and the angels of the spiritual kingdom they are not together, and have no interaction with each other. They are able to communicate only through intermediate angelic societies, which are called celestial-spiritual. Through these the celestial kingdom flows into the spiritual; and from this it comes to pass that although heaven is divided into two kingdoms it nevertheless makes one. The Lord always provides such intermediate angels through whom there is communication and conjunction.

28. As the angels of these two kingdoms will be fully treated of in what follows, particulars are here omitted.

### **There are Three Heavens**

29. There are three heavens, entirely distinct from each other, an inmost or third, a middle or second, and an outmost or first. These have a like order and relation to each other as the highest part of man, or his head, the middle part, or body, and the lowest, or feet; or as the upper, the middle, and the lower stories of a house. In the same order is the Divine that goes forth and descends from the Lord; consequently heaven, from the necessity of order, is threefold.

30. The interiors of man, which belong to his mind and disposition, are also in like order. He has an inmost, a middle, and an outmost part; for when man was created all things of Divine order were brought together in him, so that he became Divine order in form, and consequently a heaven in miniature. For this reason also man, as regards his interiors, has communication with the heavens and comes after death among the angels, either among those of the inmost, or of the middle, or of the outmost heaven, in accordance with his reception of Divine good and truth from the Lord during his life in the world.

31. The Divine that flows in from the Lord and is received in the third or inmost heaven is called celestial, and in consequence the angels there are called celestial angels; the Divine that flows in from the Lord and is received in the second or middle heaven is called spiritual, and in consequence the angels there are called spiritual angels; while the Divine that flows in from the Lord and is received in the outmost or first heaven is called natural; but as the natural of that heaven is not like the natural of the world, but has the spiritual and the celestial within it, that heaven is called the spiritual-natural and the celestial-natural, and in consequence the angels there are called spiritual-natural and celestial-natural. Those who receive influx from the middle

or second heaven, which is the spiritual heaven, are called spiritual-natural; and those who receive influx from the third or inmost heaven, which is the celestial heaven, are called celestial-natural. The spiritual-natural angels and the celestial-natural angels are distinct from each other; nevertheless they constitute one heaven, because they are in one degree.

32. In each heaven there is an internal and an external; those in the internal are called there internal angels, while those in the external are called external angels. The internal and the external in the heavens, or in each heaven, hold the same relation as the voluntary and intellectual in man—the internal corresponding to the voluntary, and the external to the intellectual. Everything voluntary has its intellectual; one cannot exist without the other. The voluntary may be compared to a flame and the intellectual to the light therefrom.

33. Let it be clearly understood that with the angels it is the interiors that cause them to be in one heaven or another; for as their interiors are more open to the Lord they are in a more interior heaven. There are three degrees of interiors in each angel and spirit, and also in man. Those in whom the third degree is opened are in the inmost heaven. Those in whom the second degree is opened, or only the first, are in the middle or in the outmost heaven. The interiors are opened by reception of Divine good and Divine truth. Those who are affected by Divine truths and admit them at once into the life, thus into the will and into action therefrom, are in the inmost or third heaven, and have their place there in accordance with their reception of good from affection for truth. Those who do not admit truths at once into the will but into the memory, and thence into the understanding, and from the understanding will and do them, are in the middle or second heaven. But those who live morally and who believe in a Divine, and who care very little about being taught, are in the outmost or first heaven. From this it is clear that the states of the interiors are what make heaven, and that heaven is within everyone, and not outside of him; as the Lord teaches when He says:

The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, Lo here, or Lo there; for behold the kingdom of God ye have within you (Luke 17:20, 21).

34. Furthermore, all perfection increases towards interiors and decreases towards exteriors, since interiors are nearer to the Divine, and are in themselves pure, while exteriors are more remote from the Divine and are in themselves grosser. Intelligence, wisdom, love, everything good and the resulting happiness, are what constitute angelic perfection; but not happiness apart from these, for such happiness is external and not internal. Because in the angels of the inmost heaven the interiors have been opened in the third degree their perfection immeasurably surpasses the perfection of angels in the middle heaven, whose interiors have been opened in the second degree. So the perfection of these angels exceeds in like measure the perfection of angels of the outmost heaven.

35. Because of this distinction an angel of one heaven cannot go among the angels of another heaven, that is, no one can ascend from a lower heaven and no one can descend from a higher heaven. One ascending from a lower heaven is seized with a distress even to anguish, and is unable to see those who are there, still less to talk with them; while one descending from a higher heaven is deprived of his wisdom, stammers in his speech, and is in despair.

There were some from the outmost heaven who had not yet been taught that the interiors of angels are what constitute heaven, and who believed that they might come into a higher heavenly happiness by simply gaining access to a heaven where higher angels are. These were permitted to enter among such angels. But when they were there they could see no one, however much they searched, although there was a great multitude present; for the interiors of the newcomers not having been opened in the same degree as the interiors of the angels there, their sight was not so opened. Presently they were seized with such anguish of heart that they scarcely knew whether they were alive or not. Therefore they hastily betook themselves to the heaven from which they came, glad to get back among their like, and pledging themselves that they would no longer covet higher things than were in agreement with their life. Again, I have seen some let down from a

higher heaven; and these were deprived of their wisdom until they no longer knew what their own heaven was.

It is otherwise when, as is often done, angels are raised up by the Lord out of a lower heaven into a higher that they may behold its glory; for then they are prepared beforehand, and are encompassed by intermediate angels, through whom they have communication with those they come among. From all this it is plain that the three heavens are entirely distinct from each other.

36. Those, however, who are in the same heaven can affiliate with any who are there; but the delights of such affiliation are measured by the kinships of good they have come into; of which more will be said in the following chapters.

37. But although the heavens are so distinct that there can be no companionship between the angels of one heaven and the angels of another, still the Lord joins all the heavens together by both direct and mediate influx-direct from Himself into all the heavens, and mediate from one heaven into another.<sup>{1}</sup> He thus makes the three heavens to be one, and all to be in such connection from the First to the Last that nothing unconnected is possible. Whatever is not connected through intermediates with the First can have no permanent existence, but is dissipated and becomes nothing.

38. Only he who knows how degrees are related to Divine order can comprehend how the heavens are distinct, or even what is meant by the internal and the external man. Most men in the world have no other idea of what is interior and what is exterior, or of what is higher and what is lower, than as something continuous, or coherent by continuity, from purer to grosser. But the relation of what is interior to what is exterior is discrete, not continuous. Degrees are of two kinds, those that are continuous and those that are not.

Continuous degrees are related like the degrees of the waning of a light from its bright blaze to darkness, or like the degrees of the decrease of vision from objects in the light to those in the shade, or like degrees of purity in the atmosphere from bottom to top. These degrees are determined by distance. On the other hand, degrees that are not continuous, but discrete, are distinguished like prior and posterior, like cause and effect, and like what produces and what is produced. Whoever looks into the matter will see that in each thing and all things in the whole world, whatever they are, there are such degrees of producing and compounding, that is, from one a second, and from that a third, and so on. Until one has acquired for himself a perception of these degrees he cannot possibly understand the differences between the heavens, nor between the interior and exterior faculties of man, nor the differences between the spiritual world and the natural world, nor between the spirit of man and his body. So neither can he understand the nature and source of correspondences and representations, or the nature of influx.

Sensual men do not apprehend these differences, for they make increase and decrease, even according to these degrees, to be continuous, and are therefore unable to conceive of what is spiritual otherwise than as a purer natural. And in consequence they remain outside of and a great way off from intelligence.

39. Finally, a certain arcanum respecting the angels of the three heavens, which has not hitherto come into any one's mind, because degrees have not been understood, may be related. In every angel and also in every man there is an inmost or highest degree, or an inmost or highest something, into which the Divine of the Lord primarily or proximately flows, and from which it disposes the other interiors in him that follow in accordance with the degrees of order. This inmost or highest degree may be called the entrance of the Lord to the angel or man, and His veriest dwelling-place in them. It is by virtue of this inmost or highest that a man is a man, and is distinguished from irrational animals, for these do not have it. From this it is that man, unlike the animals, is capable, in respect to all his interiors which pertain to his mind and disposition, of being raised up by the Lord to Himself, of believing in the Lord, of being moved by love to the Lord, and thereby beholding Him, and of receiving intelligence and wisdom, and speaking from reason. Also, it is by virtue of

this that he lives to eternity. But what is arranged and provided by the Lord in this inmost does not distinctly flow into the perception of any angel, because it is above his thought and transcends his wisdom.

40. These now are the general truths respecting the three heavens; but in what follows each heaven will be particularly treated of.

### **The Heavens Consist of Innumerable Societies**

41. The angels of each heaven are not together in one place, but are divided into larger and smaller societies in accordance with the differences of good of love and of faith in which they are, those who are in like good forming a single society. Goods in the heavens are in infinite variety, and each angel is as it were his own good.

42. Moreover, the angelic societies in the heavens are at a distance from each other as their goods differ in general and in particular. For in the spiritual world the only ground of distance is difference in the state of interiors, thus in the heavens difference in the states of love, those who differ much being far apart, and those who differ but little being but little apart, and likeness causing them to be together.

43. All who are in the same society are arranged in like manner in respect to each other; those who are more perfect, that is, who excel in good, thus in love, wisdom, and intelligence, being in the middle; those who are less pre-eminent being round about at a distance in accordance with the decrease of their perfection. The arrangement is like light diminishing from the middle to the circumference, those who are in the middle being in the greatest light, and those towards the circumference in less and less.

44. Like are drawn spontaneously as it were to their like; for with their like they are as if with their own and at home, but with others they are as if with strangers and abroad; also when with their like they are in their freedom, and consequently in every delight of life.

45. All this makes clear that all in the heavens are affiliated by good, and are distinguished according to the quality of the good. Nevertheless it is not the angels who thus affiliate themselves, but the Lord, from whom the good is. The Lord leads them, conjoins and separates them, and preserves them in freedom proportionate to their good. Thus He holds everyone in the life of his love and faith, of his intelligence and wisdom, and the resulting happiness.

46. Again, all who are in like good, even though they have never seen each other before, know each other, just as men in the world do their kinsmen, near relations, and friends; and for the reason that in the other life there are none but spiritual kinships, relationships, and friendships, thus such as spring from love and faith. This it has sometimes been granted me to see, when I have been in the spirit, and thus withdrawn from the body, and in the society of angels. Some of those I then saw seemed as if I had known them from childhood, but others as if not known at all. Those whom I seemed to have known from childhood were such as were in a state similar to that of my spirit; but those who seemed unknown were in a dissimilar state.

47. All who form the same angelic society resemble each other in countenance in a general way, but not in particulars. How these general resemblances are related to differences in particulars can in some measure be seen from like things in the world. It is well known that with every race there is a certain general resemblance of face and eyes, by which it is known and distinguished from all other races. This is still more true of different families. In the heavens this is much more fully the case, because there all the interior affections appear in and shine forth from the face, for there the face is the external and representative form of those affections. No one there can have any other face than that of his own affection. It was also shown how this general likeness is varied in particulars with individuals in the same society. A face like an angel's appeared to me, and this was varied in accordance with such affections for good and truth as are in those who belong to a single society. These changes went on for a long time, and I noticed that the same face in general

continued as a ground work, all besides being what was derived and produced from that. Thus by means of this face the affections of the whole society were exhibited, whereby the faces of those in it are varied. For, as has been said above, the faces of angels are the forms of their interiors, thus of the affections that belong to their love and faith.

48. From this it also comes to pass that an angel who excels in wisdom instantly sees the quality of another from his face. In heaven no one can conceal his interiors by his expression, or feign, or really deceive and mislead by craft or hypocrisy. There are hypocrites who are experts in disguising their interiors and fashioning their exteriors into the form of that good in which those are who belong to a society, and who thus make themselves appear angels of light; and these sometimes insinuate themselves into a society; but they cannot stay there long, for they begin to suffer inward pain and torture, to grow livid in the face, and to become as it were lifeless. These changes arise from the contrariety of the life that flows in and affects them. Therefore they quickly cast themselves down into hell where their like are, and no longer want to ascend. These are such as are meant by the man found among the invited guests at the feast not clothed with a wedding garment, who was cast out into outer darkness (Matt. 22:11, seq.).

49. All the societies of heaven have communication with one another, though not by open interaction; for few go out of their own society into another, since going out of their own society is like going away from themselves or from their own life, and passing into another life which is less congenial. But all the societies communicate by an extension of the sphere that goes forth from the life of each. This sphere of the life is the sphere of the affections of love and faith. This sphere extends itself far and wide into the surrounding societies, and farther and wider in proportion as the affections are the more interior and perfect. In the measure of that extension do the angels have intelligence and wisdom. Those that are in the inmost heaven and in the middle of it have extension into the entire heavens; thus there is a sharing of all in heaven with each one, and of each one with all. But this extension will be considered more fully hereafter, where the form of heaven in accord with which the angelic societies are arranged, and also the wisdom and intelligence of angels, will be treated of, for in accordance with that form all extension of affections and thoughts proceeds.

50. It has been said above that in the heavens there are larger and smaller societies. The larger consist of myriads of angels, the smaller of some thousands, and the least of some hundreds. There are also some that dwell apart, house by house as it were, and family by family. Although these live in this scattered way, they are arranged in order like those who live in societies, the wiser in the middle and the more simple in the borders. Such are more closely under the Divine auspices of the Lord, and are the best of the angels.

### **Each Society is a Heaven in a Smaller Form, and Each Angel in the Smallest Form**

51. Each society is a heaven in a smaller form, and each angel in the smallest form, because it is the good of love and of faith that makes heaven, and this good is in each society of heaven and in each angel of a society. It does not matter that this good everywhere differs and varies, it is still the good of heaven; and there is no difference except that heaven has one quality here and another there.

So when any one is raised up into any society of heaven he is said to come into heaven; and those who are there are said to be in heaven, and each one in his own. This is known to all in the other life; consequently those standing outside of or beneath heaven, when they see at a distance companies of angels, say that heaven is in this or that place. It is comparatively like civil and military officers and attendants in a royal palace or castle, who, although dwelling apart in their own quarters or chambers above and below, are yet in the same palace or castle, each in his own position in the royal service. This makes evident the meaning of the Lord's words, that:

In His Father's house are many abiding places (John 14:2);

also what is meant by the dwelling-places of heaven, and the heavens of heavens, in the prophets.

52. That each society is a heaven in a smaller form can be seen from this also, that each society there has a heavenly form like that of heaven as a whole. In the whole heavens those who are superior to the rest are in the middle, with the less excellent round about in a decreasing order even to the borders (as stated in a preceding chapter, n. 43). It can be seen also from this, that the Lord directs all in the whole heaven as if they were a single angel; and the same is true of all in each society; and as a consequence an entire angelic society sometimes appears in angelic form like a single angel, as I have been permitted by the Lord to see. Moreover, when the Lord appears in the midst of the angels He does not appear as one surrounded by many, but the appearance is as a one, in an angelic form. This is why the Lord is called "an angel" in the Word, and why an entire society is so called. "Michael," "Gabriel," and "Raphael" are no other than angelic societies so named from their function.

53. As an entire society is a heaven in a smaller form, so an angel is a heaven in the smallest form. For heaven is not outside of the angel, but is within him, since the interior things which belong to his mind are arranged into the form of heaven, thus for the reception of all things of heaven that are outside of him. These also he receives according to the quality of the good that is in him from the Lord. It is from this that an angel is a heaven.

54. It can in no sense be said that heaven is outside of any one; it is within him. For it is in accordance with the heaven that is within him that each angel receives the heaven that is outside of him. This makes clear how greatly misled is he who believes that to come into heaven is simply to be taken up among angels, without regard to what one's interior life may be, thus that heaven is granted to each one by mercy apart from means; {1} when, in fact, unless heaven is within one, nothing of the heaven that is outside can flow in and be received. There are many spirits who have this idea. Because of this belief they have been taken up into heaven; but when they came there, because their interior life was contrary to the angelic life, their intellectual faculties began to be blinded until they became like fools; and they began to be tortured in their voluntary faculties until they became like madmen. In a word, if those that have lived wickedly come into heaven they gasp for breath and writhe about, like fishes out of water in the air, or like animals in ether in an airpump when the air has been exhausted. From this it can be seen that heaven is not outside of a man, but within him.

55. As everyone receives the heaven that is outside of him in accordance with the quality of the heaven that is within him, so in like manner does everyone receive the Lord, since it is the Divine of the Lord that makes heaven. And for this reason when the Lord becomes manifestly present in any society His appearance there is in accord with the quality of the good in which the society is, thus not the same in one society as in another. This diversity is not in the Lord; it is in the angels who behold Him from their own good, and thus in accordance with their good. And they are affected by His appearance in accordance with the quality of their love, those who love Him inmost being inmost affected, and those who love Him less being less affected; while the evil who are outside of heaven are tortured by His presence. When the Lord is seen in any society He is seen as an angel, but is distinguished from others by the Divine that shines through.

56. Again, heaven is where the Lord is acknowledged, believed in, and loved. Variety in worship of the Lord from the variety of good in different societies is not harmful, but beneficial, for the perfection of heaven is therefrom. This can scarcely be made clear to the comprehension without employing terms that are in common use in the learned world, and showing by means of these how unity, that it may be perfect, must be formed from variety. Every whole exists from various parts, since a whole without constituents is not anything; it has no form, and therefore no quality. But when a whole exists from various parts, and the various parts are in a perfect form, in which each attaches itself like a congenial friend to another in series, then the quality is perfect. So heaven is a whole from various parts arranged in a most perfect form, for the heavenly form is the most perfect of all forms. That this is the ground of all perfection is evident from the nature of all beauty, agreeableness and delight, by which the senses and the mind are affected; for these qualities spring and flow from no other source than the concert and harmony of many concordant and congenial parts, either coexisting in order or following in order, and never from a whole without many parts.

From this is the saying that variety gives delight; and the nature of variety, as is known, is what determines the delight. From all this it can be seen as in a mirror how perfection comes from variety even in heaven. For from the things that exist in the natural world the things of the spiritual world can be seen as in a mirror.

57. What has been said of heaven may be said also of the church, for the church is the Lord's heaven on earth. There are also many churches, each one of which is called a church, and so far as the good of love and faith reigns therein is a church. Here, too, the Lord out of various parts forms a unity, that is, one church out of many churches. And the like may be said of the man of the church in particular that is said of the church in general, namely, that the church is within man and not outside of him; and that every man is a church in whom the Lord is present in the good of love and of faith. Again, the same may be said of a man that has the church in him as of an angel that has heaven in him, namely, that he is a church in the smallest form, as an angel is a heaven in the smallest form; and furthermore that a man that has the church in him, equally with an angel, is a heaven. For man was created that he might come into heaven and become an angel; consequently he that has good from the Lord is a man angel. What man has in common with an angel and what he has in contrast with angels may be mentioned. It is granted to man, equally with the angel, to have his interiors conformed to the image of heaven, and to become, so far as he is in the good of love and faith, an image of heaven. But it is granted to man and not to angels to have his exteriors conform to the image of the world; and so far as he is in good to have the world in him subordinated to heaven and made to serve heaven. And then the Lord is present in him both in the world and in heaven just as if he were in his heaven. For the Lord is in His Divine order in both worlds, since God is order.

58. Finally it should be said that he who has heaven in himself has it not only in the largest or most general things pertaining to him but also in every least or particular thing, and that these least things repeat in an image the greatest. This comes from the fact that everyone is his own love, and is such as his ruling love is. That which reigns flows into the particulars and arranges them, and every where induces a likeness of itself. In the heavens love to the Lord is the ruling love, for there the Lord is loved above all things. Hence the Lord there is the All-in-all, flowing into all and each, arranging them, clothing them with a likeness of Himself, and making it to be heaven wherever He is. This is what makes an angel to be a heaven in the smallest form, a society to be a heaven in a larger form, and all the societies taken together a heaven in the largest form. That the Divine of the Lord is what makes heaven, and that He is the All-in-all, may be seen above.

### **The Sun in Heaven**

116. In heaven neither the sun of the world, nor anything from that sun, is seen, because it is wholly natural. For nature has its beginning from that sun, and whatever is produced by means of it is called natural. But the spiritual, to which heaven belongs, is above nature and wholly distinct from what is natural; and there is no communication between the two except by correspondences. What the distinction between them is may be understood from what has been already said about degrees, and what the communication is from what has been said in the two preceding chapters about correspondences.

117. Although the sun of the world is not seen in heaven, nor anything from that sun, there is nevertheless a sun there, and light and heat, and all things that are in the world, with innumerable others, but not from a like origin; since the things in heaven are spiritual, and those in the world are natural. The sun of heaven is the Lord; the light there is the Divine truth and the heat the Divine good that go forth from the Lord as a sun. From this origin are all things that spring forth and are seen in the heavens. This light and heat and things existing therefrom in heaven will be treated of in the following chapters; in this chapter we will speak only of the sun there. In heaven the Lord is seen as a sun, for the reason that He is Divine love, from which all spiritual things, and by means of the sun of the world all natural things, have their existence. That love is what shines as a sun.

118. The Lord is seen in heaven as a sun, and is the sun of heaven The Lord is seen as a sun by those who are in His celestial kingdom, where love to Him reigns, and as a moon by those who are in His spiritual



kingdom, where charity to the neighbor and faith reign. The Lord is seen as a sun at a middle height before the right eye, and as a moon before the left eye. The Lord is seen as a sun and as a moon.

119. This is why in the Word the Lord in respect to love is likened to the sun, and in respect to faith to the moon; also that the "sun" signifies love from the Lord to the Lord, and the "moon" signifies faith from the Lord in the Lord, as in the following passages:

The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days (Isa. 30:26).

And when I shall extinguish thee I will cover the heavens and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not make her light to shine. All luminaries of light in the heavens will I make dark over thee, and I will set darkness upon thy land (Ezek 32:7, 8).

I will darken the sun in his going forth, and the moon shall not make her light to shine (Isa. 13:10)

The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood (Joel 2:2, 10, 31; 3:16).

The sun became black as sackcloth and hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars fell unto the earth (Apoc. 6:12, 13).

Immediately after the affliction of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven (Matt. 24:29).

And elsewhere. In these passages the "sun" signifies love, and the "moon" faith, and the "stars" knowledges of good and truth. These are said to be darkened, to lose their light, and to fall from heaven, when they are no more. That the Lord is seen as a sun in heaven is evident also from His appearance when transfigured before Peter, James, and John,

That His face did shine as the sun (Matt. 17:2).

These disciples thus saw the Lord when they were withdrawn from the body, and were in the light of heaven. It was because of this correspondence that the ancient people, with whom was a representative church, turned the face to the sun in the east when they were in Divine worship; and for the same reason they gave to their temples an eastern aspect.

120. How great the Divine love is and what it is can be seen by comparison with the sun of the world, that it is most ardent, if you will believe it, much more ardent than that sun. For this reason the Lord as a sun does not flow without mediums into the heavens, but the ardor of His love is gradually tempered on the way. These temperings appear as radiant belts about the sun; furthermore, the angels are veiled with a thin adapting cloud to prevent their being harmed by the influx. For this reason the heavens are more or less near in accordance with reception. As the higher heavens are in good of love they are nearest to the Lord as the sun; and as the lower heavens are in good of faith they are farther away from Him. But those that are in no good, like those in hell, are farthest away, at different distances in accordance with their opposition to good.

123. As it is from the Divine love that is in and from Him that the Lord appears in heaven like a sun, so all in the heavens are turned constantly to Him those in the celestial kingdom to Him as a sun and those in the spiritual kingdom to Him as a moon. But those that are in hell turn themselves to an opposite darkness and dense darkness, that is, they turn backwards, away from the Lord; and for the reason that all in the hells are in love of self and the world, thus antagonistic to the Lord. Those who turn themselves to the dense darkness that is in the place where this world's sun is are in the hells behind, and are called genii; while those that turn

themselves to the darkness that is in the place of the moon are in the hells more in front, and are called spirits. This is why those in the hells are said to be in darkness, and those in the heavens in light, "darkness" signifying falsity from evil, and "light" truth from good.

They so turn themselves because all in the other life look towards what rules in their interiors, thus to their loves; and with angels and spirits the interiors determine the face; and in the spiritual world quarters are not fixed, as in the natural world, but are determined by the face. In respect to his spirit man turns himself in like manner as a spirit does, backwards from the Lord if he is in love of self and the world, and towards the Lord if he is in love to the Lord and the neighbor. But of this man is ignorant, because he is in the natural world where quarters are determined by the rising and setting of the sun. But as this cannot be easily comprehended by men it will be elucidated hereafter when Quarters, Space, and Time in Heaven are treated of.

124. Because the Lord is the sun of heaven and everything that is from Him looks to Him, He is also the common center, the source of all direction and determination. So, too, all things beneath are in His presence and under His auspices, both in the heavens and on the earths.

125. From all this what has been said and shown in previous chapters about the Lord may now be seen in clearer light, namely:

That He is the God of heaven

That it is His Divine that makes heaven

That the Lord's Divine in heaven is love to Him and charity towards the neighbor

That there is a correspondence of all things of the world with heaven, and through heaven with the Lord

Also that the sun and moon of the world are correspondences

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**Isaac Watts (1674-1748) English Non-Conforming Protestant Theologian and Author of Hymns**

**The World To Come; Or Discourses On The Joys Or Sorrows Of Departed Souls At Death, And The Glory Or Terror Of The Resurrection**

**Works of Isaac Watts?**

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But I proceed to the second particular.

II. The perfection of the spirits above, not only admits of a rich variety of entertainments, according to the various relish and inclination of the blessed, but it is such a perfection as^ allows of different degrees even in the same blessedness, according to the different capacities of spirits, and their different degrees of preparation. The word perfection does not always require equality,

If all the souls in heaven were of one mould, and make, and inclination, yet there may be different sizes of capacity even in the same genius, and a different degree of preparation for the same delights and enjoyments; therefore though all the spirits of the just were uniform in their natures and pleasures, and all perfect; yet one spirit may possess more happiness and glory than another, because it is more capacious of intellectual

blessings, and better prepared for them. So when vessels of various size are thrown into the same ocean, there will be a great difference in the quantity of the liquid which they receive, though all might be full to the brim, and all made of the richest metal.

Now there is much evidence of this truth in the holy scripture. Our Saviour intimates such differences of rewards in several of his expressions. Mat. xix. 28. he promises the apostles, that they "shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." And it is probable this may denote something of superior honour or dignity above the meanest of the saints. And even among the apostles themselves he seems to allow of a difference • for though he would not promise James and John to sit next to him, on his right hand and his left in his kingdom, Matt. xx. 20, &c. yet he does not deny that there are such distinct dignities, but says, "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of his Father," ver. 23.

Again, our Lord says, Matt. x. 41, 42. He that receives a prophet, and entertains him as a prophet, shall have a prophet's reward; and he that entertains a righteous man, agreeable to his character, and from a real esteem of his righteousness, shall have a righteous man's reward; and even the meanest sort' of entertainment, a cup of cold water given to a disciple, for the sake of his character, shall not go •without some reward. Here are three sorts or degrees of reward mentioned, extending to the life to come, as well as to this life; now though neither of them can be merited by works, but all are entirely conferred by grace, yet, as one observes here, "The Lord hath fixed a. proportion between the work and the reward; so that as one has different degrees of goodness, the other shall have different degrees of excellency"

Our Saviour assures us, that the torments of hell shall admit of various degrees and distinctions; some will be more exquisite and terrible than others; it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, who never sinned against half so much light, than it shall be for Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, where Christ himself had preached his gospel, and confirmed it with most evident miracles, Matt. xi. 21—24. And the servants who did not the will of their Lord, shall be beaten with more or fewer stripes, according to their different degrees of knowledge and advantages of instruction; Luke xii. 47, 48. Now may we not by a parallel reasoning, suppose there will be various orders and degrees of reward in heaven, as well as punishment in hell; since there is scarce a greater variety among the degrees of wickedness among sinners on earth, than there is of holiness among the saints?

When the apostle is describing the glories of the body at the great resurrection, he seems to represent the differences of glory that shall be conferred on different saints, by the difference of the great luminaries of heaven; 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. "There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead."

The prophet Daniel led the way to this description, and the same spirit taught the apostle the same language; Dan. xii. 2, X. ".And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting: life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt; and they that be wise shall shine, (with common glory) as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, (shall have a peculiar lustre) as the stars for ever and ever." And if there be a difference in the visible glories of the saints at the resurrection, if those who turn many to righteousness shall sparkle, in that day, with brighter beams than those who are only wise for their own salvation; the same reason leads us to believe a difference of spiritual glory in the state of separate spirits, when the recompence of their labours is begun.

So, 1 Cor. iii. 8. "He that planteth, and he that watereth, are one; and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." If all be rewarded alike, the apostle would not have said, Each man shall receive according to his own labour. Surely since there is a distinction of labours, there will be a distinction of rewards too.

And it is with this view the same apostle exhorts the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xv. 58. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that

your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Now that great labour and diligence, that steadfastness in profession, and that zeal in practice, to which the apostle exhorts them, might seem to be in vain, if those who were far less laborious, less zealous, and less steadfast, should obtain an equal recompence.

It is upon the same principle that he encourages them to holy patience under afflictive trials, 2 Cor. iv. 17. when he says, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not to the things which are seen, and temporal, but to the things invisible and eternal" Now if the saint, who was called to heaven almost as soon as he was made a Christian, and went through no sufferings, should possess the same weight of glory with the martyrs and confessors, under the long and tedious train of cruelties which they sustained from men, or painful trials from the hand of God; I cannot see how their afflictions could be said to work for them a far more exceeding weight of glory.

He urges them also to great degrees of liberality from the same motive; 2 Cor. ix. 6. "This I say, he that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully, shall also reap bountifully." Which words may reasonably be construed to signify the blessings of the life to come, as well as the blessings of the present life; for this apostle speaking of the same duty of liberality, expresses the same encouragement under the same metaphors; Gal. vi. 6, 7, 8, 9. "Let him that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to (he Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we taint not." When God distributes the riches of his glory amongst the saints in heaven, he pours them out in a large and bountiful manner upon those who have distributed the good things of this life bountifully to the poor; but he rewards the narrow-souled Christian with a more sparing hand.

With the same design does the apostle encourage Christians to watchfulness against sin and heresy, as well as ministers to a solicitous care of their doctrine and preaching; 1 Cor iii 12, 13, 14, 15. If any man build gold, silver/or precious stones upon the true foundation Jesus Christ, and raise a glorious superstructure of faith and holiness, he shall receive a reward answerable to his skill and care in building; for his work shall stand, when it is tried by the fire of the judgment-day; but if he build wood, hay, and stubble upon it, evil inferences, and corrupt practices, or trifles, fruitless controversies, idle speculations, and vain ceremonies, his works shall be burnt, and he shall suffer loss, shall obtain a far less recompence, of his labour; yet, since he has laid Christ for the foundation, and has taught and practised the fundamental doctrines and duties of Christianity, though mingled with much folly and weakness, he himself shall be saved; yet in so hazardous a manner as a man that is saved by fire, who loses all his goods, and just escapes with his life.

When you hear St. Paul, or St. John, speaking of the last judgment, they give hints of the same distinction of rewards, 2 Cor. v. 10. "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Eph. vi. 8. "Whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." Rev. xxii. 12. "And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Though the highest and holiest saint in heaven can claim nothing there by the way of merit (for it is our Lord Jesus Christ alone, who has purchased all those unknown blessings) yet he will distribute them according to the different characters and degrees of holiness which his saints possessed on earth; and those larger degrees of holiness were also the free gift of God our Saviour.

I have often represented it to my own thoughts under this comparison. Here is a race appointed; here are a thousand different prizes, purchased by some prince to be bestowed on the racers; and the prince himself gives them food and wine, according to what proportion he pleases, to strengthen and animate them for the race. Each has a particular stage appointed for him; some of shorter, and some of longer distance. When every racer comes to his own goal, he receives a prize in most exact proportion to his speed, diligence, and length of race; and the grace and the justice of the prince shine gloriously in such a distribution. Not the foremost of the racers can pretend to have merited the prize; for the prizes were all paid for by the prince

himself; and it was he that appointed the race, and gave them spirit and strength to run; and yet there is a most equitable proportion observed in the reward, according to the labours of the race. Now this similitude represents the matter so agreeably to the apostle's way of speaking, when he compares the Christian life to a race, I Cor.- xi. 24, &c. Gal. v. 7. Phil. iii. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 7. Heb. xii. 1. that I think it may be called almost a scriptural description of the present subject.

The reason of man, and the light of nature, entirely concur with scripture in this point. The glory of heaven is prepared for those who are prepared for it in a state of grace, Rom. ix. 23. It is God who makes each of us meet for our own inheritance among the saints in light, Col. i. 12. and then he bestows on us that inheritance. As grace fits the soul for glory, so a larger degree of grace advances and widens the capacity of the soul, and prepares it to receive a larger degree of glory. The work of grace is but the means, the reward of glory is the end; now the wisdom of God always fits and adjusts the means in a due proportion to answer the end he designs: and the same wisdom ever makes the end answerable to the means he useth; and therefore he infuses more and higher glories into vessels more enlarged and better prepared.

Some of the spirits in heaven may be trained up by their stations and sacred services on earth, for more elevated employments and joys on high. Can we imagine that the soul of David, the sweet Psalmist, the prophet, and the king of Israel, is not fitted by all his labours and trials, all his raptures of faith, and love, and zeal, for some sublimer devotion and nobler business than his own infant child, the fruit of his adultery? And yet our divines have generally placed this child in heaven, because David ceased to mourn for him at his death, and said, that he himself should go to him; 2 Sam. xii. 20, 23. Deborah, the prophetess, judged Israel, she animated their armies, and sung their victories; is not Deborah engaged in some more illustrious employment among the heavenly tribes than good Dorcas may seem to be capable of, whose highest character upon record is, that she was full of alms-deeds, and made coats and garments for the poor? Acts ix. 36, 39. And yet perhaps Dorcas is prepared too for some greater enjoyments, some sweeter relish of mercy, or some special taste of the divine goodness, above Rahab the harlot; Rahab, whose younger character was lewd and infamous, and the best thing that we read of her is, that her faith under the present terror of the armies of Israel taught her once to cover and conceal their spies; and unless she made great advances afterward in grace, surely her place is not very high in glory.

The worship of heaven, and the joy that attends it, may be exceedingly different in degrees according to the different capacity of spirits, and yet all may be perfect and free from sinful defects. Does not the sparrow praise the Lord its Maker upon the ridge of a cottage, chirping in its native perfection? And yet the lark advances in her flight and her song as far above the sparrow, as the clouds are above the house-top.

Surely superior joys and glories must belong to superior powers and services.

Can we think that Abraham and Moses, who were trained up in converse with God face to face, as a man converses with his friend, and who followed him through the wilderness and unknown countries in a glorious exercise of faith, were not prepared for a greater intimacy with God, and nearer views of his glory in heaven, than Samson and Jephthah, those rude heroes, who being appointed of God for that service, spent their days in bloody work, in hewing down the Philistines and the Amorites? For we read little of their acquaintance with God, or converse with him, beside a petition now and then, or a vow for victory and for slaughter; and we should hardly have charity enough to believe they were saved, if St. Paul had not placed them among the examples of faith in his eleventh chapter to the Hebrews. Can we ever believe that the thief upon the cross, who spent his life in plundering and mischief, and made a single though sincere profession of the name of Jesus just in his dying hour, was prepared for the same high station and enjoyment it; paradise, so near the right hand of Christ, as the great apostle Paul, whose prayers and sermons, whose miracles of labour and suffering filled up and finished a long life, and honoured his Lord and Saviour more than all the twelve apostle-s besides? Can we imagine that the child that is just born into this world under the friendly shadow of the covenant of grace, and weeps and dies, and is taken to heaven, is fit to be possessor of the same glories, or raised to the same degree there, as the studious, the laborious, and the zealous Christian, that has lived

above fourscore years on earth, and spent the greatest part of his life in the studies of religion, the exercises of piety, and the zealous and painful services of God and his country? Surely, if all these which I have named must have equal knowledge and joy in the future world, it is hard to find how such an exact equity shall be displayed in the distribution of final rewards, as the word of God so frequently describes.

### **Objection.**

But in the parable of the labourers hired to work in the vineyard, Matt. xx. 9—12. does not every man receive his penny, they who were called at the first and third hour, and they who were called at the last? Were not their rewards all equal, those who had wrought but one hour, and those who had borne the burden and heat of the day?

### **Answer.**

It is not the design of this parable to represent the final rewards of the saints at the day of judgment, but to shew that the nation of the Jews, who had been called to be the people of God above a thousand years before, and had borne the burden and heat of the day, i. e. the toil and bondage of many ceremonies, should have no preference in the esteem of God above the Gentiles, who were called at the last hour, or at the end of the Jewish dispensation; for it is said, ver. 16. "The last shall be first, and the first last," i. e. the Gentiles, who waited long ere the gospel was preached to them, shall be the first in receiving it; and the Jews, to whom it was first offered, from an inward scorn and pride shall reject it, or receive it but slowly; and Christ adds this confirmation of it, "for many be called, but few chosen," i. e. though multitudes of Jews were called to believe in Christ, that few accepted the call.

There is another reason why this parable cannot refer to the final rewards of heaven; because, ver. 11. it is said, "Some of them murmured against the good man of the house." Now there shall be no envy against their fellow-saints, nor murmuring against God in the heavenly state. But the Jews, And even the Jewish converts to Christianity, were ready often to murmur that the gospel should be preached to the Gentile world, and that the heathens should be brought into privileges equal with them selves,

Thus it sufficiently appears, from the frequent declarations of scripture as well as from the reason and equity of things, that the rewards of the future world shall be greatly distinguished according to the different degrees of holiness and service for God, even though every spirit there shall be perfect; nor is there any just and reasonable objection against it.

Is it certain then, that heaven has various degrees of happiness in it, and shall my spirit rest contented with the meanest place there, and the least and lowest measure? Hast thou no sacred ambition in thee, O my soul, to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Or dost thou not aspire at least to the middle ranks of glorified saints, though perhaps thou mayest despair of those most exalted stations which are prepared for the spirits of chief renown, for Abraham and Moses of ancient time, and for the martyrs and the apostles of the Lamb? Wilt thou not stir up all the vigour of nature and grace within thee, to do great service for thy God and thy Saviour on earth, that thy reward in heaven may not be small? Wilt thou not run with zeal and patience the race that is set before thee, looking to the brightest cloud of witnesses, and reaching at some of the richer prizes? Remember that Jesus thy Judge is coming apace; he has rewards with him of every size, and the lustre and weight of thy crown shall most exactly correspond to thy sweat and labour.

But I must not dwell always on this head; I proceed therefore to the next.

11. The spirits of the just in heaven enjoy such a perfection as is consistent with perpetual changes of business and delights even in the same person or spirit. They may be always perfect, but in a rich and endless variety.

It is only God who possesses all possible excellencies, and powers, and happinesses at once, and therefore he alone is incapable of change; but creatures must possess and enjoy their delights in a succession, because

they cannot possess and enjoy all that they are capable of at once. And according to this consideration the heavenly state is represented in scripture in various forms both of business and blessedness.

Sometimes it is described by seeing God, Matt. v. 8. by beholding him face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. by being present with the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 8 by being where Christ is, to behold his glory, John xvii. 24. Sometimes the saints above are said to serve him as his servants, Rev. xxii. 3. Sometimes they are represented as worshipping before the throne, as being fed with the fruits of the tree of life, and drinking the living fountains of water, Her. vii. 15, 17. and xxii. 1, 2. and let it be noted that twelve manner of fruits grew on this tree, and they were new every month also. Sometimes they are held forth to us as singing a new song to God, and to the Lamb, Rev. xiv. 3. And at another time, they are described as wearing a crown of righteousness and glory, of sitting on the throne of Christ, of reigning for ever and ever, and ruling the nations with a rod of iron, 2 Tim. iv. 8. 1 Pet. v. 4. Rev. xxii. 5. and ii. 26, 27. And in another place our happiness is represented as sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, Matt. viii. 11. Now surely this rich variety of language, whereby the heavenly state is proposed to us in scripture, must intend a variety of entertainments and employments, that may in some measure answer the glory of such expressions.

It is not only the powers of our understanding that shall be regaled and feasted in those happy regions with the blissful vision of God and Christ, but our active powers shall doubtless have their proper entertainments too. When angels are so variously and delightfully employed in service for God, in his several known and unknown worlds, we cannot suppose the spirits of just men shall be eternally confined to a sedentary state of inactive contemplation.

. Contemplation indeed is a noble pleasure, and the joy of it rises high when it is fixed on the sublimest objects, and when the faculties are all exalted and refined. But surely such a sight of God and our dear Redeemer as we shall enjoy above, will awaken and animate all the active and sprightly powers of the soul, and set all the springs of love and zeal at work in most illustrious instances of unknown and glorious duty.

I confess heaven is described as a place of rest, i. e. rest from sin and sorrow, rest from pain and weariness, rest from all the toilsome labours and conflicts that we endure in a state of trial; but it can never be such a rest as lays all our active powers asleep, or renders them useless in such a vital and active world. It would diminish the happiness of the saints in glory to be unemployed there. Those spirits who have tasted unknown delight and satisfaction in many long seasons of devotion, and in a thousand painful services for their blessed Lord on earth, can hardly bear the thoughts of paying no active duties, doing no work at all for him in heaven, where business is all over delight, and labour is all enjoyment. Surely his servants shall serve him there, as well as worship him. They shall serve him perhaps as priests in his temple, and as kings, or viceroy in his wide dominions; for they are made kings and priests unto God for ever, Rev. v. 10.

But let us dwell a little upon their active employments, and perhaps a close and attentive meditation may lead us into an unexpected view and notice of; their sacred commissions and embassies, their governments, and their holy conferences, as well as their acts of worship and adoration.

That heaven is a place or state of worship, is certain, and beyond all controversy; for this is a very frequent description of it in the word of God. And as the great God has been pleased to appoint different forms of worship to be practised by his saints and his churches under the different economies of his grace; so it is possible he may appoint peculiar forms of sacred magnificence to attend his own worship in the state of glory. Bowing the knee, and prostration of the body, are forms and postures of humility practised by earthly worshippers. Angels cover their faces and their feet with their wings, and cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts!" Isa. vi. 2, 3. But what unknown and illustrious forms shall be consecrated by the appointment and authority of Christ, for the unbodied or the bodied saints in heaven to adorn their sacred offices, is above our reach to describe or to imagine.

Let us consider now what parts of worship the blessed are employed in.

The various parts of divine worship that are practised on earth, at least such as are included in natural religion, shall doubtless be performed in heaven too; and what other unknown worship of positive and celestial appointment shall belong to the heavenly state, is as much above our present conjecture, as the forms of it are.

Heaven is represented as full of praises. There is the most glorious and perfect celebration of God the Father and the Saviour in the upper world; and the highest praise is offered to them with the deepest humility.

The crowns of glory are cast down at their feet, and all the powers and perfections of God, with a1! his labours of creation, his cares of providence, and the sweeter mysteries of his grace, shall furnish noble matter for divine praise.

This work of praise is also exhibited in scripture, as attended with a song and heavenly melody. What there is in the world of separate spirits to answer the representations of harps and voices,, we know not. It is possible that spirits may be capable of some sort of harmony in their language, without a tongue, and without an ear, and there may be some inimitable and transporting modulation? of divine praise without the material instruments of string or wind. The soul itself by some philosophers is said to be mere harmony; and surely then it will not wait for it till the body be raised from the dust, nor live so long destitute of all melodious joys, or of that spiritual pleasure which shall supply the place of melody, till our organs of sense shall be restored to us again.

But is all heaven made up of praises? Is there no prayer there? Let us consider a little; what is prayer, but the desire of a created spirit in an humble manner made known to its Creator? Does not every saint above desire to know God, to love and serve him, to be employed for his honour, and to enjoy the eternal continuance of his love and its own felicity? May not each happy spirit in heaven exert these desires in a way of solemn address to the Divine Majesty? May not the happy soul acknowledge its dependence in this manner upon its Father and its God? Is there no place in the heart of a glorified saint for such humble addresses as these? Dews not every separate spirit there look and long for the resurrection, when it is certain that embodied spirits on earth who have received the first fruits of grace and glory, groan within themselves, waiting for the redemption of the body? Rom. viii. 23. And may we not suppose each holy soul sending a sacred and fervent wish after this glorious day, and lifting up a desire to its God about it, though without the uneasiness of a sigh or a groan? May it not under the influence of divine love breathe out the requests of its heart, and the expressions of its zeal for the glory and kingdom of Christ? May not the church above join with the churches below in this language, "Father, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven?" Are not the souls of the martyrs that were slain, represented to us as under the altar, crying with a loud voice, "How long, O Lord, holy and true Rev. vi, 9, 10. This looks like the voice of prayer in heaven.

Perhaps you will suppose there is no such service as hearing sermons, that there is no attendance upon the word of God there. But are we sure there are no such entertainments? Are there no lectures of divine wisdom and grace given to the younger spirits there, by spirits of a more exalted station? Or may not our Lord Jesus Christ himself be the everlasting teacher of his church? May he not at solemn seasons summon all heaven to hear him publish some new and surprising discoveries, which have never yet been made known to the ages of nature, or of grace, and are reserved to entertain the attention, and exalt the pleasure of spirits advanced to glory? Must we learn all by the mere contemplation of Christ's person? Does he never make use of speech to the instruction and joy of saints above?

Moses and Elijah came down once from heaven; to make a visit to Christ on mount Tabor, and the subject of their converse with him was his death and departure from this world, Luke ix. 31. Now since our Lord is ascended to heaven, are these holy souls;cut off from this divine pleasure? Is Jesus for ever silent? Does he converse with his glorified saints no more? And surely if he speak, the saints will hear and attend.



Or it may be that our blessed Lord (even though he is man) has some noble and unknown way of communicating- a long discourse, or a long train of ideas and discoveries to millions of blessed spirits at once, without the formalities of voice and language; and at some peculiar seasons he may thus instruct and delight his saints in heaven.

Thus it appears there may be something among the spirits of the just above, that is analogous to prayer and preaching, as well as praise.

O how beautiful are the pleasures of celestial worship! What unknown varieties of performance, what sublime ministrations there are, and glorious services, none can tell. And in all this variety, which may be performed in sweet succession, there is no wandering thought, no-cold affection, no divided heart,, no listless or indifferent worshipper. What we call rapture and extasy here on earth, is perhaps the constant and uninterrupted pleasure of the church on high in all their adorations.

But let the worship of the glorified spirits be never so various, yet I cannot persuade myself that mere direct acts or exercises of what we properly call worship, are their only and everlasting work.

The scripture tells us, there are certain seasons when the angels, those sons of God, come to present themselves before the Lord, Job i. 6. and ii. I. It is evident then, that the intervals of these seasons are spent in other employments; and when they present themselves before God, it does not sufficiently appear that mere adoration and praise is their only business at the throne. In the very place which I have cited, it seems more natural to suppose that these angelic spirits came thither rather to render an account of their several employments, and the success of their messages to other worlds And why may we not suppose such a blessed variety of employment among the spirits of men too?

This supposition has some countenance in the holy scripture. The angel or messenger who appeared to St. John, and shewed him various visions, by the order of Christ, forbids the apostle to worship him, for "I am thy fellow-servant, (said he) and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book;" Rev. xxii. 8, 9. These words naturally lead one to think, (hat though he appeared as a messenger from Christ, and in the form of an angel, yet he was really a departed saint, a brother, a fellow-prophet, perhaps the soul of David, or Isaiah, or Moses, who would count it an honour even in their state of glory to be thus employed by their exalted Lord; and they also keep or observe and wait for the accomplishment of the sayings of that book of the Revelations, as well as the churches of their brethren, the saints on earth.

I freely allow immediate divine worship to take up a good part of their everlasting day, their Sabbath; and therefore I suppose them to be often engaged, millions at once, in social worship; and sometimes acting apart, and raised in sublime meditation of God, or in a fixed vision of his blissful face, with an act of secret adoration, while their intellectual powers are almost lost in sweet amazement; sometimes they are entertaining themselves and their fellow-spirits with the graces and glories of the man Christ Jesus, the Lamb that was slain in the midst of the throne; but at other times they may 'be making a report to him of their faithful execution of some divine commission they received from him,, to be fulfilled either in heaven or in earth, or in unknown and distant worlds.

There may be other season! also, when they are not immediately addressing the throne, but are most delightfully engaged in recounting to each other the wondrous steps of providence, wisdom, and mercy, that seized them from the very borders of hell and despair, and brought them through a thousand dangers and difficulties to the possession of that fair inheritance. When the great God shall unravel the scheme of his own counsels, shall unfold every part of his mysterious conduct, and set before them the reason of every temptation they grappled with, and of every sorrow they felt here on earth, and with •what divine and-successful influence they all wrought together to train them up for heaven, what matter of surprising delight and charming conversation shall this furnish the saints with in that blessed •world? And now and then in the midst of their sacred dialogues, by a sympathy of soul they shall shout together in sweet harmony, and join

their exalted songs to him that sits upon the throne and to the Lamb. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy power, to thy wisdom, and to thine abounding mercy, be renown and honour to everlasting ages."

Nor is it improper or unpleasant to suppose that among the rest of their celestial conferences, they shall shew each other the fair and easy solution of those difficulties and deep problems in divinity, which had exercised and perplexed them here on earth, and divided them into little angry parties. They shall look back with holy shame on some of their learned and senseless distinctions, and be ready to wonder sometimes what trifles and impertinences had engaged them in dark and furious disputes. Darkness and entanglement shall vanish at once from many of those knotty points of controversy, when they behold them in the light of heaven: and the rest of them shall be matter of delightful instruction for superior spirits to bestow on those of lower rank, or on souls lately arrived at the regions of light.

In short, there is nothing written in the books of nature, the records of providence, or the sacred volumes of grace, but may minister materials at special seasons for the holy conference of the saints on high. No history nor prophecy, no doctrine nor duty, no command, nor promise, nor threatening in the Bible, but may recal the thoughts of the heavenly inhabitants, and engage them in sweet conversation. All things that relate to the affairs of past ages and past worlds, as well as the present regions of light and happiness where they dwell, may give them new themes of dialogue and mutual intercourse.

And though we are very little acquainted, whilst we are on earth, with any of the planetary worlds, besides that which we inhabit, yet who knows how our acquaintance may be extended hereafter amongst the various and distant globes? And what frequent and swift journeys we, may take thither, when we are disincumbered of the load of flesh and blood, or when our bodies are raised again, active and swift as sun-beams! Sometimes we may entertain our holy curiosity there, and find millions of new discoveries of divine power and divine contrivance in those unknown regions; and bring back from thence new lectures of divine wisdom, or tidings of the affairs of those provinces, to entertain our fellow-spirits, and to give new honours to God the Creator and the Sovereign. So a pious traveller in our lower world visits Africa or both the Indies; at his return he sits in a circle of attentive admirers, and recounts to them the wondrous products of those climates, and the customs and manners of those distant countries; he gratifies their curiosity with some foreign varieties, and feasts their eyes and their ears at once: then at the end of every story he breaks out into holy language, and adores the various riches and wisdom of God the Creator.

To proceed yet one step further. Since there are different degrees of glory, we may infer a variety of honours as well as delights prepared for the spirits of the just made perfect.

Some part of the happiness of heaven is described, in scripture by crowns and thrones, by royalty and kingly honours; why may we not then suppose, that such souls, whose sublimer graces have prepared them for such dignity and office, may rule the nations, even in a literal sense? Why may not those spirits that have past their trials in flesh and blood, and come off conquerors, why may they not sometimes be appointed visitors and superintendants over whole provinces of intelligent beings in lower regions, who are yet labouring in a state of probation? or perhaps they may be exalted to a presidency over inferior ranks of happy spirits, may shine bright amongst them as the morning-star, and lead on their holy armies to celestial work or worship. The scripture itself gives us a hint of such employments in the angelic world, and such presidencies over some parts of our world, or of their own. Do we not read of Gabriel and Michael, and their management of the affairs of Persia, and Greece, and Judah, in the book of Daniel? And it is an intimation of the same hierarchy, when some superior angel led on a multitude of the heavenly host to sing an hymn of praise at Bethlehem, when the Son of God was born there; Luke ii. 9, 13. Now if angels are thus dignified, may not human spirits unbodied have the same office? Our Saviour, when he rewards the faithful servant that had gained ten pounds, bids him take authority over ten cities; and he that had gained five, had five cities under his government; Luke six. 17, &c. so that this is not a mere random thought, or a wild invention of fancy, but patronized by the word of God.

Among the pleasures and engagements of the upper world, there shall be always something new and entertaining; for the works and the dominions of God are vast beyond all our comprehension. And what a perpetual change, what a glorious but improving rotation of businesses and joys shall succeed one another through the ages of eternity, we shall never know till we come amongst them. This thought leads me to the last particular, viz.

IV. The perfection which the blessed spirits enjoy, gives room for large additions and continual improvement.

Their knowledge and their joy may be called perfect, because there is no mixture of error or sorrow with it; and because it is sufficient every moment for the satisfaction of present desires, without an uneasiness of mind. But it may be doubted whether any creature ever was, or ever will be so perfect, that it is not capable of addition or growth in any excellency or enjoyment.

The Man Christ Jesus, in his present glorified state, has not such a perfection as this. He waits daily to see his Father's promises fulfilled to him; he waits till all things are put under him, and his enemies are made his actual footstool; but we know that all things are not yet put under him, Heb. ii, 8. i. e. All the nations are not yet subject to his spiritual kingdom, nor become obedient to his gospel. As fast as his kingdom grows on earth, so fast his honours and his joys arise; and he waits still for the complete union of all his members to himself the sacred head; he waits for the morning of the resurrection, when he shall be glorified in the bright and general assembly of his saints, and admired in all them that believe, 2 Thess. i. 10.

O that illustrious and magnificent appearance! That shining hour of jubilee, when the bodies of millions of saints shall awake out of the dust, and be released from their long dark prison! When they shall encompass and adore Jesus their Saviour and their God, and acknowledge their new life and immortal state to be owing to his painful and shameful death; when Noah, Abraham, and David, and all his pious progenitors shall bow and worship Jesus their Son and their Lord; when the holy army of martyrs, springing from the dust with palms of victory in their hands, shall ascribe their conquest and their triumph to the Lamb that was slain; when he shall present his whole church before the presence of his own and his Father's glory, without spot, and faultless, with exceeding joy! Can we imagine that Christ himself, even the Man Jesus, in the midst of all this magnificence and these honours, shall feel no new satisfaction, and have no relish of all this joy, above what he possessed while his church lay bleeding on earth, and this illustrious company were buried underground in the chains of death? And yet you will say Christ in heaven is made perfect in knowledge and in joy, but his perfection admits of improvement.

Now if the Head be not above the capacity of all growth and addition, surely the members cannot pretend to it. But I shall propose several more arguments for this truth in the following section.

I will not assert any thing in this matter, lest the manner of expression should offend weaker minds; but I desire leave to inquire, Whether those who know most of God do not love him best? Whether those who have the brightest and fullest visions of him, are not most transformed into his image, and made most nearly like to him? Now if the separate spirits in heaven are advanced to different degrees of divine knowledge, may they not in this sense have different degrees of holiness too? Is it not possible that one saint should love God more intensely than another, and be more impressed with his likeness, as he beholds more of his beauty? Is it not possible that a soul shall grow in the strength and fervour of its love and zeal for God, and be more exactly assimilated to him, as it gets nearer to God, and grows up into higher measures of acquaintance with him? Has not the angel Gabriel, the apostle Paul, and the glorified human nature of Christ in any respect more of holiness, or love, or likeness to God, than the meanest saint or angel in heaven? Is not their sublimer knowledge and nearness to God attended with proportionable rays of divine sanctity and glory? Is not the divine image in these exalted saints more complete than in the very lowest?

And yet we may boldly assert, that the meanest saint or angel there is so perfect in holiness, as to be free from all sin; there is nothing to be found in any spirit there, contrary to the nature or the will of God. So a soul released from the body may perhaps grow in likeness and love to God perpetually, and yet it may have no sinful defects either in its love or conformity to God from the first moment of its entrance into heaven.

I shall first illustrate this by two similitudes, and then propose a rational and clear account of it in a way of argument.

When the distant morning sun shines on a piece of polished metal, the metal reflects the face of the sun in perfection, when the sun just rises on it. But the same instruments coming directly under the meridian sunbeams, shall reflect the same image brighter and warmer; and yet every moment of this reflection from the morning to the highest noon, shall be perfect, i. e. without spot, without blemish, and without defect. Such perhaps is the holiness of all the saints in heaven.

Or shall I rather borrow a similitude from scripture, and say, the holiness of the spirits in heaven is compared to fine linen? Rev. xix. 8. "The line linen clean and white is the righteousness of the saints". Now though a garment may be perfectly clean without the least spot or stain, yet fine linen may grow whiter hourly, as it is bleached by the constant influence of the heavens. So though every spirit be perfectly cleansed and purified from all sin and defilement, yet it is not impossible that the degrees of its grace and holiness, or conformity to God, may grow brighter, and much improve by nearer approaches to God, longer acquaintance with him, and the continued influences of his majesty and love.

Now let me propose a rational account of this matter to the consideration of those, whose minds are raised above common prejudices.

The holiness of an innocent creature consists in attaining the knowledge of the nature and will of God, according to the utmost of its own present capacity, and the means of discovery which it enjoys, and in the various exercises of love to God in an exact proportion to its knowledge; or to express it briefly thus, An innocent creature is perfectly holy, when it knows and loves God to the utmost reach of its present powers. If this be done, there is no sinful defect, no guilty imperfection; and yet there may be almost an infinite difference in the various degrees of power and capacity, of knowledge and love, amongst innocent spirits: one spirit may be formed capable of knowing much more of his Maker than another, and may be favoured with richer discoveries. Now if every new divine discovery raise an equal proportion of love in the soul, then it is possible that any soul might be perfectly holy at its first entrance into heaven, and yet may make sublime advances in holiness hourly.

Can we suppose that innocent Adam, at his very formation in Paradise, knew all the wonders of divine wisdom and goodness, that ever he was designed to attain, had he lived sinless and immortal? And then can we believe, since his knowledge of his Maker's goodness and wisdom was to receive continual advances, that he should admire him no more, and love him no better after a thousand years' converse with him, than he did at his first creation? Now the case of the saints in heaven is much the same. The rule and measure of their duty is their knowledge, and the rule and measure of their knowledge is their own capacity, and their means of discovery. They never fall short of their duty, and therefore they have no sin; and thus their holiness may be every moment perfect, and yet perhaps every moment increasing, as their capacities, are enlarged, and receive new discoveries through all the ages of their immortality.

Happy souls, whose aspiring knowledge, and love, and zeal, move onward hourly, and get still nigher to their God! Surely while they behold his face in the unveiled beauties of his holiness, they shall love him with warmer zeal, and be more abundantly satisfied with his likeness; Psal. xvii. 15.

After all that I have said on this subject, some will insist on this objection, viz. Can there be any such thing as imperfection in heaven? Is it not said to be a perfect state? Now if the spirits above be always growing in

excellency and holiness, then they are always defective and eternally imperfect; which is very hard to suppose concerning the saints in glory, and contrary to the very expression and letter of my text.

The answer to this is very easy, to all that will give their reason leave to exercise itself upon just ideas, and to think and argue beyond the chime of words. .

Perfection (as I told you before) is not to be taken here in an absolute, but in a comparative sense; nothing is absolutely perfect but God; and in comparison of God, the highest and most exalted of all creatures is, and will be eternally imperfect and defective; "The heavens are not pure in his sight, and he charges his angels with folly," Job iv. 18. Even the Man Christ Jesus shall for ever fall short of the perfection of the divine nature to which he is united, and in this sense will be imperfect for ever.

jj1- But where any creature has attained to such exalted degrees of excellency, as are far superior to what others have attained, it is the custom of the scripture to call them perfect, and that with a design to do honour to their character; so "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation," Gen. vi. 9. Job also has this honour done him, "He was perfect and upright," Job i. 1. And the saints on earth are called perfect in many parts of the word of God, even while they are here on earth, and have many defects and imperfections. So though it be literally true, that the saints in heaven are continually imperfect in comparison of God and Christ, and of what they themselves shall further attain; yet the scripture, which delights to do honour to them, chuses rather to call them perfect, because of the sublime degree of excellencies they possess above their fellow-saints on earth; and it is not fit for us to degrade them in our common language by the diminishing and abasing names of defect and imperfection, though their present perfection and excellency admits of everlasting increase.

If any man, after he has read this treatise thus far, and has duly weighed all the former arguments, can see force enough in this last objection to baffle or destroy them all, or can find terror enough in the mere sound of the word imperfect to forbid his assent; I desire he may not be disturbed in the possession of his own sentiments, till the sweet and surprising sensations of ever-growing felicity convince him, that heaven is a place of glorious improvement.

This shall suffice for the third general head of my discourse, wherein I have shewn, that the perfection of the spirits of the just is such a perfection as admits of a rich variety of employments and pleasures, according to the various taste and inclination of the blessed; it allows of their different degrees of felicity, according to their different capacities and preparations; it furnishes each blessed spirit with a frequent change of pleasures, and it gives room for perpetual increase.

**1770**

**John Flavel (1627 – 1691): English Presbyterian clergyman and scholar**

**We Reject With Abhorrence Popish Doctrine Of Diversity Of Glories As Founded In Diversity Of Merits**

**The Whole Works of the Reverend Mr. John Flavel**

**(published 1770)**

The question about degrees of glory in heaven is not necessary, but problematical. We reject with abhorrence the popish doctrine of diversity of glories, as founded in the diversity of merits: Nor is it questioned, among the orthodox, whether there be an equality of glory, as to the essentials. But only in respect to the accidentals, and concomitants; amongst which, they place the additional glory and joy of such ministers, whose faithful and prudent labours God hath blessed, and crowned with the conversion and edification of many souls.

And of this the apostle speaks, i Thess. ii. 19,20. "For what "is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy," Where we find a very remarkable gradation. He calls his Thessalonian converts his "hope, his joy, nay, his crown of rejoicing." His hope, that is, the matter of his hope, that they should be saved. His joy, as they had already given him abundant cause of joy, in their conversion to Christ by his ministry. And the "crown of his rejoicing in the presence of Christ, at his coming." This is an high praise, indeed! The meaning, I suppose, is, that the fruit and success of his ministry among them, would add to his crown, and redound to his glory in the day of Christ.

O brethren! who would not study and pray, spend and be spent, in the service of such a bountiful Master! Is it not worth all our labours and sufferings, to come with all those souls we instrumentally begat to Christ; and all that we edified, reduced, confirmed, and comforted in the way to heaven; and say, Lord, here am I, and the children thou hast given me. To have one spiritual child say, Lord, this is the minister, by whom I believed: Another, this is he, by whom I was edified, established, and comforted. This is the man that resolved my doubts, quickened my dying affections, reduced my soul, when wandering from the truth. O blessed be thy name, that I ever saw his face, and heard his voice.

What think we of this, brethren? But far beyond this; what will it be to hear Christ, the prince of pastors, say in that day, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee master over many things: Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," Mat. xxv. 21.

O sirs! We serve a good Master, who is not unrighteous to forget our work, and; labour of love for his name-sake. He keeps an exact account of all your fervent prayers, of all your instructive and persuasive sermons; and all your sighs, groans, and pantings, with every tear and drop of sweat, are placed like marginal notes against your labours in his book, in order to give a full reward.

1770

Augustus M. Toplady (1740-1778) British Calvinistic divine and author, and was eminently a Premillennialist.

### The Millenium and Degrees of Glory

I am one of those old fashioned people who believe the doctrine of the Millennium, and that there will be two distinct resurrections of the dead: 1st, of the just, and second of the unjust; which last resurrection of the reprobate will not commence till a thousand years after the resurrection of the elect. In this glorious interval of a thousand years, Christ I apprehend, will reign in person over the kingdom of the just; and that during this dispensation, different degrees of glory will obtain, and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor, Corinthians 3:8. In the course of the present argument, I have been forced to take the doctrine of the Millennium for granted; time not allowing me to even intimate an hundredth part of the proof by which it is supported. I would only observe to those who have not considered that subject that it would be prudent in them to suspend their judgment about it, and not be too quick in determining against it, merely because it seems to lie out of the common road. As doctrines of this kind should not be admitted hastily, so they should not be rejected prematurely. "It is enough for us to know that a day will dawn when a period shall be put to every disorder under which nature at present labors, and the earth will become just what it was, perhaps considerably better than it was, ere sin destroyed the harmony and broke the balance of the well-according system. The stupendous accomplishment of this predestined restoration is largely and explicitly foretold, Revelation 20, where we read that the apostate angels shall be restrained by the coercive power of God, etc. The next chapter opens with acquainting us, that prior to the commencement of the Millennium, a new heaven, that is, a new body of surrounding air, and a new earth shall be prepared for the residence of Christ and his elect: 'I saw new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth

were passed away;’ intimating that this terraqueous globe and its circumambient atmosphere will be so purified by the preceding general conflagration, as to be totally changed in their qualities, and divested of everything noxious or that can cause disgust and pain.

Oh, pray to Him for faith, and he who prepares your heart to call upon him will hearken to your cry. Throw yourself for eternal life on the merits of Jesus; and then, whether you believe the doctrine of the Millennium or not, you will certainly have a part in the blessedness of the state itself, and the second death shall have no power over you.

**1770**

**Augustus M. Toplady (1740-1778) British Calvinistic divine and author, a Premillennialist**

**The Millenium and Degrees of Glory**

**The Works of Augustus Toplady**

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**1773**

**Johann Friedrich Cotta**

**Dissertatio Dogmatico-Polemica de Diversis Gradibus Glorise Beatorum**

**No Text Available**

**1793 (English translation and Condensation by “Miss Hunt”)**

**Charles Louis de Villette (1700 - 1769), Minister of French Huguenot Church of St. Patrick in Dublin, Ireland**

**There is generally in this world a balance of good and evil, which reduces our several lots almost to an equality; In heaven, on the contrary, there will probably be degrees of rank infinitely varied**

**An Essay on the Felicity of the Life to Come**

**English Translation and Condensation to 160 pages**

From Google Books

Original **Essai sur la Felicite de la Vie a Venir**

The following essay is extracted from a French book, entitled "Essai sur la Felicite de la Vie a Venir", by C. L. de Villette. The Translator has selected those parts alone which seemed most calculated to awaken such ideas of the life to come, as it appears to have been the author's principal aim to produce; and has ventured to make some alterations and additions.

To familiarize the joys of heaven to our imagination, without degrading them by too close a comparison with our present pleasures—to place them in such a point of view, as to warm the heart without dazzling the understanding;—to represent our occupations in the celestial abodes, as holding such affinity with our earthly pursuits, that, in order to be admitted to the privileges of the former, we must observe the strictest rectitude in the objects of the latter—to direct our views in every event beyond the narrow bounds of time, to a happy eternity, where that which is in part shall be swallowed up in that which is perfect;—these are the views of the Translator, as they evidently were those of the Author.

It must indeed be acknowledged, that, after all our endeavours to describe the joys of heaven, our mortal understanding can never acquire an adequate idea of that glorious state, in which we shall be partakers of the divine nature, and be conformed to the image of Christ. But nothing surely can so effectually detach us from low pursuits, and unworthy inclinations, or inspire the true Christian with gratitude and moderation in prosperity, with resignation and fortitude in adversity, with humble and ardent piety, universal benevolence, and every virtue becoming a being destined for immortality, and a possessor of the gospel of Christ, as the habit of reflecting on those superior enjoyments which the soul will experience, when, the veil of mortality being withdrawn, we shall see God "face to face," and partake of that "fulness of joy" which is in his presence for evermore

**Beginning of Translation and Condensation of Original Work**

**An Essay on the Felicity of the Life to Come**

**Introduction**

To prove the superiority of our immortal to our mortal state; to assert that the body will be purified by death from its natural imperfections, and be raised spiritual and perfect, and that the faculties of the soul will acquire a nearer resemblance to that pure spirit from whom they proceed, would be an useless attempt; since to those who examine the words of eternal life, these truths are incontestably evident. But what the changes will be, which shall then take place in us, is seldom enquired; and they are by many people considered as inconceivable, not only in their degree, but in their nature also. That with regard to the former, they far exceed all which we can imagine, is clear from the words of Scripture: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; but it doth not yet appear what we shall be." But I apply these passages to their degree alone; and it is the object of the following essay to prove, that the knowledge we have of the nature of the universe, and of the ways of God, as revealed to us in the gospel, may furnish us



with strong reasons to be persuaded, that we shall possess in heaven our present faculties, and enjoy many of our present pleasures, though improved and refined beyond all human conception.

It may be alleged, that an acquaintance with the nature of that happiness, which we hope to enjoy in a future state, is of no importance to us, provided it really merits the most ardent desires of a rational creature; and that a perfect conviction, that he who knows and has power over all, will render us happy, forms a motive more than sufficient to induce us to undertake every thing, to sacrifice every thing, in obedience to his commands. Yet, if he permits us to discover, in some degree, what those rewards are which "he hath prepared for them that love him," our imagination will come in aid of our duty, and we shall meditate with transport on the scenes of future bliss, which in those moments of elevation, when the heart is lifted up to the Fountain of Happiness, we may in some measure be said to anticipate.

But, on the other hand, too distinct a view of the celestial regions would be productive of many evils. It would render this world a state of misery, by the impatience it would raise in us to arrive at that period, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life. Besides, our imagination, being thus forcibly captivated with such an enchanting prospect, must almost deprive us of the freedom of action in our pursuit of virtue. The motives to persevere in the great work of our salvation would be so strongly impressed on our minds, that those painful exertions which constitute our virtue, those trials which prove its constancy, would no longer deserve these titles; and we should derive no merit from actions, the rewards of which were set before us in a light too powerful to resist. This would destroy the source of one of our greatest pleasures.

We frequently complain of the difficulties attendant on all our attainments, both mental and corporeal; yet it may be easily proved, that in most cases this pretended cause for complaint ought to be a subject of gratitude. In every situation the Creator has provided for us a satisfaction and joy, resulting from our free agency, and from our own exertions. Even in our most trifling amusements, and yet more in those things on which our happiness principally depends, we could not be deprived of the privilege of deliberating, choosing, and acting with freedom, without losing what is most solid and precious in the benefits bestowed on us. Yet God, through the greatness of his mercy, has offered to our researches such an insight into the glories of his presence, as to induce us ardently to desire "an inheritance among the saints in light."

It is evident, from experience, that when we do not neglect our faculties, the knowledge we acquire, the virtuous affections, the happy inclinations, the laudable habits, which we fortify, are far more powerful than the counterpoise of criminal desires; and that our ideas of the great God, when we are frequently occupied in contemplating him, triumph considerably over all those in which the most fertile imagination can paint the objects of this world. If we have not too often, and too long, lost sight of these august ideas, they restrain the violence of our most impetuous passions, and divert the current of our most dangerous inclinations; till, by degrees, they change our whole heart, re-establish all our good dispositions, and plant virtue in all those secret recesses where vice had flourished before.

If it be true, that from our entrance into the world, from the commencement of our discipline, every thing points out to us the way of true felicity, and that, if at the first step we take the right path, every thing engages and encourages us more and more to pursue it; it is true also, (and it is a very remarkable and a very consoling observation) that God, infinitely wise and good, has hazarded our happiness no farther than was necessary to preserve our free-agency, the soul of all enjoyment.

It follows then, that thus supported by a sure and certain hope, we may be enabled to endure with patience unto the end all those trials of mortality which shall be succeeded by eternal happiness. Let us suppose all the evils we can suffer to be collected over us, those at least which we do not bring upon ourselves, they would occupy only a very small part of our life; they do not arrive altogether; they are blended with many comforts; they may be constantly alleviated by the pleasure of self-approbation, by the sentiment of an affectionate obedience, of an humble resignation, to the will of that adorable Being whom we love with our whole soul; and they are almost absorbed in that faith, which is as an anticipated possession of "things hoped for."

St. Peter lays it down as an evident fact, that a faithful Christian is also joyful. He does not say to those to whom he addresses his epistle,—“In believing on the Son of God I beseech you rejoice,”—but, “Ye do rejoice with joy unspeakable;” and it ought to be remarked, that at the time in which St. Peter wrote to them in this manner, they were threatened with various evils, from the absolute power of the Gentiles, and the implacable fury of the Jews.

In the moments of attentive meditation, a Christian cannot be insensible to the mercies of God in his beloved Son; and if he has not one of those extraordinary dispositions which nothing can move, he must be strongly affected by them. If we could constantly preserve this happy state of mind, we should be in the most desirable situation to which we could aspire here below; but this is not the case: the Christian, so lately penetrated with celestial joy, again becomes a feeble mortal, who mourns and rejoices for trifles. In spite of the resistance of the understanding, in spite of the ascendancy of the sublimest sentiments, the mechanism of our body, its unforeseen disorders, produce unhappy variations, which an over-strained severity regards as incompatible with zealous piety and solid virtue. Yet these humiliating inconsistencies will not prove that we do not love our heavenly Father and merciful Redeemer, that we do not trust and rejoice in him; but these glorious sentiments require to be frequently awakened, extended, and more firmly established.

Our natural eagerness after present pleasures, which so often leads us into folly, forms on this occasion a motive to employ all our cares, all our efforts, to perfect this important work. The tranquillity, the state of peace and contentment, which I have just mentioned, is an immediate actual blessing, and it is an inestimable one; it adds a charm to all our innocent pleasures, which infinitely surpasses their intrinsic value. Without that tranquillity, founded on an immoveable basis; without that permanent satisfaction which has its source in our own bosom, and depends on no exterior object; all which the world calls pleasure is generally accompanied by a frightful train of reproaches, regrets, and afflictions; while this happy state of mind can convert the most insignificant recreation, the most trifling amusement, into a real, a considerable blessing.

The most insipid day of the man who rejoices in God, is infinitely preferable to the most brilliant, the most fortunate day, of the ambitious or the voluptuous. But behold this man blessed from above; behold him either in “the courts of the Lord,” or in a chosen retreat, where, abstracting his thoughts from all terrestrial objects, and inviting those which constitute the measure of his heart to appear before his soul, he fills it with celestial joy; then you will exclaim with him, and with the Psalmist, “O Lord! A day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere:” Then you will not be surprised at David’s ardent spiritual thirst after God, at the unutterable aspirations of St. Paul, at the unspeakable joy of St. Peter, at “that peace which passeth all understanding:” expressions which many regard either as poetically figurative, or as extravagancies proceeding from the warmth of an eastern imagination. It is true that the degree of this joy depends greatly upon the constitution, and upon the force and delicacy of certain faculties or qualities of the mind; consequently those who are susceptible of strong and lively emotions, would do wrong to judge from their own feelings of the reality, the sincerity, the constancy, or the piety of others; but those who cannot feel these emotions, ought not to confider as error or weakness, a sensibility so noble and so enviable.

Every one may, if I do not deceive myself, regard as moral truths the following propositions:

If that joy with which we are inspired by our love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, is not with the generality of Christians absolutely an unspeakable joy, at least it is sometimes ardent, and it almost constantly produces a state of peace, of confidence, of content, to which no situation merely worldly or terrestrial can approach. Sometimes indeed it may be suspended in the confusion of business, absorbed in the anguish of affliction, or banished for some moments by the petulant impatience of a quick and warm temper; but it soon regains its ascendancy, and re-establishes a prudent tranquillity. Where these effects do not appear, that Christian disposition does not exist; and those who do not possess it, and yet believe that they are Christians, deceive themselves, and take for real piety what has only the appearance of it; or those passions, “which war against the soul,” obtain frequent victories over their feeble virtue, and they abandon themselves

to foolish projects and hurtful desires. In this case, assuredly they cannot expect to feel that celestial joy; and the same principles which ought to produce and nourish it, will cause in its place a dejection and terror, which even incredulity itself does not always experience. I do not mean to include those, who, with the sincerest piety, and the best dispositions, are afflicted with doubts and distractions. These are frequently owing to some corporeal disorder, which oppresses the faculties of the mind, and disturbs its tranquillity. Sometimes indeed the cause is unknown to us; but we may trust to that merciful Saviour, who has said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Those doubts which afflict us here, will be removed in a future state; though now we "know but in part," then shall we "know even as we are known." God "shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more sorrow."

Secondly, If we would assure ourselves that our joy is solid, that it is adequate to the greatness of its cause, that it expresses how strongly we are affected by that faith which we profess to be planted in our hearts, how deeply we are penetrated with admiration, love, gratitude, confidence, and hope; let us beware of trusting to transient emotions; they may be deceitful. We can only judge of this joy from its ordinary and constant effects. The Christian in whom it dwells knows nothing, I do not only say which can equal it, but which can bear a comparison with it. He therefore makes a firm resolution to banish immediately all joy, with which this is inconsistent. He knows that it has its source, not in a fruitless contemplation of the favours of the Most High, and of his great designs for the happiness of the human race, but in an active admiration, a gratitude fruitful in good works, a pure taste for, and a firm attachment to, every thing laudable, honourable, just and amiable; in short, in employing his cares and exertions to cultivate and strengthen in himself all those noble principles of virtue which God has formed within him, and all the salutary knowledge which he has afforded him. When the least danger threatens his conscience, all the powers of his soul are exerted to avoid it. Animated also by his present happiness, he labours, not with painful efforts, but with joyful ardour, to establish and augment it; imploring that assisting grace, which will ever be vouchsafed to those who seek its aid with sincerity of heart and pious confidence. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." "He hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." So that we may boldly say, "the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man doeth unto me."

## **Part I**

In a comparative view of our present and future state of existence, my observations will be chiefly comprised under two heads: Knowledge and Sentiment; the first relative to the powers of the understanding, the second to the affections of the heart. I shall first enlarge on the imperfections of these faculties, and of the pleasures which we derive from them in this life; and then endeavour to explain what their improvements will probably be in that which is to come.

I begin with the powers of the understanding.

The positive evils which attend our progress through this state of trial are sensibly felt by every human being. Pain and sickness, sorrow and disappointment, are at times the lot of all; but there are sufferings of a different kind, of which the most cultivated minds are most susceptible, as they are perceived and felt in proportion to the delicacy of our taste, and the improvement of our mental powers.

We may place in the rank of intellectual evils the natural imperfection of our faculties. Our understanding and memory are weak, and various inevitable impediments prevent us from employing these talents to the utmost. Established errors, instructors who teach ill, or (if we are reduced to proceed without a guide) the want of proper means to inform ourselves; and various circumstances of life, which prevent us from attaining those acquirements for which we have the greatest inclination; in a word, innumerable accidents, and unfavourable events, either turn us aside from the truth, or permit us to discern it only through an obscure and perplexing medium.

If any person would be surprised that there are so few people in the world who make a progress in elegant and useful knowledge, I entreat him only to consider how rare is the advantage of an uninterrupted and regular meditation; how many necessities or disorders derange or retard our researches.

By the tyranny of man also, we frequently find ourselves stopped in the career of the most sublime and interesting studies. The desire of knowledge is universal; and yet whole nations, as most all the nations of the world, shamefully enslaved by prejudice, and proud of their infatuation, persist with an invincible obstinacy in a dark and intricate path, and frequently only advance further into error; or, perhaps, satisfied with the labours of their predecessors, and abandoning themselves to an unmanly indolence, they enquire no further: they know already all which they desire. Not content with indulging this unworthy inactivity, they oppose the exertions of those noble individuals, who, animated by an ardent love of truth, dare to shake off such dishonourable and dangerous fetters, and endeavour to deliver others from them.

We may rank amongst mental evils those which, from the natural influence of the body upon the mind, are occasioned by corporeal disorders. Pain and sickness not only frequently betray us into a restlessness and impatience of spirit, which it requires the strictest watch over ourselves to avoid, but often, by deranging those finer plans which more immediately rest upon the mental powers, produce the most deplorable effects, and degrade the faculties of the immortal soul almost to a level with the instinct of the beasts that perish. To this we may add, that dejection of mind, that pensive sadness, the cause of which cannot be discovered either in the soul itself or in any external event; and which, therefore, can be supposed to proceed only from some corporeal derangement, which, without this grievous effect, would have remained imperceptible. We frequently see, and even more frequently than elsewhere, in these happy climates, where liberty and enlightened reason eminently prevail, persons of an excellent understanding, perfectly regular in their manners, rich in advantages both of nature and fortune,—fall into a deep melancholy, which they pronounce to be insurmountable. Nothing gives them pleasure: every thing wearies them. But are we very certain that no afflictive event has befallen them? Yes, they themselves confess it. Every thing around smiles upon them as before. It is, therefore, an internal and insensible disorder which thus affects their intellectual faculties. "The corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things. And hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth; and with labour do we find the things that are before us: but the things that are in heaven who hath searched out?"

Particular circumstances vary infinitely the evils of the mind. It is very seldom that our business, our profession, our way of life, the persons with whom we are acquainted, the country which we inhabit, the fortune, the employment, the rank which we possess, answer to our inclinations and ideas. One man, whose destiny confines him in a country almost desert, thinks continually of the happiness which the citizen of a capital enjoys: whilst the same citizen, overpowered with business, and tormented with cares, envies the peaceable retreat of the inhabitant of the country.

But our greatest evils are caused by our passions. If we yield to them in the smallest degree, they become to the soul what violent paroxysms are to the body; and, however nobly we may subdue them, there is at least a time in which they make us suffer:—the time of combat.

Our desires and aversions, with regard to all kinds of advantages or evils, real or imaginary, are the sources of innumerable vexations and afflictions. They are often attended with alarms and fears, with regard both to the present life and to that which is to come. We fear for our possessions, reputation, health, and life; we interest ourselves for others; we fear the same evils for them; we place our desires on improper objects, and these desires torment us; we love what does not deserve our regard, and sooner or later we find reason to be ashamed of it; we regret excessively an object which could but very imperfectly contribute to our happiness; we fear that which may never happen, we hope for that which can scarcely ever happen. Ideas which strike the imagination, cause torments as real, and sometimes much more severe than the evil which we thus represent to ourselves would be in itself; and we are punished for encouraging extravagant hopes, by the disappointments which follow them. Add to these, dissensions, quarrels, jealousies, afflictions of every kind,

Which often, in this corrupt world, neither prudence nor probity can prevent; and lastly, the evils of conscience, infinitely more terrible than all the rest.

Frequently it is neither to our own follies, nor to those of others, that we owe our mental evils. This is a fact which I was unwilling to confound with the preceding general reflections. To be happy, we must have inclinations; and how often does it happen that it is not in our power to gratify them. Add to this, the well-grounded fear of many other real and inevitable evils; the actual loss of many advantages, which reason and the sweetest affections of the heart concur to render precious; and we shall confess, that the most moderate, cautious, and virtuous men, are exposed to numerous painful emotions.

Assuredly the spiritual part of our felicity (permit me to call it the health and ease of the soul) depends upon a much greater variety of circumstances, than the ease and health of the body, and its secret springs are much more delicate. In a long life, there are weeks, months, and sometimes years, which are not distinguished by any corporeal disorder; instead of which, few days pass over our heads unmarked by some mental pain or uneasiness. We may then venture to assert, that the evils of the mind are far more numerous, more various, and often much less supportable, than those of the body; and in considering them together, what could we think of the designs of the Creator, if our existence terminated with the present life?

But when "this corruptible shall have put on incorruption," when "this mortal shall have put on immortality," we shall be freed from all infirmities. Sickness and pain shall no more disturb our most useful occupations, our most innocent pleasures. Our senses being perfected to a degree of which we can at present form no idea, will convey to the soul an endless variety of delightful impressions. In the enjoyment of eternal youth and health, with our faculties and tastes in a state of continual improvement, our pleasures and our virtues will be continually increasing. Our pursuit of knowledge will no longer be attended with weariness or disgust; our virtues will no more be mixed with imperfections, nor our pleasures end in grief and disappointment. I intend to consider our comparative situation in this world and the next with a view to all these sources of enjoyment.

The pleasures most suitable to an intelligent creature, those which distinguish him from the brute, and form the essential part of his felicity, are the active pleasures: I mean those which he derives from the voluntary use of his faculties. What is it to be acquainted with an object? Assuredly it is not merely to have that idea of it which is imprest upon the soul by means of the senses, for in that case the brute would know as well or better than we do: it is when we reflect on the impression received, that we begin to know; that we free ourselves from the vile state of passive creatures, and rise to the honourable class of active beings: it is then, and then only, that the soul, enjoying the consciousness of its own dignity, finds in its actions a satisfaction, a variety of pleasure, which no sensation, no impression, merely as such, could possibly afford it. To reflect, to examine, is to will, to act freely; consequently the pleasure of acquiring and possessing knowledge is an intellectual, an active pleasure; calculated for a being endued with reason, and glorying in free agency. A state of mental repose is not consistent with the nature of a created intelligent being. We have no sooner attained to one degree of knowledge, than we aspire to the next. If we should find our progress suddenly limited by eternal barriers, our desires would continually torment us. We cannot enough admire the extent, the delicacy, of those arrangements which God has made for our felicity. Our faculties unfold, and our acquirements increase more and more. In comparison with the impetuosity of our desires, we seem to advance but slowly, yet still we do advance. This impetuosity is rendered excusable here below, by the shortness of our life, the uncertainty of every thing human, and our own Weakness. It is frequently necessary to facilitate our progress in various occupations and studies; yet it is generally attended with some degree of uneasiness, as it induces us to aspire after the attainment of perfections, before we can arrive at them by a natural progression, and consequently occasions us many mortifications.

But such is the importance of acquiring and possessing knowledge, that the wise and benevolent Creator impels us, almost irresistibly, to employ all our faculties in the pursuit of it. He has not only furnished us with the motive, which is produced by the idea of extensive utility annexed to such pursuits, (an idea which

presents itself at first, and which opens and extends in proportion to our progress) but lest this motive should not be effectual, or should begin too late to operate on imperfect and mortal beings, he has given us a spring of action, influencing us continually from our earliest infancy; and this is curiosity.

The human understanding, expressly calculated to acquire knowledge, and introduced into the world destitute of it, no sooner exists than it exerts itself to learn. This natural curiosity is the first spring of all the efforts we make to inform ourselves. It is so powerful, that if destitute of objects worthy of its attention, it will employ itself upon trifles. Our understanding cannot remain inactive; that state is insupportable to it. To this it is owing, that when we have not early learnt to love those truths which are of some importance, we contrast the despicable habit of sending our intellectual powers in quest of a thousand trifles, and pry into the most insignificant affairs of our neighbours.

Curiosity is an intellectual appetite, which is scarcely appeased before it presses us again; and the pleasure of knowledge consists less in possessing than in acquiring it; which shows the necessity of a progression in knowledge, in order to render us happy; and to derive from this progression all the pleasure which can result from knowledge, it is necessary that we should always preserve our free agency, the use of our liberty, the voluntary exercise of our faculties. Our progress in knowledge is, in this case, a continual renovation of the pleasure of gratifying our intellectual appetite; and our enjoyment is increased by the flattering consideration, that it is the fruit of our own exertions.

But in order to animate us to seek after knowledge, and support us through our studies with cheerfulness, it is necessary that our exertions should not become disagreeable through too much labour; that our faculties, talents, and assistances, should always bear an exact proportion to the object in question; that a well-grounded hope of success should make every thing easy to us, just so far as that even the most attentive study may become a pleasure; that nothing should interrupt our occupations against our own inclinations; that we should have a glimpse, in the depths of infinity, of an inexhaustible fund to supply that intellectual appetite which is continually increasing; and above all, that we should be as certain of an eternal duration as we are of our own existence and of that of the Creator.

Let us consider, according to these ideas, our situation in this world with regard to knowledge; and from thence, in regulating our observations by the declarations or insinuations of the Scriptures, we may conjecture, in some degree, what will be our situation in heaven.

In many respects, our knowledge here below far exceeds what is necessary to direct us in providing for our natural wants; so much so, that if the Creator had limited our duration to the short space of human life, it would be impossible to comprehend with what design he could have given to man a capacity, which extends to innumerable speculations, not requisite for the supply of our necessities; and this is of itself a strong proof, that the present state is only the beginning, the infancy of our existence.

On the other hand, our understanding is in some respects so weak and imperfect, that even with regard to what it is necessary to know, in order to answer all our wants, we find ourselves impeded every moment.

This ignorance, by which we are mortified and afflicted, is absolutely necessary to our state of discipline, and to the government of our Sovereign ruler; and in this we must admire the wisdom of the Most High; but at present I am only to consider our knowledge itself, and certainly it is very imperfect. We must be sensible, that our efforts to penetrate into the depths of science, carry us but little beyond the outside, with regard to sublime speculations; though our intellectual powers eagerly aspire after innumerable objects, superior to those of this world, yet in every thing we see only part of the ways and works of God. Scarcely have we satisfied our curiosity on one point, before a thousand others present themselves, upon which we perceive with concern that we cannot satisfy it; our discoveries are never perfect, our exertions are often too fatiguing, our progress slow; in general we advance only by groping as in the dark; our pursuits are every moment interrupted, and we are often very uncertain of success. Not only the universe itself, but an insect, a plant,

and even a single hair, offers to our curiosity matter for profound and often fruitless investigation. Far from being in danger of objects failing us, we are confounded by their abundance. Thousands of ages, of such a life as ours, would not suffice to glance slightly over the ten-thousandth part of them. But of what use to us is this excessive abundance, this astonishing profusion of exquisite gratifications, if we have scarcely time allowed us to taste a very few of them; unless the Creator, who places them before us, and who continually excites that appetite which he gave us, designs to bring us again to this magnificent banquet, and to allow us to enjoy it for ever?

In Heaven, through the goodness and power of Him who has created us, and who will raise us from the dead, our faculties will be endued with the precise degree of perfection requisite for our making a rapid progress in all intellectual attainments. I regard the resurrection of the body as an acknowledged fact, for I write to Christians; "but we will all be changed;" and we may reasonably suppose that change to consist, not only in a freedom from bodily infirmities, but in the attainment of a much more perfect organization. A blind man has no idea of the pleasure produced by sight, or a deaf man of the delights of harmony; and as we know that even in this world, there are sensations of which some individuals are entirely ignorant, surely it is not unreasonable to conclude, that our glorified bodies may be endued with new modes of perception, which may convey to the soul new sources of enjoyment, infinitely varied, and continually increasing, in an eternal progression of happiness. By attempting entirely to spiritualize our celestial existence, we reduce ourselves to the impossibility of forming the least idea of it; and while we acknowledge a resurrection of the body, we in fact deny it. To this cause, amongst others, is owing the coldness and indifference with which even the best people too often regard the joys of heaven; and the assertion, so often repeated, that we can form no idea at all of our future state. Yet we cannot reasonably complain of the unsatisfactoriousness of that information, which few of us endeavour to obtain; and it will not, I think, be difficult to prove, that in these researches, the Holy Scripture confirms the deductions of reason.

The expressions of St. Paul, Our body "raised in glory," which implies an inconceivable improvement of our organs; "then we shall see face to face;" "now we walk by faith, not by sight;" "now we know in part, but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away:"—the comparison which the same apostle makes between our present state, and that in which we shall be in heaven, "when I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things:"—what St. John says, in speaking of God, that "we shall see him as he is."—All these passages establish as so many infallible truths, the flattering ideas which mere reason ventures to present to us only as conjectures.

We shall see God face to face. Of what nature will be that view or that knowledge? Here it would be rash and absurd to conjecture; because, in order to be in a state to do it, we must be invested with the faculties requisite to conceive that kind of knowledge: that is, we must be now, what we shall be after a glorious resurrection. When Paul was caught up to Heaven in a miraculous ecstasy, he heard things which he declares to be "unspeakable." Thus with regard to the manner of the beatific vision, we are in a profound ignorance here below; but we may venture to assert, that we shall know God, and every other object, with a strength, a facility, a clearness of conception, infinitely superior to all which the finest capacity can hope for on earth, from the longest study. The soul, invested with a spiritual body, and thus provided with organs incomparably more perfect than those with which it is now connected, will have great advantages for acquiring knowledge, and making a rapid progress in it. The attributes of God, the conduct of his providence, his vast designs, and, as proceeding from them, the wonders of creation, of which we now discern only a small part; all these objects of infinite grandeur, beauty, variety, and importance, in the study of which we are every moment sensible of the weakness of our understandings, will be placed within the reach of our observation.

By the lustre of the heavenly ray with which God will enlighten us, a thousand admirable novelties will burst upon our sight; in him, and by him, we shall see all around us what at present eye cannot see, hear what at present ear cannot hear, and our hearts shall conceive what at present they cannot conceive.

Those who sail upon the ocean, some leagues from land, see only the coasts. Those who have the clearest eyes, with the best instruments, discern in this confused landscape only some objects, which are lost to others, and which strongly excite curiosity. Night comes on and veils the prospect from their sight. During their sleep the vessel approaches the port, and at sun-rise casts anchor. They land; a thousand beautiful and magnificent objects present themselves on every side, infinitely excelling all which the distant view had induced them to imagine.

Thus we shall enjoy in heaven, to a degree beyond all conception, the pleasures of novelty and surprise, of finding our curiosity satisfied, or at least ourselves provided with means to enable us to satisfy it: for if we were to suppose that God would display to us at once, all which we hope to know through eternity, this would be, according to my ideas, to suppose that he would rob our knowledge of one of its greatest charms.

In proportion as the truths we are to learn shall become more difficult to comprehend, we shall doubtless acquire talents adapted to them; and thus we shall go on from strength to strength, with regard to the pleasure of acquiring and possessing knowledge, as in every respect we shall rise from glory to glory. The studies requisite to advance in this manner will not be oppressive labours. The assistance which may be necessary to us, an infinite number of beings more intelligent than ourselves, and full of celestial goodness, will be eager to offer. If they are now "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, will they not then rejoice to associate with us, when, purified from the corruptions of mortality, we shall be "as the angels which are in heaven?" Our own efforts, provided they do not fatigue us, contribute much to our satisfaction. Our exertions being thus the source of our pleasure, nothing will discourage us; for can we fail to have a steadfast hope of success? Upon what could a fear of disappointment be founded? Whatever then may be the length of the attentions requisite to attain to a certain point, the hope, or rather assurance of success, will support, animate, and fill us with joy.

Our progress, always equal to our faculties, and not retarded by involuntary interruptions, will be great and rapid. In a world where we shall be freed from all the cares which are here requisite for our subsistence, our clothing, our lodging; where we shall sleep no more; where "there shall "be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor pain;" where all, far from molesting us, or deranging our plans of study, will favour them; it is evident that we must have undisturbed leisure to execute them.

At the same time, with such great advantages for enjoying all the pleasure of acquiring and possessing knowledge, and, notwithstanding the vast treasure of science which we shall have collected through myriads of ages,—we shall never lose for a moment that soothing idea, so necessary to the happiness of every being who values the pleasure of learning; that the source of this pleasure will never fail. In God, and the immensity of his works, there is an inexhaustible fund of materials to satisfy the most unbounded curiosity; but though assured that we shall never arrive at a period when there will be no more to learn, yet we shall still preserve a steadfast hope, that we shall perfectly understand all the objects which offer themselves for our investigation.

It may be objected, in answer to these observations on the extent of our capacities in a future state, and the means which will be afforded us for acquiring knowledge, that there will probably be some things, the entire comprehension of which will be reserved for God alone; as it is reasonable to suppose that the creature, however perfect, can never acquire complete ideas of every thing relative to the Deity; and, in that case, that we may feel our curiosity strongly excited, without being possessed of the means to satisfy it. But I believe, that when we shall have attained to such an exalted understanding, we may have all the discernment requisite to distinguish between what is to be known to the creature, and what to the Supreme Being alone; and, always able to regulate appetites which might corrupt us, we shall, without difficulty, prescribe to our curiosity the same limits, which will necessarily, from the nature of things, be prescribed to our knowledge. The most noble ambition would be extravagant, if it engaged a created being to desire to usurp the place of the greatest, the first of beings: this therefore will not happen: the most ardent imagination will not aspire so high. The most vehement curiosity will be repressed, the moment we shall perceive, that to attempt to



penetrate further, would be to encroach upon the privileges of the Most High; to wish to be what He is, what He alone can be. Always humble and grateful, always joyfully submitting our own will to that of the great God, whom we shall love with all our soul, We shall no sooner arrive at those unfathomable depths, than retreating with respect, and acknowledging our dependence on him, we shall, without regret, turn all our attention and enquiries towards that multitude of objects, upon which we may innocently and successfully indulge our curiosity.

If then we are in the smallest degree susceptible of those pleasures which are the most worthy of a thinking being, the idea of seeing God as he is must excite very strong desires; and how natural is it to seek incessantly the means to fulfil those desires, and to employ those means without delay!

They are all comprehended in this word "holiness." Those alone will be admitted into the adorable presence of God, who labour sincerely and assiduously in the work of their sanctification. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord:" "depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

To meditate on God as soon as we are capable of reasoning, to apply afterwards to that meditation more and more, is a sure path to holiness, and a most powerful incentive to exert every possible effort to practice it with diligence. Even an indistinct and limited knowledge of the wisdom and goodness of the Almighty, such a knowledge as we may acquire here below, should fill our hearts with comfort and joy. God, in the glories of the gospel dispensation, is the God of mercy, the God of peace. What measures of benignity! What effusions of grace! He is amiable, adorable, beyond all expression, all conception: our language has no terms, our hearts have no sentiments, adequate to this sublime subject.

We may reasonably suppose, that all the endeavours which we employ upon earth to know God, shall not be lost to us in heaven; and that those who in this world shall acquire the best knowledge of Him, will have, at their entrance into the habitations of glory, the qualities most requisite for seeing Him as he is.

Every man, who has not been bewildered by false information; who has steadfastly followed, through the interposing mists of error, those rays of light which God has diffused through the universe; and above all, he, who favoured with that shining light displayed in the gospel, shall constantly have employed it as a guide to direct him into the paths of truth: in a word, every man who, uninfluenced by prejudice, shall not have adopted any of those systems which give us false notions of our great God, notions injurious to the divine majesty, will have nothing to correct in the copy, which, faint as it is, now so much delights him. He sees God only as through a glass; he sees him only at a distance; yet at least his glass is true; if it represents the image faintly and darkly, it does not represent it falsely; but when he shall enter into the regions of bliss, before the throne of God, he shall see Him in the brightness of his glory. Happy here below, when we faintly discern him such as he is: how supremely blest shall we be, when we shall "behold him face to face; when we shall know, even as also we are known!"

## **Part II**

I have as yet only considered what may satisfy our boundless curiosity in the knowledge which we shall have of God in the future state, but there are many other delightful sentiments with which this knowledge may inspire us.

When we contemplate objects which deserve our admiration, and which are besides connected with our self-love, or with our generous and social affections, then to the pleasure of admiring, are united various other pleasures which animate and extend it in proportion to the number and greatness of these objects. I will endeavour to illustrate this by a familiar example.

Let me suppose myself conducted into a palace, from thence into a garden, from thence into a beautiful country, where art and nature have united to form all which we can imagine pleasant, commodious, and

lovely. I have leisure to admire the most striking beauties: I do so, with the indifference of a stranger, who is immediately to quit these charming scenes, where neither himself nor his friends have the least possession; but at the instant of my departure, my conductor stops to tell me, that all which I have just seen belongs to me and to my friends. I return: I remark with an extreme surprise, that even in the most trifling things, the most scrupulous attention has been paid to our taste; that even the smallest flower is disposed according to our fancy: then my admiration is raised to the highest degree: the little flower, artfully placed in that particular spot to gratify me, affords me a much more lively pleasure than I had felt before in the contemplation of all the enchanting beauties of this terrestrial paradise. But the emotions of my heart towards him to whose goodness I owe this magnificent present, are of a different nature, and diffuse over my soul the sweetest sentiments of love and gratitude.

This will be our case in heaven. At first astonished at the objects which will offer themselves to our observation on every side, and afterwards reflecting on the goodness of the Creator who has given them to us, and disposed our minds to enjoy them, we shall admire their several relations to our faculties; and a minute examination of these will increase our admiration to infinity, and continually awaken in our hearts a new emotion of gratitude and love.

To the prospect of this treasure of felicity which will be displayed before our enchanted eyes, will be added the recollection of all which God has done to secure the possession of it to us.

Is memory's magic only felt below?  
Say, thro' what brighter realms me bids it flow;  
To what pure spirits, in a nobler sphere,  
She yields delight, but faintly imaged here.

We shall retrace, to a remote period, that amazing variety of combinations, circumstances, and events, which the providence of God has brought to pass to work out our salvation. Our particular reflections upon ourselves will soon extend to the whole human race. In unfolding the work of our redemption, which will then be completed, we shall by degrees discover the depths of that wisdom, and that love, which have shone forth in Jesus Christ, and which at present the angels themselves cannot totally penetrate. What here appears most obscure in the dispensations of Providence, what sometimes confounds, alarms, and discourages us, will then appear to have been evidently necessary to the divine system, and the most mysterious parts to have been the most skillfully contrived and disposed.

In the same manner, with regard to the evils of this life, of which we now sometimes complain so bitterly, which we support with such impatience, and which we every moment fear should betray us into injurious murmurs against our heavenly Father, we will perceive that to them we are in some degree indebted for our state of glory. With what joy will we then reflect on these favourable evils, these happy afflictions! What transports of love and gratitude to God will be excited by this retrospect of the past! We shall continually recur to this affecting idea, and dwell upon it with rapture. Formerly he had appeared to us a God who had pleasure in concealing himself, a father whose ambiguous dealings might render his affection uncertain; but then we shall perceive, that always inclined "to lift up the light of his countenance upon us," He had deferred it only 'till the proper time should arrive; that he had constantly been a watchful and impartial father, unchangeable in his vast and generous designs, which had ever been conducive to our happiness; but whom the steadfastness of his affection, and his profound knowledge of what would best contribute to our felicity, had engaged to impose upon us a discipline accommodated to our dispositions and our state upon earth, and which consequently had been sometimes severe. Regarding then, in the true point of view, all his conduct towards us, we shall discover an admirable union of the tenderest care, the most consummate prudence, and the most inimitable will, to guide and impel us insensibly towards a state of everlasting happiness. The pleasure of surprise, of a comparison between our present and our past situation, all the relief which our joy can receive from the most soothing reflections, we shall enjoy to the utmost. If our happiness would be complete in itself, without the aid of such a comparison, what vivacity of sentiment will it add to it! The

contemplation of the dispensations of God, in every part of this retrospect, will raise in our soul's sentiments of gratitude and love, of which our happiest experiences in piety upon earth can give us but a faint idea.

When an event befalls us in this world which surpasses our hopes, if we connect with that event a firm persuasion that it is in a peculiar manner the effect of the approbation and favour with which God honours us, we shall have infinitely greater joy in that persuasion, than in the benefit itself which his providence has just bestowed upon us. The sentiments of affection and gratitude, which arise in our minds towards a benefactor worthy of all our veneration, all our attachment, are far superior in value to the gift which we receive from him. This gift is a pledge of his affection, and that consideration awakens all our own: that engaging idea is what principally renders it precious to us. This is true above all with regard to God; for besides the present advantage which we enjoy, besides the delightful sentiments of gratitude and love which it inspires, we may infer from it what are the designs of the Most High, and what will be his future dealing with us. His favour once obtained, we do not lose it but by our own fault; there is no caprice, no inconstancy, to be feared from God. What may we not then express and hope! What sweet emotions arise at once in our souls! And in heaven how clear, how convincing will this argument be!

Here below, besides that we are prevented from beholding, by the "clouds and darkness which are round about" our good God, the full perfection of that "righteousness and judgment which are the habitation of his throne;" and from tasting that joy unspeakable and full of glory, with which a clear perception of him would fill every heart; besides this obscurity, there is often another obstacle, incomparably more difficult to surmount, and which we ourselves create; this is sin. We are the same with regard to God, as we usually are with regard to our friends; as soon as we have acted ill towards them, or in any manner rendered ourselves less worthy of their affection, we immediately feel our own diminish. Frequently, in consequence of the injury which an unjust offender has committed, he hates the offended person more than he is hated by him.

Of all mental evils, the greatest and the most insupportable is remorse of conscience. To those who have been guilty of enormous crimes, it is a sensation of inexpressible anguish; but every species of guilt, every degree of sin, creates in the mind uneasiness and confusion, in proportion to the sentence which we pass upon our actions; and it is impossible to elude the judgment of our own conscience, or to render ourselves indifferent to its awful voice.

Shame, as well as remorse, is always revived by the sight of the person we have injured; it strikes through the heart, and we fly, we abhor, whatever awakens it. The idea of a witness of our unworthiness, especially when that witness is the person with regard to whom we are guilty, is a tormenting idea. If to shame be added a well-grounded fear of suffering the punishment deserved, we have then a complication of emotions which distract us. Such is our deplorable situation with regard to God, when we have trampled on his sacred laws, and despised his salutary counsels. The sentiments of soothing confidence, of sincere and ardent love, which we once felt towards him, are weakened by the flock of various opposite sentiments. This great God, who was the source of our tranquillity, of our consolation and joy, becomes a source of shame and fear; and if we are not diligent to suppress this frightful tumult in our souls, by sincere repentance and speedy amendment, we expose ourselves to the most formidable of all dangers, that of changing into aversion those sentiments of filial duty and affection which we once felt towards that adorable and almighty Being. If we were always wise and virtuous, we should taste here below, in a high degree, the pleasure of loving God; but even those who have made the greatest progress in the work of sanctification, have always sufficient cause to reproach themselves. This is what principally cools that celestial ardor, and mingles much bitterness with all its pleasures.

In heaven this great obstacle will be removed. If at first we should feel some degree of shame, on the recollection of the numerous weaknesses, omissions, and errors, which had interrupted the work of our sanctification, and should be confused at obtaining rewards so greatly surpassing all which we could reasonably expect from our cares and exertions; cares so continually interrupted, exertions frequently so languid; these painful reflections will immediately be alleviated by the propitious aspect of our heavenly

father, and afterwards entirely absorbed in the profusion of his favours. Having once and for ever "cast away our sins," and ceased to "remember our iniquities;" having accepted our good intentions and our feeble endeavours, he will obviate at the moment of our entrance into glory, by every testimony of paternal affection, all which might give us uneasiness. Like the indulgent and tender father, in the affecting parable of the prodigal son; who, instead of uttering the least reproach to his returning penitent, was anxious to dry up his tears, hastened to embrace him, and bestowed upon him innumerable caresses and benefits; he will not leave us time to recall to our minds those painful sentiments which his ineffable goodness will exclude for ever and ever.

We are surrounded here below by those dangerous enemies of our soul, temptations. However important may be the advantages which we have obtained, and however firm may be our confidence in future victories, through the grace of God, yet we must still sustain the combat; we are exposed to surprise, and frequently, alas! we yield to it. We must live in a state of continual watchfulness, left in an unguarded moment we should be led astray from the path of duty; for our adversary, the devil, as a "roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." How delightful then will be that tranquillity and peace, which we shall enjoy, when such shall be our happy situation, such our spiritual strength, that, instead of temptations to guard against, we shall find in every object around us, something to afford an agreeable exercise to our virtue.

From all which has befallen us in this world, and above all, from the happiness we shall experience at our entrance into the next, we may deduce prophetic consequences, which will be a transporting anticipation of those degrees of glory and felicity, which we shall not at first possess. I am in the harbour of salvation, safe from a thousand dangers from which I have just escaped; they exist no longer, except in my remembrance. These dangers, formerly so terrible, now only form a strong contrast, which makes me feel more sensibly my present security. Tranquil and happy in the midst of my friends, I look forward only to pleasures, pure, infinitely varied, and eternal. We can conceive but very imperfectly the delights of such a situation; yet there are circumstances in this world, which may perhaps convey to the mind a faint idea of it. For example, you escape miraculously from a shipwreck; you land amidst the embraces of beloved friends, from whom you had been separated for many years, and whom you had scarcely hoped to meet again; you hear the sea still roaring behind you, but in vain; you find yourself in a peaceful and charming asylum, amidst the sweetest transports of the tenderest affection. "Such a deliverance," says the elegant and amiable Dr. Beattie, "will every good man meet with at last, when he is taken away from the evils of life, and awakes in the regions of everlasting peace; looking back on the world and its troubles with a surprise and satisfaction, familiar in kind, tho' far higher in degree, to that which we now feel, when we awake from a terrifying dream, and open our eyes upon the sweet serenity of a summer morning." All will be joy and exultation. The bitter streams which mingle with the sweets of this life, will then be totally dried up. No more remorse, no more shame or anxiety, shall there interrupt our felicity: (allow me to use some repetition and recapitulation, for we return with pleasure to such objects, and love to dwell upon them:) from reviewing in the records of the past the depths of the wisdom and mercy of God, we shall derive a thousand inexpressible pleasures. In reflecting on our passage through mortality, that dangerous passage, which, in spite of so many errors and wanderings, shall at length, through the indulgence and assistance of our heavenly Father, have conducted us to that happy abode; we shall find, not only in the best actions and most favourable events of our lives, but in our misfortunes, our dangers, and even in our failings, subjects for admiration and joy. On the other side, the immensity of that futurity to which we shall look forward, will be a boundless perspective, presenting a progressive succession, a constant and inexhaustible store of knowledge and pleasure, of amiable sentiments, and generous designs; which, uneclipsed, and uninterrupted, continually extend the amazing prospect, and augment the magnificent scene; ascending through a state of gradual, but constant improvement, to the centre of all glory and felicity; the throne of the Most High.

These prospects, so flattering to ourselves, will also include all the intelligent beings which surround us. Those beams of light and life, which proceed from the throne of the Lord, will have dispersed every cloud, and dispelled every shadow of death. They will diffuse around a perfect serenity, an ineffable and glorious joy.

It is not sufficient to be happy ourselves, or rather we cannot be happy alone: it is also necessary that all those should be made happy, who are capable of becoming so. What pleasure must a generous soul derive from contemplating the Supreme Being, continually establishing, without partiality, all the happiness which is suitable to every one, or of which every one is susceptible. But of this noble pleasure we are entirely destitute here below. None of our fellow creatures are perfectly happy, and a great number of them are in a state of suffering. This alone would be sufficient to render the happiness of the present life imperfect, even if it were a situation in other respects the most desirable. If, with the assurance of our own safety, we cannot connect that of the safety of the friends whom we love, our tranquillity must be very imperfect. But in heaven, our friends, (if they have not been totally unworthy of that name) our dearest friends, will be with us, in perfect security, in the presence of our great God. The power of pain and death over them, as well as over ourselves, will have ceased; and consequently all that dejection, and those variations of temper, which corporeal disorders sometimes occasion upon earth, will cease also; and amongst beings so wise, so good, so refined, both in body and soul, we shall enjoy an intercourse always undisturbed and always free.

Happy in ourselves and in our friends, we shall also rejoice in the felicity of all around us. To feel sincerely and forcibly the happiness of others, is in some measure to increase our own, in proportion to the number of the blessed. This will be more particularly considered when I speak of our sentiments in regard to our fellow-creatures; but it is principally to God, that all the various sentiments which I have mentioned must be referred. He will be the great object of our love, the strength of our confidence, and the source of all our happiness.

Every pleasure which we enjoy will continually recall our attention to Him, by constantly setting before us his tender cares: it will be in Him that we shall see the glorious plan of universal felicity, which shall increase through all eternity: in a word, according to the admirable expression of St. Paul, he will be "all in all." He will not only be the most essential object of all our attachment, the inexhaustible treasure, as well as the original cause, of our greatest pleasures; we shall not only trace his hand continually, in every new effect of his wisdom and beneficence, but He himself will penetrate even to the inmost recesses of our hearts. He has formed them, he sees them, and knows their most secret sentiments. It is He who has put in motion all the springs of our felicity, and it will be in his presence that we shall find fullness of joy. Nothing is too vast for his power, nothing too difficult for his wisdom, nothing too beneficent for his goodness. What a variety of delightful sentiments he will create in us, in manifesting himself to us as he is; and in giving room to our liberty, our understandings, and our affections, to exert themselves according to our wishes, and at the same time in the pursuit of our greatest good!

He shall be all in all! This great, this good God will fill our souls with that joy which his adorable presence will diffuse throughout the universe. All which is pleasing, all which is transporting, in admiration, in gratitude, in love, in confidence, in hope; in the anticipated accomplishment of the generous wishes formed by a noble heart, glowing with fraternal affection; in the prospect of an infinite variety of blessings, at which we shall sooner or later arrive, all adapted to contribute in some measure to our happiness; and finally in the prospect of an eternal augmentation of excellence and felicity;—all this we shall possess and enjoy without alloy, and with a warmth and energy of sentiment, which we neither feel, nor can feel, here below; for the Lord himself, from whom proceedeth "every good and every perfect gift," will be "the portion of our inheritance" to all eternity.

### **Part III**

I Shall now make a few observations on those sentiments which will arise from our connexion with our fellow-creatures, and with the other inhabitants of the mansions of immortality.

We are so formed for society, that we cannot imagine happiness without it. The idea of an abode where it would be impossible for us to meet with any of our fellow creatures, a desert island for instance, upon which we might be cast by a shipwreck, has something in it melancholy and dreadful. In vain might that island be represented as the garden of Eden; this would have no influence upon us. But let us suppose that a second shipwreck should cast on the same coast two or three persons, possessed of talents and merit to deserve our esteem; this idea immediately diffuses over our heart consolation and joy. This pleasure does not arise from reflecting on the assistance which we may derive from each other, in procuring the necessaries of life. Though nature herself should have formed for us a commodious and agreeable habitation, tho' our food should spring up spontaneously, though the useful animals should come to us of their own accord, or suffer themselves to be taken and tamed without difficulty; all this could not compensate for the absence of every being upon whom we could fix that social affection by which our hearts are animated. All which might give us pleasure, if we were not alone, would in solitude become insipid and wearisome.

In solitude, what happiness, who can enjoy alone,  
or all enjoying, what contentment find? (John Milton)

It is not therefore because we could not subsist, or not without painful and continual exertions, that we love our fellow-creatures; but it is because our sentiments towards them, and theirs towards us, make them the principal sources of the great springs of our felicity. It is true that the caprices and vices of those with whom we are connected, frequently suspend, impede, and restrain, our natural affections; and sometimes change into aversion our strongest propensity towards friendship. Then these affections resemble affrighted birds; after a long and wavering flight, if they rest any where at last, it is without confidence, and every moment prepared to fly off again. That suspicious disposition is frequently very excessive; and it is generally owing in a great measure to ourselves.

In judging of the actions of others, and especially of such actions as are evidently doubtful, we are too apt to suffer ourselves to be biased by prejudice. Thus an understanding, on other occasions just and penetrating, may be deceived; and the error is more fatal as it is necessarily unjust and cruel. A man endued with excellent moral faculties, which he has assiduously cultivated, perceives instantaneously in every action what motives would on such an occasion infallibly have influenced himself. He discovers some just causes for suspicion, but his impartial mind is in a state to decide, according to the trusted rules of equity, whether the fact may be considered in the most advantageous light, or whether there is a strong foundation for doubt; and he concludes with humility, that at the worst it may be one of those actions in which some evil is blended with the good. But those observers, who yield imperceptibly to a secret jealousy, or who prefer the reputation of penetration to that of charity, have not recourse to laudable motives, if they can without them explain the mystery with an air of plausibility, or with the hope of pleasing the multitude; they confidently assert that such motives had no part in the action; and applauding themselves for such an ingenious discovery, they raise it as a trophy to their pride; for pride generally gives rise to that false policy, which makes us judge so rigorously of the actions of others; and if such is the weakness of human nature, that we must in one way or other deviate from the point of perfection, it is infinitely more for our own comfort, and for that of all around us, that we should err on the side of affection and benevolence. It is better to be exposed to the danger of deception, than to torment ourselves with subjects of suspicion, perhaps entirely imaginary.

Again: frequently possessed by some passion which prevents us from cultivating diligently these sweet affections, we suffer them to be enfeebled, 'till we render ourselves almost indefensible to them; our self-love becomes confined; it can no longer cherish even those sentiments which were the most calculated to gratify it. By thus neglecting, and leaving unexercised, our social and generous dispositions, we accustom ourselves by degrees to consider our fellow-creatures as so many instruments from which we may derive some advantage in the affairs of life; but we lose the idea of the pure pleasure of loving. Still more; we suffer to perish in our souls the sublime pleasure of desiring the happiness of others, without any interested view to our own: then we regard with indifference those who cannot render us any service, or contribute in any manner to our amusement. Confined within a narrow sphere, we do not extend our social affections beyond a

small number of friends: perhaps there may be some who, strictly speaking, cannot be said to love any one of their fellow-creatures.

But even those who, partly through the faults of others, and partly through their own, are thus almost contracted within themselves, and suffer their generous and social affections to languish in total inaction; even they would reanimate them with a powerful energy, if all mankind should become really estimable and amiable, and should clearly appear so to them. You are informed that all who surround you are changed; that they are good and generous; that they love you sincerely and tenderly; and that even those strangers whom you see at a distance, are impatient to give you proofs of the affection which they feel towards you.

These obdurate hearts would be no longer inflexible; they would, with the most pleasing surprise, feel themselves affected with the same sentiments which they should find in all around them.

This will be our case in heaven. We shall be secure of meeting, in each of the blessed, with every disposition, every affection, every sentiment, which we would wish them to feel towards us.

We all have a natural desire to be esteemed and beloved. The fact is incontestable. This is an admirable motive to induce us to exert all our faculties in the most advantageous manner; to unite ourselves to each other by the tenderest friendship; to perform the most glorious actions. The wisdom and goodness of God are displayed in this disposition of our hearts. Here below, our own errors and frailties, and a great number of external objects; various accidents, the ignorance of other men, and their false judgments, often prevent us from gratifying that noble desire. But the worst of men cannot entirely divest themselves of regard for the approbation of their fellow creatures. That affection and esteem which by means of certain qualities and actions we may have lost with some, we endeavour to regain with others by different qualities and an altered conduct; but the success is always uncertain.

It will not be thus in heaven. All its inhabitants, being really estimable and amiable, will be constantly esteemed and beloved. We shall no longer be deceived, with regard either to the proper objects of esteem and friendship, or the proper means of inspiring them with the same sentiments towards ourselves.

Endued with the most excellent faculties, far more susceptible than we now are of moral pleasures; zealous imitators of the great God, whom we shall then see continually "face to face;" we shall love all who approach him; those innumerable beings who surround his throne, we shall love with a warmth, a delicacy, and a constancy, which we can but imperfectly conceive in this world. God loves us better, infinitely better, than the most tender father loves his only son. We shall learn of him our fraternal love: regarding all his creatures as his children, we shall feel for them that peculiar affection with which we are naturally inspired for every object, considered by those who are dear to us as worthy of theirs.

We shall love all our fellow-creatures, every intelligent being, for God, and in God. Every circumstance also will concur to promote our union and mutual affection.

Here it is quite otherwise; there are frequently jarring interests, misunderstandings, obscurities, and difficulties, in our affairs and our claims, discussions on property, oppressive customs, tyrannical prejudices on the point of honour, and false notions respecting the designs and sentiments of others: from hence arise fears and suspicions; and then, how much time is requisite, how many obstacles must be surmounted, in order to be secure of the regard of our fellow-creatures. Every one knows the danger we incur of making an improper choice, and of misplacing our confidence; and how difficult it is to prevent others from distrusting us.

There are also jealousies and wars between entire nations; the disadvantageous opinions, the enmities, which a trifle suddenly produces, are fomented and increased through succeeding ages; in a word, innumerable events, both public and private, destroy mutual affection, or render it feeble, partial, and limited.

However well disposed we may be, it is not possible for this affection to prevail in our hearts with all the force, and to all the extent, of which it is capable. Either from a deficiency of deserving objects, or from various accidental causes, it seldom happens, in the course of a long life, that we acquire more than two or three friends towards whom we can indulge it without constraint or diminution; some defect, some trifling circumfluence, restrains or interrupts it; and even in the happiest friendships, the impossibility of continually enjoying the society of all the objects of our affection, the necessity of separating from some in order to associate with others, render our tenderest connexions in this world sources of pain as well as of pleasure.

In the mutual services which we render to each other here below, there are generally several imperfections: perhaps we defer them too long; we do not extend them to the utmost; in conferring a favour we may fail to observe a proper delicacy, and give pain to the person obliged by our manner of bestowing a benefit; when we have been great benefactors, we are apt almost insensibly to assume an authority, which those who are the objects of our kindness feel, without venturing to complain of it.

On the other side, those who have received obligations though really equitable, and sincerely disposed to gratitude, are often deceived with regard to the true value of the favours bestowed: various suspicions respecting the motive of the benefit, some trifling error in the manner of conferring it, some inattention to that subtle essence which constitutes the gracious in word or action; or, finally, that ascendancy which the benefactor gains, and of which he sometimes makes an improper use: all these disturb and weaken gratitude, discourage and abate affection.

How uncommon is perfect mutual affection here below! Besides various subjects for reciprocal distrust, what a trifle disquiets us! And those almost imperceptible defects, which occasion slight mortifications, few people are sufficiently unprejudiced to discover clearly in themselves, or to bear with meekness and thankfulness to be told of them by others; and how few are there who can eradicate them entirely!

In conversation, and in our social recreations, many little difficulties arise, which greatly diminish the pleasure they might afford. Such are, the constraint often imposed upon us; our uncertainty of what attentions, or what subjects of discourse, would be the most acceptable; the reserve, the indifference, the ignorance of some; the excessive vivacity and arrogance of others; amusements ill chosen, in which we neglect and offend some person, because a separate interest interposes; a failure in respect; marked preferences, which render some indifferent, and raise jealousy and indignation in the hearts of others; frequently an impolite eagerness, which leads several persons to speak at the same time, to interrupt each other, or to suffer no one to be heard but themselves. By these means the most interesting conversations degenerate into broken sentences, without order, and without consistency; or change into tedious soliloquies, which reduce a man of taste to solitary meditation in the midst of a large company; as few people have attained to that perfect politeness which can give a long and uninterrupted attention to that which is disagreeable or uninteresting, notwithstanding it is so necessary to the real comfort of life: all this creates disgust, restlessness, impatience, and a desire to be elsewhere.

These, and a thousand grief's minute as these,  
Corrode our comfort, and destroy our ease.

It would be an endless task to enumerate the various unpleasant circumstances which intrude themselves into society, even amongst those who have always the inclination to render it agreeable, and talents to enable them to do so.

That all these inconveniencies will be excluded from heaven, we shall be convinced, when we consider the difference of our faculties, sentiments, and situation there. An unbounded confidence, united hearts, souls open to each other, celestial benevolence; a sovereign contempt for those vain distinctions which flatter our confined imaginations here below; a pure and ardent affection, and in consequence of that, an unwearied



endeavour to promote the happiness of our fellow-creatures, by gratifying to the utmost of our power their inclinations and tastes; inclinations well-regulated and amiable, tastes corrected and refined, and which we shall discover distinctly at the first interview: it appears evident to me, that with all these favourable circumstances, a real and reasonable politeness, that politeness which, proceeding from the heart where charity reigns, excludes all troublesome formalities, and exerts the most obliging attentions, will universally prevail amongst such beings as the inhabitants of heaven must be supposed to be.

Not only an opposition of interests can have no place there, but on the contrary, all our interests must necessarily be united. If the objects which might be profitable to us, were sufficiently abundant to be equally useful to us all; or if they were of such a nature, that each of us might obtain the possession of them, without destroying or diminishing that of others; if every one, satisfied with his own present pleasures, patiently waiting 'till his lawful exertions should procure greater for him, regarded those of others with no view but to congratulate them sincerely upon their enjoyment of them: in short, if the happiness of each individual, far from being prejudicial to others, augmented the felicity of all; and if every affection, con-centered in the Supreme Being, tended in conformity with his to promote that universal felicity, it is evident that each particular interest, instead of opposing the general advantage, would be closely connected with it; and that common interest would unite every heart by indissoluble bands.

This will be our situation in heaven; there our mutual affection, strengthened by our progress in knowledge and virtue, animated by the presence and by the love of God, encouraged by all around us, free from all impediments, and secure from all indifference,—will be more ardent and tender towards each individual of the blessed, than that which we now feel for the most beloved friend. Amongst so many millions of associates in felicity, we shall not exclude one from this universal regard; yet the multiplicity of the objects of our friendship will not diminish its force. We may be convinced of this, as we have many examples here below which in some measure prove it to us. A father and mother who have a numerous family, or a person who passes his life amidst a circle of chosen friends, may afford us these examples. The parents love their children, the friend his friends, without any individual depriving the rest of the sentiments due to them; they love them all sincerely and tenderly; they cannot lose one of them without feeling a severe pang. I do not say that they have an equal affection for them all; that is not necessary; and I am far from supporting that particular friendships will be excluded from heaven. There, probably, as well as upon earth, will be those singular affinities, and favourable concurrences, which, united with true merit, form those friendships, so intimate, so precious, and so uncommon, the mere idea of which is ever soothing to the soul. Will those who by the most diligent exertions have established such an union upon earth, lose the fruit of all their cares in the mansions of glory and happiness? Surely not.

There thy bright train, immortal friendship, soar,  
No more to part, to mingle tears no more!  
And, as the softening hand of time endears  
The joys and sorrows of our infant years;  
So there the soul, releas'd from human strife,  
Smiles at the little cares and ills of life;  
Its lights and pliaades, its sunshine and its flow'rs,  
As at a dream that charm'd her vacant hours.

The imagination, ever active, ever inquisitive, loves to anticipate futurity, and to form airy scenes of happiness, which, when they relate to this world alone, frequently fade and vanish away. But when we extend our views to the realms of everlasting felicity, we may safely indulge ourselves in contemplating the enchanting prospects, which, founded on faith, and illuminated by hope, will become brighter on a nearer approach, increasing more and more unto the perfect day. We may anticipate the happiness we shall there derive from the renewal of our earthly friendships; and such reflections will console the afflicted heart, when every other comfort fails.

When a fond parent weeps over a departed child, what consolation can the world afford? Let us suppose that child to be the only son of his mother, and she a widow, in vain her friends attempt to soothe her sorrows; they cannot awaken in her soul those transporting sensations which the fond caresses of her child continually excited; sensations which only parents feel. But when she looks beyond the grave, when she contemplates her once suffering infant transformed into an angel of light, she submits with pious resignation to the will of her heavenly Father; while she meditates with rapture on that period, when her soul, disengaged from the fetters of mortality, shall ascend to the throne of God, and be welcomed to whose blissful regions by a glorious angel, once the innocent cause of her tears, but thenceforth the sweet companion and joyful promoter of her eternal felicity!

How often is a son deprived of an affectionate and virtuous father, at that early period of life, when, assailed by temptations, and deceived by false appearances, a prudent guardian is most requisite to guide his steps in safety through surrounding dangers. What must be the transport of such a father, when he shall meet his son entering into the regions of celestial peace, to receive the reward of a virtuous and holy life; and shall hear him acknowledge the advantages he had received from those principles of piety, and those examples of virtue, by which his paternal care had established his heart in the right way, during the years of childhood; which had influenced his conduct to the last moment of his mortal existence, had pointed out to him the path of life, and taught him to pass with religious courage through the valley of the shadow of death!

What must be the feelings of the pious pastor, when he shall meet those happy spirits over whom he had watched in this life with parental care and tenderness; to whom he had displayed, in their most attractive colours, the sacred doctrines of the gospel: the timid, whom he had inspired with confidence; the discontented, whom he had armed with patience; the despairing, whom he had soothed with hope; the ignorant, whom he had blest with instruction; the careless, whom he had awakened to watchfulness; the proud, whom he had converted to humility. How will he rejoice to behold their felicity, and to hear them acknowledge their gratitude to him, while with religious joy he shall behold in himself the accomplishment of that promise of scripture, "they that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."

Those whose precepts and example have extended beyond the short duration of their own life, and the narrow sphere in which they moved upon earth; whose writings have defended the truths of religion against the attacks of false philosophy, and asserted the cause of pure morality in defiance of licentious sophistry; will offer continual praises to the Lord who giveth wisdom, who enabled them to employ their talents to his glory; and whilst in heaven they rejoice in the effects of their labours, with those glorified spirits who had derived instruction from them upon earth, they will find confirmed this sacred truth, that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the praise of it endureth for ever."

Perhaps some difference of opinion, some unfortunate misunderstanding, had separated on earth those who once were tenderly attached to each other; circumstances, which could not be explained, had weakened esteem, and interrupted friendship; but when all the mists of error shall vanish before the light of truth, and the man whose conduct had been unjustly blamed in this world, shall be acknowledged by his gracious master as his good and faithful servant, With what rapture will that friendship be renewed, which no doubts, no suspicion, can ever more disturb: while those whose tender attachment, founded on mutual esteem, and confirmed by continual proofs of reciprocal affection, had remained unshaken, even by that stroke of death which separated them for a time, will, when they shall meet in the heavenly mansions, look forward to the everlasting enjoyment of those blessings which flow from the indulgence of the social affections, and above all, from virtuous friendship. They will fear no interruption to their felicity; for time, and all its attendant cares and sorrows, will be swallowed up in eternity, and perfect happiness will be their everlasting inheritance:

That holy calm, that harmony of mind,  
Where purity and peace immingle charms.

Such an union supposes an assemblage on both sides of every virtue; a fervent piety and steadfast probity, an extent, a delicacy of benevolence, and of social affections, which, without being able absolutely to conquer defects and weaknesses, induce us without difficulty mutually to endure and pardon them. The general effects of these dispositions and sentiments will continue for ever; and why not then this particular intimacy, so similar to that which will unite every soul in heaven? Will not a connexion, founded on the same basis as our eternal felicity, endure like that for ever and ever? This pleasing hope constitutes here below the most soothing, the most solid consolation of those friends who are separated by death: it prevents this king of terrors, that terrible enemy of all those who live without hope, and without God in the world, from depriving us, by the very idea of his approach, of the transporting pleasures of friendship. We may believe that this sweet hope will not deceive us; but that, like all the others which are founded upon the goodness of God, and upon what there is in ourselves most laudable, and most worthy of his approbation, it will never be destroyed, until that which is perfect being come,

that which is in part shall be done away  
and Faith be lost in sight, and hope in joy!

It appears from several texts of scripture, that a difference of rank prevails amongst the angels (See Rom. viii. 38. Ephes. i. 21. Col. i. 26); and the same difference between the blessed in heaven seems to be alluded to by our Saviour (Matt. xi. j1; xxv. 21 } 23. Also, Luke xix. i; 19).

The inequality of rank which we have reason to believe will be established amongst the glorified spirits, will not create envy or jealousy in our purified souls. These odious passions arise only from a conflict of real or of imaginary interests, and from the abuse of a noble ambition, which is inseparable from an intelligent being. But a conflict of real interests will have no place in heaven; and imaginary opposition will, without doubt, be equally excluded from thence, for it proceeds only from our errors. With regard to that ambition which is natural to us, that constant desire to exalt and improve ourselves, we ought to cherish and encourage it; but when we direct that improperly, which is in itself so worthy of us, when we suffer ourselves to be governed by an extravagant and impetuous imagination, we persuade ourselves that the exaltation of another debases us, that his superior felicity diminishes our own; and, judging only by a foolish comparison, we imagine that to prevent others from equalling or excelling us, is to advance ourselves, and that our happiness will be augmented, in proportion as theirs is diminished. These false and cruel ideas will not enter into the abode of the blessed; all will be rectified there, and the noblest sentiments will prevail in their utmost purity and lustre.

If envy were not totally eradicated from our minds, an equality of rank amongst the inhabitants of heaven would not prevent it from exerting its baneful influence: even if we were exalted far above all created beings, yet then the Creator himself would become the object of our envy, which, regardless of the height to which we had already attained, would still aspire to be supreme.

Yet all his good proved ill in me,  
And wrought but malice; lifted up so high  
I disdained subjection, and thought one step higher  
Would set me highest. (Milton)

If in heaven we should be subject to envy, our felicity there would be infinitely more precarious, and frequently more imperfect, than that which we enjoy upon earth. The difference of degrees of dignity or pleasure here cannot be compared with that which we shall meet with there; or, in other words, the objects which we here regarded as objects of envy, will then be far more numerous and considerable.

There is generally in this world a balance of good and evil, which reduces our several lots almost to an equality. In heaven, on the contrary, there will probably be degrees of rank infinitely varied. It is true that there will not be any real evils; but an envious man would create as many imaginary ills as he should find

beings superior to himself, and imaginary evils produce real misery, since then envy would necessarily be productive of unhappiness, it must be excluded from those peaceable realms, where God has fixed the throne of his glory, and where concord and mutual affection will be amongst the principal sources and supports of the universal felicity. And therefore that odious passion, as well as jealousy, covetousness, and all which are connected with it, are so expressly, so strongly, and so frequently pointed out in the scriptures, as incompatible with that purity of heart which shall make us heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

In the presence of God, and amidst the angels and glorified Saints, every one entirely free from these hateful sentiments, will be content with his lot; every one, will rejoice in the superior felicity of others. It belongs only to the heavenly virtues of humility and charity, to diffuse over our hearts, through all eternity, this admirable source of tranquillity and joy: we can form but a very imperfect idea of that treasure of happiness, that amazing variety of pleasures, with which this alone will enrich the mansions of immortality. One of my fellow creatures makes a discovery which delights him; I also enjoy it with him. Another, superior to us both, communicates to me some new augmentation of his grandeur and felicity; I participate in it in the same manner: thus I in some measure appropriate to myself all the happiness of heaven.

Here below, either because our generous sentiments are far inferior to those which we shall then possess, because the felicity of others as well as our own is too much blended with sorrow to claim great congratulations, or because that being too much occupied with our own affairs, and our own troubles, we can only receive slightly and transiently the agreeable impressions of an affectionate sympathy; those pleasures which we derive merely from our knowledge of the pleasures of others, are seldom very lively or very numerous. But these obstacles will cease in heaven: our hearts, purified and tranquil, having no other occupation than to indulge agreeable sentiments, will yield to them without reserve, and each of us shall enjoy the happiness of all the rest.

In this world there are few to whom we wish to display all the emotions of joy which we experience. Frequently we fear that our friends might find the subject frivolous, and enter into it with a degree of coldness and indifference which would give us pain; and if the person to whom we wish to open our whole soul, is much less happy than ourselves, we can scarcely avoid fearing that our lot might lead him to reflect upon his own, and might mingle with his joy a secret mortification. We may suspect that he is capable of some emotions of envy, because we feel a consciousness that we are so ourselves. But such doubts can have no place in heaven. After what I have said, to enlarge upon each particular would be only repetition.

The people of China and Japan imagine that it is impossible for us to be perfectly happy, whilst we see others excel us in talents, and surpass us in felicity. To reconcile this idea with the happiness of heaven, they suppose that, by an agreeable illusion, every one will there persuade himself that he is more favoured and more happy than the rest.

This proceeds from an ignorance, or at least a very imperfect knowledge, of the wonderful effects which are produced by those two excellent virtues, which shine forth with such lustre in the gospel,—humility and charity. Into what absurd mistakes do they fall respecting true happiness, when they attribute it to illusion and deceit! And what should we gain by this ridiculous stratagem? We should destroy one of the most abundant sources of our celestial pleasure.

God has given me a being, he has given me a soul; he offers me a felicity which is sufficient to gratify it entirely. Shall I counteract this felicity? Shall I mingle bitterness with it, because I know that there are spirits susceptible of more extensive happiness? Far from complaining of this, I admire his goodness the more; I give him thanks with the greatest sincerity for the blessings which he has bestowed on others; this gratitude constitutes a part of the very small return which it is in my power to make to him, for those he has bestowed on me.

My thankfulness towards him, my benevolence and tender affection towards all the rest of the blessed, who love me perhaps even to a greater degree than I love them, are essential parts of my happiness. Shall I envy their glory or felicity, because it is superior to my own? Ah, rather, how should I rejoice to be able to exalt them still higher! But I do enjoy this divine pleasure; my sentiments augment their happiness. I exercise their sublimest faculties; that which inclines my heart towards them, animates and increases their affection for me; they exert their talents to please me; I afford them the delightful employment of endeavouring to become useful to me. Thus they are indebted to me for a part of that joy which arises from being perfect in love, as I am indebted to them for the gratitude and affection with which they inspire me.

This is assuredly the light in which we shall consider these things in heaven, and such the sentiments which will prevail there.

Then there will be no necessity for a concurrence of circumstances to form this delightful union of hearts: at the first meeting, at the first sight of an inhabitant of heaven, we shall feel a mutual attachment, and shall be one heart and one spirit.

In the immense regions of immortality my curiosity leads me to seek those who are unknown to me; friends whom I have never seen. I arrive amongst them; immediately all press around me, and every one endeavours to the utmost of his power to procure me pleasure. My satisfaction animates their zeal; and their generous and tender joy is the most delightful source of mine. I meet, every where with innumerable multitudes, but never with an enemy. All those who see me, immediately wish to add to my happiness; it is their first idea, their prevailing inclination, their predominant passion. They know that my heart is inspired with the same sentiments towards them; we give reciprocal assurances of affectionate attachment, and enjoy the delightful pleasures of virtuous friendship.

This sweet sentiment will be continually augmenting; and what warmth, what delicacy, what wise and benevolent attentions, will be displayed to increase our mutual love, and to vary our mutual pleasures! One of the occupations to which we shall apply with the greatest ardour, will be to discover, and turn to advantage, every thing which can promote and extend the happiness of others.

In the present state of things it is not possible to conceive the degree of tranquillity, content, and pleasure, which will accompany that universal and reciprocal affection; especially if we suppose it infinitely more animated, as well as more pure, than it could be here below, even if all mankind were perfectly virtuous; and we must imagine that it will be so, in consequence of the great superiority of our celestial dispositions, of the additional motives which we shall then have, and of the many favourable circumstances which we shall there meet with.

If any person doubts whether these admirable sentiments of fraternal love will prevail in heaven, and desires a confirmation of it from scripture, he may be easily satisfied. I shall not insist upon the proofs which reason alone affords. All which I have said of our social dispositions, of our natural affections, of the principal sources of our pleasures, and of our ideas of the infinite number of the inhabitants of heaven, offer these proofs at first sight to every attentive person; but let us consider what light revelation affords to confirm our conjectures on this interesting subject.

After this I beheld, and lo! a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. They are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are

written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.

If it be alledged that these passages do not absolutely express the mutual affection of the blessed, yet they certainly imply it; and even without admitting these as proofs, we shall still find as many as are necessary. St. Paul, in the epistle to the Ephesians, strongly expresses this spiritual union, by a metaphorical allusion to an edifice, firmly founded, founded, and elegantly constructed. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth. into an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God, through the spirit." In the Epistle to the Colossians, he says, "Above all put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body." St. John says, "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." And St. Paul's admirable description of that "charity which never faileth," comprehends all the sentiments which I have particularized.

We may then conclude, that the social pleasures which we shall enjoy in heaven, will be uninterrupted and perfect; not producing that immoderate and impetuous joy which sometimes accompanies them here, and which is more frequently the effect of thoughtless levity, than the expression of real satisfaction; for true content is tranquil, and the most heartfelt pleasure serious; but our joy in heaven will be an eternal serenity, animated by the most delightful transports. No tumult, no confusion, none of that turbulent mirth which exhausts the spirits of those who feel it, and embarrasses and wearies those who feel it not; but an universal tranquillity, a sweet satisfaction; a joy, lively, yet calm; pleasures sensible and animated, but pure, and always accompanied with that amiable circumspection which a tender friendship inspires; sentiments exquisite and inexpressible, yet free from violence; sentiments which will impel us, not to introduce discord amidst the universal harmony of hearts, but to improve that harmony more and more, and to raise it to a degree of perfection, infinitely above the most enchanting image which the brightened imagination can trace. For we shall not "love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth. We shall have fellowship one with another, and our fellowship will be with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ."

#### **Part IV**

Let us now consider some of the celestial pleasures which we shall derive more immediately from our own reflections, and from some other circumstances which I have not had an opportunity of mentioning, and which will greatly add to our happiness in heaven.

Memory is a kind of restoration of the past: when we feel, or foresee as certain, effects of a distant cause, which no longer exists, this gives in some measure a new existence to that cause, and places it again before us. When this relates to an action which we have performed, and which it was in our own power to have avoided, the idea or recollection of that action is a present source of pleasing or of painful sentiments, according to the consequences of that conduct which we recall to our remembrance. No situation can be more dreadful, than a state of misery towards which we have voluntarily directed our steps for a long time, and into which we have at length plunged ourselves. Whatever may be the torment which we endure, our greatest suffering consists in the reproaches of our conscience. And in the same manner, in a happy situation, at which we have arrived by attentions and exertions, full of circumspection, prudence, and assiduity, some of our most agreeable reflections arise from self-approbation. The more difficulties we have surmounted, and the more dangers we have avoided, the more perfectly we enjoy the happiness acquired.

Such is our sensibility to what is proper and reasonable, that independently of the success of our actions, we feel pleasure or sorrow according to the conduct we have pursued. If we have done what ought naturally to bring upon us great misfortunes, as the loss of reputation, fortune, or health; and if, contrary to the common course of things, these misfortunes have not befallen us,—yet there still remains a severe punishment in our

own breast; we are secretly of the esteem which the world expresses for us, we cannot help inwardly confessing that we have not deserved it; our possessions appear to us to be in some measure unjustly acquired; our health a blessing which we ought not to enjoy; at least we certainly do not experience the comfort and satisfaction which we should feel without these humiliating reflections. And if, instead of losing any thing, though we deserved to be deprived of all, we have on the contrary obtained rewards which were due only to qualities of which we have been entirely destitute, or to efforts which we have not exerted, we then profit with regret from the ignorance of our superiors, who, by exalting us, have perhaps been guilty of injustice towards a more worthy object. That reward, however great it may be, can afford us only inconsiderable pleasure, in comparison of what those who had deserved it would enjoy.

On the contrary, such is the power and influence of self-approbation, that it alleviates the greatest calamities. To be able to say with truth, "This is not my fault; I have acted with all possible prudence to avoid this misfortune; I have not departed from my integrity;" this disarms our sorrows of their sting, and almost converts them into comforts. So delightful is the pleasure of self-esteem and approbation, that when our misfortunes are the effects of our virtues, which sometimes happens amidst the disorders of the present world, then they change their nature and cease to be evils, Are we poor? Perhaps it is because we have restored to the right owners, though not compelled to it by the law, that wealth which our predecessors had gained by rapine and extortion; our poverty then becomes a treasure, of more value than thousands of gold and silver. If in the cause of religion or virtue we should lose friends or reputation, yet, "if our heart condemn us not, and we have confidence towards God," we may console ourselves for the loss of esteem and regard, with the soothing reflections arising from a good conscience; trusting that He to whom all hearts are open, will in a future world, when the mists of error shall be dispelled, bring forth our "righteousness as the light, and our just dealing as the noon-day."

With what pleasure shall we reflect in heaven upon the various temptations we have resisted, and the numerous evils we have endured, in pursuing with fortitude and perseverance the path tending towards that felicity, to which we have at length attained. Thus delightfully shall we enjoy the past, and, all evil having ceased, "God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes." We shall possess, without any abatement, the fruit of our cares and exertions; and that approbation of our own conscience, which on earth had seldom been greater than to afford us consolation in our calamities, shall become in heaven a pure and sensible pleasure; a pleasure which reason will no longer oppose, or humility condemn; for we are there no longer to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling," but to obey the call of our glorified Master:— "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world."

More impressed with the beauty of virtue than we were, or could be, here below, we shall not only rejoice in our self-approbation, with regard to the past, but we shall anticipate this celestial pleasure in an everlasting futurity; for we shall be assured of preserving it inviolate, and of augmenting it continually, through eternal ages. Upon earth, alas! we feel this pleasure but very imperfectly. One day distinguished by some great victory over our own heart, one day on which we can reflect with self-approbation, is a truly valuable day, and may almost be compared to those which we shall pass in heaven. But through our negligence and weakness, these days seldom arrive, and even when they do, our joy is abated by some melancholy recollection of the past, and by the fear which it occasions that the next day may referable those numerous preceding ones, which have been stained with sin. We can, therefore, form but a faint idea of that transporting felicity which will proceed from the constant self-approbation which we shall enjoy in that illustrious assembly of saints, where our most ardent desire will be to advance "from glory to glory," "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

This boundless prospect of happiness will be enjoyed in perfect security. Here below the idea of our mortality, and of our subjection to corporeal pains, constantly accompanies us. We are sensible every moment that that some accident may arrive the next, to deprive us of the fleeting breath of life; and that however happily we may escape from the dangers which hover continually around us, yet in a short space of time we must necessarily become a prey to decay and death. Our occupations both of business and pleasure

frequently lead us into perils; while terror and anxiety diminish our enjoyments, and intrude into almost every circumstance of life.

In heaven we shall no longer be subject to the wars of elements, or to those more terrible revolutions which arise from the passions of mankind, and bring in their train miseries and destruction; miseries more formidable, and destruction more frequent, than are produced by infectious diseases, ferocious animals, animals, overflowing seas, or contending storms.

Fate, armed with thunder, fire, and every plague,  
That ruins, tortures, or distracts mankind,  
And makes the happy wretched in an hour,  
Overwhelms you not with woes so terrible  
As your own wrath. (Armstrong)

The present state of things renders it impossible, even with the greatest care, to avoid misfortunes; and mankind are in general so indiscreet and inconsiderate, as not to reflect what evil their conduct may bring upon others. Is it surprising then, that, even without enmity, we are continually crossing and clashing with each other, and that our negligence occasions various evils, which a small degree of prudence would have prevented?

Without misfortune, what calamities!  
And what hostilities, without a foe!  
Nor are foes wanting to the best on earth.  
But endless is the list of human ills,  
And sighs might sooner fail, than cause to sigh.

But even in this life misfortunes would be much less frequent, if mankind were united by that bond of mutual affection, which our Saviour earnestly recommends to his disciples as their peculiar distinction. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Such misfortunes cannot therefore have place in an abode where the tumults both of the natural and moral world will subside into peace, and we shall "love our neighbour as ourselves."

We cannot perhaps, here below, form an adequate idea of the pleasure arising from perfect security. It is impossible to enjoy such a state on earth, and therefore we cannot acquire a just idea of the satisfaction and joy which must accompany the assurance of an absolute exemption from all danger. We are so far from being able to acquire perfect tranquillity in this world, that, on the contrary, the moment we reflect on that which we do experience, it appears so ill-founded, that we immediately lose it, and can recover it only by ceasing to reflect. I am in health to-day, but am I certain that I shall be so to-morrow? The friend whose society is now so delightful to me, in a few days perhaps may be snatched from me by death. In short, if we were to meditate on all the probable dangers which threaten us every moment, upon what basis should we found our tranquillity? It is true, that many persons live without fear, even when they are threatened with various misfortunes; they are inattentive to the dangers which surround them, and this is frequently a real advantage; an advantage, which, if we did not all possess in some degree, our mortal life would be a state of constant suffering; and it is probably for this reason, that the Creator has concealed futurity from our view.

But the most fearless do not, neither can they, enjoy that rational tranquillity which proceeds from the conviction of being in a state of security which nothing can alter. Such a state is inconsistent with this life; and therefore it is evident that we cannot here enjoy that species of tranquillity, of which that state alone can be the source and foundation.

It is only by looking forward with confidence to a perfect and eternal state, that we can acquire real tranquillity here below. Notwithstanding our natural repugnance to pain, and every kind of adversity, such is



the force of religion, that by her powerful influence we may conquer that repugnance, whenever it would interfere with our duty; and we shall not only prove our religious courage when we are called forth to active exertions, but we shall possess the more difficult virtue of passive fortitude, which will induce us to submit with patience and resignation to every apparent misfortune, and even to rejoice in it. Then only can we enjoy a tranquillity in some measure resembling the felicity of heaven, when "casting all our care" upon Providence, in the full assurance that "He careth for us," we build our confidence on this incontestable principle, that whenever God permits misfortunes to befall a virtuous man, it is only as the means of increasing his future happiness; because that, according to the admirable arrangements of his wisdom and goodness, "all things shall work together for good to them that love God."

In heaven, where pain and sorrow shall be no more, and "death shall be swallowed up in victory," we shall feel a sweet security that every danger is past, and that we shall enjoy for ever those pleasures which are at the right hand of God: treasures immortal and immutable, "eternal in the heavens, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

This perfect security is so necessary to our felicity, that without it the greatest blessings would become in some measure the source of misery; and even the more deserving they were of our attachment, the more afflictive would be the evil resulting from the possible privation of them.

In the world to come our desires will not exceed their proper limits; and the assurance that they shall be gratified will render them agreeable sentiments, without any mixture of impatience. I have already remarked, that, in order to enjoy a felicity suited to our nature, we must have desires: a situation without them would be insipid. That which renders them painful is the fear of disappointment, which always accompanies them here; and fear produces impatience. But if we could banish fear, obtain a perfect command over ourselves, and consider seventy years as an almost imperceptible portion of our duration, impatience then would cease; and such will be our situation when we shall arrive in the mansions of immortality. There our desires, being always bounded by reason and virtue, will be always gratified: our love of pleasure will never be at variance with our sense of duty. Without doubt the principal aim of our application and exertions will be, to inform and improve ourselves more and more, and to embrace every opportunity of informing, improving, and rendering more happy, those of our fellow-citizens in the household of God, who may not have made so great a progress as ourselves, or to whom we can be in any degree useful. We shall joyfully sacrifice our own particular gratifications to our social and generous sentiments, whenever circumstances, or our own assertion and benevolence, require such a sacrifice; and this will greatly heighten the pleasure which we shall derive from our noble and exalted sentiments. Labour will be no longer necessary to procure us conveniences and comforts. We shall neither toil nor spin: for we shall dwell in "a city whose builder and maker is God;" we shall be clothed in that "fine linen which is the righteousness of saints;" and we shall eat of those "fruits and drink of that water of life," which shall be "in the midst of the new Jerusalem." Our occupations will therefore only be calculated to promote our felicity; but an attempt to particularize them would be absurd, since we are not sufficiently acquainted with the nature of our celestial sensations, the degree of our faculties, or the species of objects which we shall meet with in heaven. There are in nature innumerable mysteries which are impenetrable to mortal eyes, an infinity of wonderful connexions which our weak understandings cannot trace; we shall then perhaps penetrate those mysteries, and comprehend those connexions.

We may frequently employ ourselves in contemplating the glories of our heavenly abode, which will doubtless afford an everlasting subject for admiration. St. John has given us, in the Revelations, a sublime idea of the magnificence of that habitation, which will be, as he expresses it, "the tabernacle of God with men. The building of the wall of it was of jasper, and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass; and the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it, There shall be no night there; and they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it." This figurative description conveys to us, by metaphors adapted to our present conceptions, the most lofty ideas of the grandeur of that holy city, which shall be filled with the glory of God.

The noblest and most delightful of all our occupations will be, to praise and adore that gracious Being, who is the author and giver of every blessing. The angels and saints in heaven are represented to us as continually worshipping God, and ascribing unto Him "glory, and honour, and power." To see this perpetual adoration may appear wearisome; but how little do they understand those exquisite sentiments which arise from a continual meditation upon the felicity we enjoy, and an uninterrupted contemplation of that divine Benefactor from whom alone it proceeds. What transports of gratitude and love will fill our hearts, when we shall behold Him, who, having guided us with his "counsel" through the paths of time, has afterwards received us "to glory" in the mansions of eternity: having given us, who were dead in trespasses and sins, his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, "but have everlasting life."

I shall not enlarge further on the nature of our celestial felicity, but conclude with a few general observations.

A situation far inferior to that which I have endeavoured in some degree to describe, would appear to many persons a paradise worthy of our desires. There are in the present life tranquil and happy moments: for example; when in a fine day, in the society of chosen friends, far from the dreadful din of arms, surrounded by objects which flatter the senses, our mind unembarrassed by troublesome affairs, and our heart free from reproach, we enjoy an innocent and interesting conversation; or when in a peaceful and pleasing solitude, meditating without restraint, according to the bent of our dispositions, and the nature of our inclinations, or amusing ourselves with some other favourite occupation, we possess those pleasures which are peculiarly adapted to our turn of mind.

Let us suppose an entire security, a freedom from the usual evils of this life; let us admit a variety of pleasures, but not surpassing in degree those which I have just mentioned; let us suppose also, (for this is absolutely requisite) that we had no promise, nor even the least notion of another life infinitely preferable to the present; we should then look forward with sweet satisfaction to the eternal duration of such a state.

Now, if it be true, that with the single advantage of absolute tranquillity, that is to say, an exemption from all positive evil, and notwithstanding the impossibility of acquiring a proficiency in various sciences, as being incompatible with the present condition of human nature;—if it be true that, in such circumstances, a succession of moderate gratifications, but little varied, and which, at the end of a certain number of years, would be only repetitions of those pleasures which we had already enjoyed, could constitute a desirable paradise;—what idea ought we not to form of those celestial regions, where the least of our pleasures will surpass the most interesting earthly joy; where tranquillity will be accompanied with an endless progress, and the assurance of success in our studies; where we may expect varied and increasing enjoyments; and where consequently, eternity, far from introducing disgust and languor, will add to our glory and felicity a more ample and more exquisite delight?

The ancient heathen writers, and particularly the poets, have left us descriptions of their Elysian fields, and of the golden age. In the latter, simplicity of manners, innocence, peace, freedom from fatiguing occupations, a soil naturally fertile, and seasons mild and serene, constitute the greatest charms of the description. In the Elysian fields, the same images heightened and improved, an exemption from the humiliating necessities of our mortal state, some pleasures adapted to our nature, represent to us another golden age, but in some measure refined. These fictions, though extremely deceptive, interest the most insensible hearts. If we purify them from the mean, the gross, and the imperfect, which must necessarily accompany the description of objects, too nearly resembling those with which we are acquainted upon earth; and if we add to them various advantages which the heathens either could not imagine, or could not represent in all their extent and lustre, for want of ideas, sufficiently sublime, of the Divinity and his designs,—these descriptions may perhaps be regarded as faint sketches of the celestial felicity in its commencement.

What the holy scripture tells us concerning the garden of Eden, and the state in which we suppose mankind would have been, if neither our first parents, nor their posterity, had sinned, presents a very engaging image;

yet this cannot give an adequate idea of our future paradise: "far happier place Than this of Eden, and far happier days." (Milton) Man here below, even in a state of innocence, and with the approbation of the Most High, could be only in the infancy of his dignity and happiness. Man, though innocent, would still be but man; the earth would be but a garden; though we should not be subject to death, we could not in this world enjoy immortality to that degree of which our nature would be capable. To confine immortals here below, would not be consistent with that unbounded love which the Almighty testifies towards his creatures: to enjoy a glorious and blissful immortality we must have been transported to some superior abode, or our present habitation must have been considerably improved, in order to be suitable to the purified nature of its inhabitants, when they were become equal unto the angels.

But the pleasures of our celestial paradise will not consist in a limited felicity, a small portion of joy, particles of happiness, (if I may be allowed the expression) of which we might form almost an adequate idea; but in an unbounded joy, surrounding us on every side; in a vast, an immense felicity, arising from pleasures innumerable and unlimited; in the eternal emanations of the power and goodness of the infinite Author of all, and in the "unsearchable riches of Christ;" our dwelling will be with God in boundless realms of bliss, and our society, with innumerable multitudes of intelligent beings, continually advancing, as well as ourselves, in wisdom, glory, and happiness.

With such hopes, and such prospects, we may not only "run with patience the race" which is set before us, but we may go on our way rejoicing:" looking unto "Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Angels, principalities, and powers, being made subject unto him."

## **Conclusion**

To render this Essay more complete, I shall collect into one point of view, the principal objects of that glorious prospect which eternity opens before us, as a recapitulation and summary of my preceding observations and reflections; and if any of them have in the smallest degree engaged the attention of the reader, when only separately considered, I hope, that when thus united, and reflecting on each other a more glorious lustre, they will produce a greater effect, and make a more forcible and more lasting impression.

In heaven, our glorified bodies will be no longer subject to infirmity or decay: all positive evil will cease. Our faculties, being perfected to a degree of which we can at present form no idea, will bring to the soul an endless variety of delightful emotions. In the enjoyment of eternal youth and health, endued perhaps with modes of perception at present as incomprehensible to us as are the pleasures of vision to a man born blind, our senses will no longer be at variance with our reason: the corruptible body will no more press down the soul, but will be the instrument of its happiness. We shall enjoy the pleasure of acquiring and possessing knowledge, unallayed by any of those inconveniencies which accompany them on earth. Our faculties, talents, and assistances, will always be equal to the studies in which we shall employ them: a firm confidence of success in our enquiries and researches will make them so easy to us, that they will be productive of pleasure, unmixed with the slightest degree of fatigue; and being secure of an eternal duration,- we shall not fear any impediment to our advancement in those sublime attainments, which will be the objects of our pursuit in the realms of immortality.

The Supreme Being will always be the principal object of our meditations. Here below we see him darkly; but then we shall see him face to face. The attributes of God, the wonders of creation, the conduct of Providence, the great designs of the Most High, and all those beautiful, sublime, and infinitely diversified objects, in the contemplation of which we feel every moment the weakness of our earthly faculties, will be displayed before us in all their lustre.

At the sight of that immense store of pleasures, of which God will have given us possession, our boundless admiration will be accompanied with the sweetest emotions of gratitude and love. By the recollection of the

past, those evils, which can exist no longer but in our memory, will be admirably instrumental in enhancing the value of our happiness, and procuring us a more exquisite enjoyment of it. During this delightful retrospect, we shall look up to that Being, who is the author and finisher of our faith, with transports of gratitude and love, of which our most ardent sensations of piety on earth can give us but a faint idea.

From reflecting on the past, we shall naturally proceed to meditate on the future, and to enjoy the delightful anticipation of those degrees of glory and felicity which we shall not at first possess. Admitted into the presence of God, honoured by his approbation, we shall see in Him, and in every thing around us, the great system of universal felicity: a felicity for ever extending, and for ever increasing. God, who knows our hearts, will place objects before us to exercise our noblest virtues, in all their variety, delicacy, and ardour. Happy in ourselves, and in the happiness of myriads of our fellow-creatures, exulting in the prospect of an eternal augmentation of excellence and felicity, we shall enjoy these inestimable blessings with a warmth, an energy of sentiment, which it is impossible to feel in this imperfect state.

We shall be secure of finding, in each of the blessed, every disposition and assertion towards us which can gratify our social feelings, and our natural desire to love and to be beloved. Strengthened by our progress in knowledge, in virtue, and in amiable sentiments; animated by the presence of our heavenly Father; free from all impediments; secure from all indifference; our affection for each individual of the blessed will be more ardent and tender, than that which we now feel for the most beloved friend: while we have the greatest reason to hope, that every tender and virtuous attachment formed on earth, is the object of it be really deserving of our esteem, will be renewed with augmented ardour, and be enjoyed for ever. No envy, no jealousy, can ever disturb our social happiness. Every one will be contented with his own lot, every one will sincerely rejoice in the superior exaltation of others; and thus we shall in some measure appropriate to ourselves all the happiness of heaven. At the first sight of a glorified spirit, we shall feel a reciprocal attachment; and shall for ever rejoice in the blessings of mutual love.

When we shall reflect on the numerous temptations we have overcome, and the various afflictions we have endured, in our progress towards that felicity to which we have at length attained, we shall enjoy the approbation of our own conscience; and that approbation which on earth had seldom been more than a consolation in adversity, will become in heaven a pure and delightful pleasure;—a pleasure which we shall anticipate in an everlasting futurity; for we shall be secure of preserving it inviolate, and of augmenting it continually, in the constant exercise of virtue.

All these blessings will be accompanied with the certainty that they are ours for ever. In heaven, where pain and sorrow are no more, and death is swallowed up in victory, we shall feel a sweet security that every danger is past: while futurity presents an endless perspective, a boundless field for the exercise of the noblest virtues, and the enjoyment of constantly increasing happiness.

Such are my ideas of the blessings of a future state. I flatter myself that I have not offered, under the sanction of the gospel, any propositions which are not either absolutely asserted, or clearly implied, in the sacred writings; and with regard to my conjectures, I have carefully endeavoured to hazard such only as, sounded on the attributes of God, on the nature of things in general, and on the constitution and situation of the human race in particular, appear to be extremely probable. If I am mistaken in any of these ideas, yet I cannot err in recommending the encouragement of those sentiments which they tend to excite, and the practice of those duties which they are calculated to enforce.

Our life in this world is only a preparation for the next; a state of trial, and of discipline; in which we ought, not only to avoid as much as possible every action which is displeasing to God, but also to acquire virtuous habits, and a taste for every thing which is rational, amiable, and worthy of a being who aspires to become hereafter equal unto the angels. By this principle we may try the value of all our pursuits, of all our pleasures. If our intellectual and moral improvements in this world tend to the perfecting our felicity in that which is to come, it necessarily follows that our most important business here below, is to enlighten our understanding,

and to improve our heart; which may be as effectually accomplished by the active member of society, as by the sedentary recluse. Religion does not oblige us to renounce the common occupations, or the innocent pleasures of life. A proper attention to the former is often a great and important duty; and the latter are the showers which Providence has scattered, in the narrow, and often thorny path of virtue.

But let not the cares of this life engage our whole attention; let not pleasure be considered as our business. In a state which I have already called the infancy of our existence, our heavenly Father acts like a kind and tender parent; indulging us in every pleasure which is not contrary to our more important interests, but leading us to pursue such as will form our minds to happiness and virtue.

The father who consults the real good of his child, will cultivate his taste, his understanding, his virtuous affections, at the moment when he appears only felicitous to amuse him. The sports of infancy must not be cruel; they must not be such as feed the selfish passions, and counteract the great ends of education. Instruction may be united with pleasure, and reason may gain strength while fancy is amused. The tender guardian will never lose sight of the permanent advantage of his pupil; the child must remember that he is born to be a man.

Such is our situation on earth; and the comparison may give us a faint idea of the gracious designs of our heavenly Father. Since the bountiful hand of Providence has bestowed upon us innumerable blessings, and placed us in the midst of objects calculated to gratify our various tastes and inclinations, as far as is consistent with those great designs which regard our eternal felicity, we cannot surely render ourselves unacceptable to Him, when we enjoy with gratitude the gifts he has vouchsafed to offer us, or exult in the pleasing consequences of those virtues, which, by his grace, we have been enabled to perform. Let the rich and prosperous rejoice in the blessings which God has given them; the wealth which is spent in relieving distress, in encouraging science and virtue, or in promoting the innocent pleasures of society, and affording to a fellow-creature one agreeable hour, will not be lost. Whenever we contribute to the happiness of others, we cultivate sentiments which to all eternity will form a part of our own. Let philosophy extend its researches, let genius indulge the enthusiasm of a warm imagination; all that is beautiful, all that is sublime, in the productions of art, or the works of nature, all contribute to raise the mind to Him from whom they immediately or ultimately proceed, and to fix the attention on those more glorious scenes, where alone real perfection can be found.

And ye, whose hearts are formed to feel the sweet emotions of friendship and benevolence, to you I address myself with peculiar satisfaction. Let not the cold maxims of unfeeling skepticism check your enjoyment of pleasures in which angels share. The example, the positive command, of the great Author of our salvation, calls us to love one another. "The charities of father, son, and brother," the tender ties of friendship, the warm philanthropy, "which scarce collective man can fill," all are the glorious fruits of that religion of which the distinguishing characteristic is charity. Fear not the sorrows which, in this state of trial, will be blended with the highest transports which the human mind is capable of feeling. The object of your tenderest attachment may be doomed to suffer, may be removed from you by death; even the Saviour of the world wept for his Lazarus, and all his disciples must be ready to resign every blessing they enjoy, when they are called to take up the cross and follow him. But these light afflictions are but for a moment: the friends who are parted on earth will again unite in heaven to part no more: the gentle heart, which now bleeds at the sight of human miseries, will there enjoy for ever the enchanting spectacle of universal happiness.

These are pleasures which reason does not blush to own, and which religion does not forbid us to enjoy: and shall we exchange these pleasures for follies which disgrace our understanding, and vices which corrupt our heart; which afford no real satisfaction in possession, and which must soon perish forever? In a few years the delusive objects of vanity, avarice, and ambition, will lose their deceitful splendor; and all the glittering treasures, which are so often purchased at the expense of honour and virtue, will appear as contemptible to the poor wretch who now pursues them, as the toys which amused his infancy.

Thrones will then be toys,  
And earth and sides seem dust upon the scale.

The Christian, whose faith is fixed upon the happiness of a future state, is prepared and enabled to support with unshaken constancy, and entire resignation to the will of God, the evils of the present life. The heaviest appear to him insignificant; the most lingering, but transient. Far from obstructing his progress towards the heavenly Canaan, they will advance and accelerate it. He submits, with religious patience and pious fortitude, to the deprivation of worldly consorts, while he trusts that he shall receive a recompense for them in the realms of purest happiness. To arrive in those regions of felicity, is the principal, is almost the sole object of his desires. One step in the way which leads to heaven, is productive of far greater advantages than a thousand directed only towards the acquisitions and pleasures of this world. Those "treasures" which are "laid up in heaven," are the only "true riches." To connect religion with every circumstance in life, to make it the companion of our gayest as well as our gravest hours, is to pursue the path which will conduct us to real and permanent felicity: it is to secure a present satisfaction, preferable to every other enjoyment our mortal slate can afford. The least important, as well as the most material blessings proceed equally from God, and require our grateful acknowledgments; and we cannot truly enjoy any pleasure which we do not sincerely believe to be authorized by Him "who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." The pursuit in which we cannot ask his protection must be criminal; the pleasure for which we dare not thank Him cannot be innocent. This habitual piety appears to be the proper offering of a Christian; who ought to be always employed in the service of God, and who fulfils his will, as much when he enjoys with gratitude the blessings he has given, as when he supports with fortitude the trials which are sent by the same all-gracious hand.

We are too apt to yield to indolence in virtue, and to negligence in piety; which may be productive of the most fatal consequences. They are the most common, and at the same time the most dangerous, spiritual diseases of the sincere Christian. They insensibly lay the soul asleep, and that sleep threatens us with death. The most religious man requires frequent admonitions and precautions against those enemies of his soul. On this account St. Peter thus addresses himself to his fellow-Christians: "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance. Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance."

Let us then exert ourselves with courage, with ardour, and an uninterrupted perseverance, to acquire all the glory, all the felicity, of which we can be susceptible in the life to come: "forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, let us"press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "Let us not faint; but, though our outward man perish, let us pray that the inward man may be renewed day by day. Then"our light affliction, which is but for a moment, shall work out for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen, are temporal, but the things which are not seen, are eternal."

THE END.

### **1797 Publication date**

**James Hervey (1714 – 1758) British Calvinistic Clergyman**

**In World Above Are Various Degrees Of Happiness, Various Seats Of Honour - Some Will Rise To More Illustrious Distinctions And Richer Joys**

**James Hervey's Meditations and Contemplations**

(Joseph Smith gave a copy of this book to the Nauvoo library shortly before his death, perhaps from the 1797 edition. The text below is from an edition published in 1855)

### **On the Starry Heavens**

I perceive a great variety in the size and splendour of those gems of heaven. Some are of the first magnitude, others of an inferior order. Some glow with intense flames, others glimmer with fainter beams. Yet all are beautiful; all have their peculiar lustre, and distinct use; all tend, in their different degrees, to enamel the cope of heaven, and embroider the robe of night.

This circumstance is remarked by an author, whose sentiments are a source of wisdom, and the very standard of truth. "One star," says the apostle to the Gentiles, "differeth from another star in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead." In the world above, are various degrees of happiness, various seats of honour. Some will rise to more illustrious distinctions and richer joys; some, like vessels of ample capacity, will admit more copious accessions of light and excellence. Yet there will be no want, no deficiency, in any; but a fulness both of divine satisfactions and personal perfections. Each will enjoy all the good, and be adorned with all the glory, that his heart can wish, or his condition receive. None will know what it is to envy. Not the least malevolence, nor the least selfishness, but everlasting friendship prevails, and a mutual complacency in each other's delight. Love, cordial love, will give every particular saint a participation of all the fruitions which are diffused through the whole assembly of the blessed. No one eclipses, but each reflects light upon his brother. A sweet interchange of rays subsists, all enlightened by the great fountain, and all enlightening one another; by which reciprocal communication of pleasure and amity, each will be continually receiving from, each incessantly adding to, the general felicity.

Happy, supremely happy they who are admitted into the celestial mansions. Better to be a door-keeper in those "ivory palaces," than to fill the most gorgeous throne on earth. The very lowest place at God's right hand is distinguished honour and consummate bliss. O! that we may, in some measure, anticipate that beatific state while we remain in our banishment below! May we, by rejoicing in the superior prosperity of another, make it our own! and, provided the general result is harmony, be content, be pleased, with whatsoever part is assigned to our share, in the universal choir of affairs.

**1797**

**Johann Friedrich Flatt (1759 – 1821) German theologian and philosopher**

**Remarks about the proportion of morality and Felicitousness in relation to the doctrine of Christianity (Bemerkungen uber die proportion der Sittlichkeit und Glukseeligkeit in Beziehung auf die lehre des Christenthums von der kunktigen Seeligkeit gebesserter Menschen)**

**No Text Found**

**1805 Publication Date**

**Philip Doddridge (1702 -1751), English Nonconformist Leader, Educator, & Hymnwrite**

**There Shall Indeed Be Some Difference In Degree Of That Glory, Correspondent To Different Excellencies In Characters Of Good Men**

**The Works of the Rev. Philip Doddridge**

Improvement (on First Corinthians 15)

Published in 1805 in Leeds, Great Britain

(Joseph Smith gave a copy of Philip Doddridge's "Sermons" to the Nauvoo Library in 1844)

41 There is an immense variety in the works of God, even in those which fall under the inspection of our senses, feeble and limited as they are, while we dwell in flesh and blood. you know, is not the same kind of flesh, but the flesh of man, and of cattle, and of fish, and of fowls, is different each from the other, in its

form, qualities, and manner of being subsisted. [There are] also celestial bodies, and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial, and the terrestrial, are apparently differeth, and the brightest lustre the latter can have, is but a faint reflection of what is received from the former. And even in the glory of the celestial bodies there is also a wonderful variety: There is one superior and incomparable glory of the sun, which often shines with a lustre scarce to be endured; and another reflected and milder glory of the moon; and another glory of the stars, which as they appear to us, are far interior to either of the two great luminaries. And again, [one] star differeth from [another] star in glory, according to their respective magnitudes, in reference to which they are ranged by astronomers under different classes.

42 So [shall be] also the resurrection of the pious dead: another kind of glory shall appear, than human nature has known in its purest state, in any beauty of form or ornaments of dress. There shall indeed, as I intimated but now, be some difference in the degree of that glory, correspondent to the different excellencies in the characters of good men, on whom it is to pass: happy change; so that it may be said concerning the body of them all in general, it is sown, or committed, like seed to the ground, in corruption, just ready to putrify, and through various forms of putrefaction to be reduced to the dust: but it is raised in incorruption, so that no accident or disorder whatsoever shall be able to dissolve it again, or to threaten it in the least degree.

43 It is sown in dishonour, in a poor contemptible state, and under a kind of infamy, put upon it by the execution of God's first sentence against sin; but it is raised in glory, every part and trace of the curse being abolished, and itself being formed in such a manner as to make it appear that the King of heaven delights to honour the happy spirit on which he bestows such a dress. It is sown in weakness, absolutely incapable of any, even the lowest degree of action, or sensation, and deprived of those limited abilities which it possessed in this its mortal life: but it is raised in power, endowed with almost angelic degrees of strength, vigour and activity.

44 is sown an animal body, formed to the purposes of animal life in this present world: but it is raised a spiritual body, formed to a noble superiority to the mean gratifications of this imperfect state, and fitted to be the instrument of the soul, in the most exalted services of the spiritual and Divine life. For it is certain, that as there is an animal body, with which we are now by daily, and frequently, by unhappy experience, acquainted; so there is also a spiritual body: God can exalt and refine matter to a degree of purity and excellence to us unknown; and there are many bodies now existing so pure and active, as that in comparison they may be called spirits.

**1807 (Article by Susan Easton Black in 1992)**  
**Solomon Chamberlain (Early Convert to Mormonism)**  
**Chamberlain's Vision of Three Heavens**  
**Stories From the Early Saints**

(Published in Susan Easton Black, Ed. *Stories from the Early Saints: Converted by the Book of Mormon*, Review by Daniel C. Peterson, *FARMS Review of Books*, vol. 4 (1992),, p.16)

Solomon Chamberlain, for instance, had a vision, in or about the year 1807, of three heavens, graded hierarchically according to their differing degrees of glory. In another vision, in 1816, he learned that the true church was not upon the earth, but that it soon would be, and that its arrival would be connected with the publication of another book of scripture, much like the Bible. At about the time that the Book of Mormon was being printed, but before he had yet heard of it, Solomon was divinely led to the Smiths' neighborhood in upstate New York.

I was a stranger in that part of the country, a town where I never before had set my foot, and knew no one in the town. It was now about sundown, and my guide [the Spirit of the Lord] directed me to put up for the night, which I did to a farm house. In the morning, the people of the house asked me if I had heard of the



Gold Bible. When they said Gold Bible, there was a power like electricity went from the top of my head to the end of my toes.

He went to the Smiths' home, where he met Joseph Smith's brother Hyrum and found that the revelations he had received agreed in precise detail with those granted to the Prophet. He was baptized by Joseph Smith in the waters of Seneca Lake shortly after the establishment of the Church (pp. 34-37).

Footnote: This account appears indirectly to conflict with the notion, advanced by some, that Joseph Smith got his idea of the three degrees of glory--an idea, incidentally, with roots deep in antiquity--not by revelation from the Lord, but by reading speculative books of the 1830s.

### **1808 Publication date**

**Joseph Hall (1633-1710), Bishop of Exeter and Norwich, England**

**Discoursing Of Different Degrees Of Heavenly Glory; Of Our Mutual Knowledge Of Each Other Above**

**Works, Right Reverend Father in God, Joseph Hall, D.D.**

Successively Bishop of Exeter and Norwich, now first collected, with some account of his life and sufferings, written by himself

### **Letter to Sir Edmund Lucy**

**Discoursing of the different Degrees of Heavenly Glory; and of our mutual Knowledge of Each Other above.**

As those, which never were at home, now, after much hearsay travelling toward it, ask in the way, what manner of house it is, what seat, what frame, what soil; so do we, in the passage to our glory. We are all pilgrims thither; yet so, as that some have looked into it afar, through the open windows of the Scripture. Go to, then: while others are enquiring about worldly dignities and earthly pleasures, let us two sweetly consult of the estate of our future happiness; yet without presumption, without curiosity.

Amongst this infinite choice of thoughts, it hath pleased you to limit our discourse to two heads.

You ask first, if the joys of the glorified Saints shall differ in degrees. I fear not to affirm it. There is one life of all; one felicity: but divers measures. Our heaven begins here; and here, varies in degree. One Christian enjoys God above another, according as his grace, as his faith is more: and heaven is still like itself; not other above, from that beneath. As our grace begins our glory, so it proportions it. Blessedness stands in the perfect operation of the best faculties, about the perfectest object; that is, in the vision, in the fruition of God. All his Saints see him; but some more clearly: as the same sun is seen of all eyes, not with equal strength. Such as the eye of our faith was, to see him that is invisible; such is the eye of our present apprehension, to see as we are seen. Who sees not, that our rewards are according to our works? not for them, as on merit: woe be to that soul, which hath but what it earneth: but after them, as their rule of proportion. And these, how sensibly unequal! One gives but a cup of cold water to a disciple: another gives his blood, for the Master.

Different works have different wages; not of desert, but of mercy: five talents well employed, carry away more recompence than two; yet both approved, both rewarded with their Master's joy. Who can stick at this, that knows those heavenly spirits, to whom we shall be like, are marshalled by their Maker into several ranks? he, that was rapt into their element, and saw their blessed orders, as from his own knowledge hath styled them, Thrones, Principalities, Powers, Dominions. If, in one part of this celestial family, the great Householder hath thus ordered it, why not in the other? yea, even in this he hath instanced; You shall sit on

twelve thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel: if he mean not some preeminence to his apostles, how doth he answer, how doth he satisfy them?

Yet more, Lazarus is in Abraham's bosom: therefore Abraham is more honoured than Lazarus. I shall need no more proofs; if from heaven you shall look down into the great gulf, and there see diversity of torments, according to the value of sins: equality of offences, you acknowledge an idle paradox of the Stoics: to hold unequal sins equally punished, were more absurd; and more injurious to God's justice: there is but one fire, which yet otherwise burns the straw; otherwise, wood and iron: he, that made and commands this dungeon, these tortures, tells us, that the wilfully disobedient shall smart with more stripes; the ignorant, with fewer.

Yet, so conceive of these heavenly degrees, that the least is glorious: so do these vessels differ, that all are full: there is no want in any; no envy. Let us strive for a place, not strive for the order: how can we wish to be more than happy?

Your other question is, of our mutual knowledge above; the hope whereof, you think, would give much contentment to the necessity of our parture: for, both we are loath not to know those whom we love; and we are glad to think we shall know them happy: whereof, if it may comfort you, I am no less confident. If I may not go so far, as, with the best of the Fathers, to say we shall know one another's thoughts, I dare say, our persons we shall: our knowledge, our memory are not there lost, but perfected. Yea, I fear not to say, we shall know, both our miseries past, and the present sufferings of the damned: it makes our happiness not a little the sweeter, to know that we were miserable, to know that others are and must be miserable. We shall know them; not feel them: take heed, that you clearly distinguish, betwixt speculation and experience: we are then far out of the reach of evils: we may see them, to comfort us; not to affect us. Who doubts, that these eyes shall see and know the Glorious Manhood of our Blessed Saviour, advanced above all the powers of heaven? and if one body, why not more? and if our Elder Brother, why no more of our spiritual fraternity? Yea, if the twelve thrones of those judges of Israel shall be conspicuous; how shall we not acknowledge them? And if these, who shall restrain us from more? You will easily grant, that our love can never fail: faith and hope give place to sight, to present fruition; for these are of things not seen: but love is perpetual; not of God only, but his Saints: for nothing ceases, but our earthly parts; nothing, but what savours of corruption: Christian love is a grace; and may well challenge a place in heaven: and what love is there, of what we know not? More plainly, If the three disciples in Tabor knew Moses and Elias, how much more shall we know them in God's Sion! Lastly, for it is a letter not a volume that I intended in this not necessary but likely discourse, that famous Parable can tell you, that those, which are in hell, may know singular and several persons, though distant in place: the rich Glutton knows Lazarus and Abraham. I hear what you say: "It is but a Parable:" neither will I press you with the contrary authority of Ambrose, Tertullian, Gregory, Jerome, or any Father; nor with that universal rule of Chrysostom, That those only are parables, where examples are expressed, and names concealed: I yield it; yet all holy parables have their truths, at least their possibilities: deny this, and you disable their use, wrong their Author: our Saviour never said ought was done, that cannot be; and shall then the damned retain ought, which the glorified lose? No man ever held that the soul was advantaged by torment. Comfort you, therefore, in this; you shall know, and be known.

But far be from hence all carnal and earthly thoughts; as if your affections should be, as below, doubled to your wife or child: nature hath no place in glory: here is no respect of blood; none, of marriage: this grosser acquaintance and plea, sure is for the Paradise of Turks, not the Heaven of Christians: here is, as no marriage, save betwixt the Lamb and his Spouse, the Church; so, no matrimonial affections: you shall rejoice in your glorified child; not as your child, but as glorified. In brief, let us so enquire of our company, that, above all things, we strive to be there ourselves; where, we are sure, if we have not what we imagined, we shall have more than we could imagine.

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**Samuel Drew (1765-1833) British Wesleyan Theologian**

**Different Degrees Of Lustre With Which Heavenly Bodies Appear, Afford Strong Presumption That They Are Specifically Unlike Each Other In Their Internal Constitutions, As In Their Magnitudes & Distances From One Another**  
**Essay on the Identity and General Resurrection of the Human Body**

We know not with any precision, how far quantity is included in our idea of body; nor can we determine how far sensible qualities may be removed, while the essence remains entire. Of these variations St. Paul tells us, That all flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of man, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial, (verses the thirty-ninth and fortieth).

Of eternal things we can have no conception but by comparison; and that which the apostle has made use of, is sufficiently satisfactory to assure us, that body may remain after many astonishing changes have passed upon it, of which in our present condition we can probably have no conception. That there is a specific difference in the flesh of animals, we cannot doubt. The flesh of snakes is totally distinct from that of men; and yet we are fully assured, that the denominating qualities still remain. In what the real difference actually consists, between these two species of animal substances, I take not upon me to determine; but I learn from the comparison this important lesson, that what changes soever our bodies may undergo, body, in all its essential properties, will still continue. And though they may be so far changed, from what they at present are, as the flesh of snakes is different from the flesh of men; so much so, that flesh and Hood, which cannot inherit the kingdom of God, shall be done away, yet that the human body will remain. We see in the comparison, that variations in the constitution are consistent with sameness of nature; and that the bodies which we have, will still be bodies, whether we consider them as terrestrial or celestial.

From contemplating those animal substances, which are specifically different, and yet essentially the same; the apostle proceeds in his comparison by an appeal to the masses of the universe, and the distinct sphere of glory which they exhibit. After having said, that there are bodies celestial, and bodies terrestrial, he observes, but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead (verses the fortieth and forty-second).

The different degrees of lustre, with which these heavenly bodies appear, afford strong presumption that they are specifically unlike each other in their internal constitutions, as in their magnitudes and distances from one another; some of them are luminous, some of them are opaque; and even those of the solar system, from their differences in their approximation to their common centre, demonstrate that their densities must be various, and that their constitutions must be unlike. Of the fixed stars we know but little; but, since variety is found in all those works of God which we have any opportunity of contemplating, it is unreasonable to suppose that variety is exclusively confined to the sphere which we inhabit. The productions of distant worlds may be as different from those with which we are acquainted, as the embryo in the womb is from the man in a state of maturity; or as the man in a state of maturity is from man in a future state.

The nature and constitution of the sun must be as distinct from the nature and constitution of those revolving bodies, which he invigorates and warms, as water is from marble; or as the air we breathe is from the ground on which we tread. The distinctions, which we contemplate, are not founded upon hypothetical possibility, but in many cases they are in actual existence. They differ from one another, in constitution and manner of existence; and serve to shew us what an infinite variety of forms omnipotent power is able to produce out of the same materials; or at least out of materials which only differ in sensible qualities from one another, while they are ultimately resolvable into one common essence.

Whatever differences may be presumed to exist between these heavenly bodies, either in situation, in magnitude, in density, in constitution, or in lustre; it must not be forgotten that in point of essence they are still the same. They claim their origin in the same common substance; they still sustain the general

appellation of bodies, though some of them are more exalted than others; and though the glory which they emit is different in radiance, as well as differently diffused.

So also is the resurrection of the dead. The same body is capable of undergoing changes, equally surprising, with those variations which we have been contemplating in the bodies of the universe. The ductility of matter, when acted upon by omnipotent power, is so great, that the substance can bend to every thing which its essence does not preclude. And, whether we view it in the distinct species of fish, in bodies celestial, or in bodies terrestrial; we learn from each subject, to lessen our astonishment at those changes through which our bodies have to pass.

St. Paul having prepared us for the great event, by the enumeration of those facts to which he has appealed; proceeds to mark out the specific difference between those bodies which we now have, and those which we must have hereafter. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption 'it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body (verses the forty-second and forty-fourth).

Through the preceding illustrative comparisons, which St. Paul had introduced, and the masterly application which he has made, we discover, so far as the scantiness of our ideas and the limitation of our capacities will afford, the important changes which await our bodies beyond the grave. The process of vegetation is still in view; and a state of dissolution seems to be that great alembic, through which our present bodies are to be refined, in order to that perfection which lies in a future state. To ask why these things are not more clearly revealed, is only to ask why God has not given to us those refined capacities, which are inapplicable to our condition; and which, if actually bestowed upon us, would make us no longer man. To comprehend, with minute exactness, the subject before us, and to form conceptions which are at once accurate and appropriate, may be reserved for us in that state, which will shortly be our portion, when mortality shall be swallowed up in life.

That our bodies are sown in corruption, is a fact so evident, that it requires no comment. And we may naturally conclude, from the expression of verse the forty-second, that the incorruption in which our bodies shall be raised, stands opposed to that corruption in which they are said to be sown. As therefore corruption implies decay, and so total separation of those parts which appear, when deposited in the earth; & we may naturally conceive that incorruption implies an exemption from that dissolution and decay, which are inseparable from all compounded bodies in our present state of existence. And, as a separation of all the component parts of our bodies, implies either a previous tendency in the parts themselves, or a certain power in some external cause, which communicates its impulses to produce these effects; so we may naturally infer, either that this internal tendency shall be totally removed, or that the body which shall be raised, will be placed beyond the influence of that power through which a separation of the parts was wrought.

That the body shall be placed beyond the influence of those external causes, which now impel it, has been proved in section the sixth, of the sixth chapter. And, as our future bodies must be material, and as matter in itself can have no tendencies when placed beyond the reach of all external causes either to motion or rest; no given particle, which shall then be placed in our bodies, shall ever remove from its station. And therefore the body, though composed of separable parts, shall be raised and preserved in a state of incorruption.

On these accounts we may easily conceive, how this body, which is sown in dishonour, shall be raised in glory; and why, though sown in weakness it shall be raised in power. Its state of incorruption is a state of glory, to the bodies of the righteous; and perpetuity of life, implies vigour and power, which never can decay. A removal from the influence of all external causes, must place the particles, of which our bodies shall be composed, beyond the reach of all constraint; and even give to each of them the power to adhere for ever. Thus weakness shall be exchanged for power, and dishonour for glory; when this corruptible, shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality.

That there is a natural body, and that there is a spiritual body, we are expressly told in verse the forty-fourth; but in what they shall specifically differ from each other, it is difficult to know. Of a spiritual body, in its strictest sense, we can certainly form no accurate, no consistent idea. The two words seem inapplicable to each other, and naturally introduce confusion into our thoughts: I am therefore inclined to imagine, that the expression is not to be taken in an absolute, but only in a comparative sense.

That matter can never become spirit, any more than spirit can become matter, will admit of no question; because according to those notions which we have of these substances, essences can never be exchanged with each other, any more than identity can be supposed to be transferred from one substance to another. A removal of the essence must be a destruction of the being; and a destruction of the being must inevitably prevent an exchange of nature. In fine, to suppose that matter can become spirit, or that spirit can become matter, its original nature still remaining, is an evident contradiction, and therefore never can be admitted.

But, though the supposition that matter can become spirit, and that spirit can become matter, involves an evident contradiction; it is not to be presumed, that we have any real knowledge of the internal essence of either. Many latent qualities may be concealed in both substances, which may unfold themselves in eternity, and point out an approximation to each other, in their sensible qualities, of which at present we can have no conception. And perhaps through those latent qualities, which have hitherto eluded the researches of philosophy, their nominal affinity may be so great, as to leave no distant qualities for finite discrimination.

Whether the nominal essences of substances can be so far changed, as to have no specific quality, through which we shall be able to distinguish the distinct identity of these substances, is a question which we feel ourselves incompetent to decide. It is, however, not improbable, that something analogous thereto will be the case. For, since we sow not that body which shall be, the change must be amazingly great; not only in the modification of its being, but also in its component parts. And therefore, when the resurrection of the body shall take place, all the known properties of matter may retire from our future perceptions, which without doubt, will be considerably changed, and become as invisible and unknown, as those latent properties now are, which are included in both matter and spirit.

The changes, which our organs and powers of perception must undergo, will without doubt considerably contribute towards the concealment of those sensible qualities, which, I have presumed, will undergo a change. If then our modes of perception shall be changed; if our bodily organs shall be changed; if our bodies themselves shall be changed, as well as all external objects, who can say what effects may not be produced by Sensible qualities, without all doubt, will vary; and a variation of sensible qualities in matter, in its approaches towards perfection, must increase its affinity towards spirit, and conduct it to those exalted regions, in which our contemplations are lost.

But, notwithstanding those important changes which our bodies shall undergo; they will without doubt be chiefly confined to those sensible qualities through which the identity of matter is at present known. Amidst these changes of our bodies, the real essence must be preserved entire; because our bodies will remain the same. The qualities may be changed, through the causes which have been mentioned, without affecting the essence of matter, whatever it may be; its refinement may render it so subtle, that to touch it will be difficult, and it may, though material, approximate to spirit.

The germ of future life, which we have already considered, dilated in all its parts, and diffused through those spaces which now bound the extremities of our corporeal being, may contain all the matter which shall survive the grave. If this be admitted, its expansion must make it subtle; and it is not improbable that, with an eye to this, St. Paul denominated that collection of matter which shall adhere to our souls hereafter, a spiritual body, to which it must in this case approach, through the mere exility of its nature.

In this view, the expression becomes at once intelligible and sublime. The boldness of the figure obtains sanction, from the subject to which it is applied; and perhaps the whole compass of language will scarcely

have afforded an expression, so concise, so appropriate to the subject, and so sublime. We may therefore conclude with safety, that those bodies which shall be raised from the dust of death, whatever may be the internal constitution of their natures, or the whole mass of component parts; will be purged from those gross materials which now incorporate with their purer essence. And we may also learn from the language of St. Paul, that through those refinements which shall take place, the infinite distances which now lie between matter and spirit, will be so far overcome as the nature of their distinct essences will admit; and that matter shall be so far changed from its present condition, as to sustain a new appellation.

The view, which St. Paul appears to have taken, seems to have been this. He places our bodies in their present condition, at an inconceivable distance from spirit; and considers our future bodies as formed of refined materials, and standing between these vast extremes. In tracing their resemblance, from their sensible qualities, they evidently appeared to lie at a greater distance from what they are at present, than from pure spirit with which they were compared. And, in consequence of that resemblance, he selected his language, and denominated them spiritual bodies.

From fact, the apostle proceeds to order; and, after having pointed out the changes which shall take place, he states the progress of their accomplishment in the following words. Howbeit, that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual, (verse the forty sixth).

We learn from this passage, that the stages through which we pass are all progressive, from the commencement of being to the final consummation of that perfection which our bodies shall attain, when they shall for ever quit mortality, and become comparatively spiritual in their natures. Every stage therefore seems necessary in the grand movement of the whole: they are so many links in the chain of individual being, at once dependent and connective, and necessary in their several stations to the final result of all. The seminal parts are necessary to the embryo; the embryo to the perfect body; and the body to that material perfection, which shall be attained in another life. The manner of existence seems as necessary, as the condition in which it must appear in each of the intermediate stages. Life commences with the organic and vegetative mode; vegetative life soon loses itself in that which is animal; animal life subsides at the hour of death, and gives place to that life in which we shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but in which we shall be as the angels of God. Thus, virtual existence shall issue in that which is formal; formal existence shall commence with an animal body; and finally issue in that body which St. Paul has denominated spiritual.

Nor can we conceive, that either of these stages or modes of existence can be suspended or changed. The progress is established by laws, which are immutable; and the order cannot be inverted. The parts in this progressive arrangement, are not only necessary in themselves to the perfection of being; but are essentially necessary in that particular station in which they are fixed. The establishment is fixed by the laws, which regulate and govern nature; and these laws must be repealed, before we can suppose the order of this process to be inverted. That, therefore, is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

To this general principle, there seems, however, to be one remarkable exception, which is introduced in verse the fifty-first. Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump.

That the exception to the general principle here spoken of, is an exemption from death, is evident, from the period to which the passage alludes; it is at the last trump. And, though the apostle introduces the first person in the plural number; yet we cannot suppose that as an individual he had any intention to include himself in the number of those, who should be exempted from the stroke of death. When, therefore, he says we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, he must be supposed to allude to the body of Christians at last, in all ages of the world; or perhaps to the human race, whom he considers to be one family; and the exception must in that, or any view, apply to those who should be alive in the latest ages of the world, "when the swarm shall issue, and the hive shall burn."

But, though this remarkable exception shall take place, through which the last generation of the human race shall be exempted from the stroke of death, yet the change itself, which death produces, will not be dispensed with. For, though all shall not sleep, yet all shall be changed. The change seems absolutely necessary, by what means soever it may be produced, to the production of that spiritual body, which we have already considered. The change therefore, through which these last individuals of mankind may pass, must be, in its nature, equivalent to that which death, by a much slower and more gradual process, shall produce upon the great mass of the human race. It is a change, through which mortality shall be put off: and through which that extraneous matter, which) shall be. incorporated with those radical parts which, are destined for eternity, shall be thrown aside; that the germ or radical parts, separated from the rest, may be renewed in immortal vigour, to begin a mode of being which shall never end.

That this important change is in itself progressive, according to the general principle, it is natural to conceive both from reason and revelation; and the inequalities of those periods, during which the body shall repose in the grave, we have endeavoured to account for, in the third section of the fifth chapter. In that section, I have considered that no given period of duration is absolutely necessary for our continuance in the grave. The periods will be as various as the individuals; and yet the bodies of all will be as ready to quit their gloomy mansion, as soon as the trumpet shall utter its awful sound.

That these sentiments are congenial with those of St. Paul, is evident from verse fifty-first, which we now have under consideration. But inequalities of time do not bound the apostle's views. He proceeds farther, and tells us, that though all shall be changed, all shall not taste of death. It is true, he views it as an astonishing circumstance; and ushers it into view as a deviation from general principles, which we cannot easily comprehend. He tells us that it is a mystery, and as such it evidently appears. At the same time, it is a mystery that he has shewed us in point of fact, though the circumstances of its accomplishment be perfectly concealed. We see, with sufficient plainness that it must be so; but what the nature of that process may be, is not clearly revealed.

Of this, however, we are assured, that the change shall be instantaneous, instead of progressive; and perhaps one short moment will accomplish that work, which on some human bodies had been in a state of progression, for more than five thousand years. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, it shall be effected; and the change, which death administers through the medium of corruption, shall be accomplished without his aid.

With an eye to the process of nature, this point has been already considered, in the sixth section of the sixth chapter. The length of that period through which these bodies had passed, or in which they had lain in a seminal state, precluded a length of time in their final stage. But, philosophy could only assure us, that this stage must necessarily be short. The change which appeared absolutely necessary, required a period of duration, in order to its completion; and as nothing but the common process appeared necessary to its completion, philosophy directed our attention to the grave. St. Paul, however, instructed in a better school, has penetrated the cloud which hovered over our researches, and told us in a few words how the mighty work shall be performed. He has revealed to us that secret, which God had revealed to him; and told us that important mystery which must otherwise have been concealed. It is therefore from him we learn, that we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed, (verse the fifty-second).

Hence then we learn from the verse last quoted, that in one awful moment, the sound of the trumpet, the change of the living, and the resurrection of the dead to a state of incorruptibility, shall take place. Human nature must then undergo its final renovation, and enter upon the commencement of that state of existence, which shall know nothing either of intermission, of change, or of termination. Of those bodies, which had mouldered in the grave, and passed through the process of corruption; and those which had sustained the

changes which supplanted death, no difference will probably hereafter remain. In both cases, mortality is swallowed up of life; and every vestige of corruption is done away. No distinction can therefore remain between those bodies, which are totally delivered from its influence; and those which are exempted from it by passing through a mysterious change. In both cases, the germ of the future body must be preserved from destruction; and whether it collect around it any new particles or not, it will, without all doubt, put forth those latent powers which now are in an embryo state; while it will be dilated through all its parts, and be assimilated to that mode of existence, which spiritual substances enjoy.

But, amidst these changes which our bodies will sustain, there is one of peculiar import, which St. Paul has noticed in verse the fiftieth, in these words, Now this I say unto you, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

We have, perhaps, included in this expression, the most astonishing alteration in the human body, that we can possibly conceive. It includes a change, which removes those parts that are necessary to our present state of existence; and concurs to place our bodies in that astonishing light, which the preceding paragraphs have been written to elucidate and confirm.

That the dead shall be raised incorruptible, is the plain language of the fifty-second verse; and it is evident that this verse must refer to the body; because nothing can be raised but that which had been previously sown; and that which had been sown could include nothing but the material part. If then the body shall rise again, and those of the righteous shall enter into the joy of their Lord; and if flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; the consequence is inevitable, that flesh and blood conform no part of those bodies which shall survive the grave.

Of those human bodies, which shall be destitute of flesh and blood, we can form no adequate idea. The bones, were they to remain, would not be a human body; they would form but an unpleasant spectacle; and carry with them evident marks of mortality, if they were endued with life.

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor corruption inherit incorruption.

**1820 Publication (Edinburgh, Scotland)**

**Hugh Blair (1718 – 1800), Scottish Theologian**

**Sermon X - On The Immortality Of The Soul, and A Future State**  
**Sermons**

**2 Corinthians, v. 1.**

For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

This passage presents to us in one view, the nature of our present earthly state, and the future object of the Christian's hope. The style is figurative; but the figures employed are both obvious and expressive. The body is represented as a house inhabited by the soul, or the thinking part of man. But it is an earthly house, a tabernacle, erected only for passing accommodation, and to be dissolved; to which is to succeed the future dwelling of the just in a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Here, then, are three great objects presented to our consideration. First, The nature of our present condition. Secondly, That succeeding state which is the object of good men's hope. Thirdly, The certain foundation of their hope; we know, that if our earthly house be dissolved, we have a building of God.

The text gives a full description of our present embodied state; as an earthly house, an earthly house of this tabernacle, and a tabernacle which is to be dissolved.



We dwell in an earthly house. Within this cottage of earth, is lodged that spiritual, immortal substance, into which God breathed the breath of life. So we are elsewhere said in Scripture, to have our foundation in the dust and to dwell in houses of clay. During its continuance in this humble abode, the soul may be justly considered as confined and imprisoned. It is restrained from the full exertion of its powers by many obstructions. It can perceive and act only by very imperfect organs. It looks abroad, as through the windows of the senses; and beholds truth as—through a glass darkly. It is beset with a numerous train of temptations to evil, which arise from bodily appetites. It is obliged to sympathize with the body in its wants; and is depressed with infirmities not its own. For it suffers from the frailty of those materials, of which its earthly house is compacted. It languishes and droops, along with the body; is wounded by its pains; and the slightest discomposure of bodily organs is sufficient to derange some of the highest operations of the soul.

All these circumstances bear the marks of a fallen and degraded state of human nature. The mansion in which the soul is lodged, corresponds so little with the powers and capacities of a rational immortal spirit, as gives us reason to think that the souls of good men were not designed to remain always thus confined. Such a state was calculated for answering the ends proposed by our condition of trial and probation in this life; but was not intended to be lasting and final. Accordingly, the Apostle, in his description, calls it the earthly house of this tabernacle; alluding to a wayfaring or sojourning state, where tabernacles or tents are occasionally erected for the accommodation of passengers. The same metaphor is here made use of, which is employed in several other passages of Scripture, where we are said to be strangers and sojourners on earth before God, as were all our fathers. This earth may be compared to a wide field spread with tents, where troops of pilgrims appear in succession, and pass away. They enter for a little into the tents prepared for them; and remain there to undergo their appointed probation. When that is finished, their tents are taken down, and they retire to make way for others, who come forward in their allotted order. Thus one generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; and the earthly house is to all no other than the house of their pilgrimage.

The earthly house of this tabernacle, the Apostle, proceeding in his description, tells us, is to be dissolved. Close as the union between the soul and body now appears to be, it is no more than a temporary union. It subsists only during the continuance of a tabernacle of dust, which, by its nature, is tending towards ruin. The dust must soon return to the dust, and the spirit to God who gave it. The dissolution of the earthly house of this tabernacle, is an event full of dismay to wicked men. Beyond that period, they see nothing but a dark unknown, which, as far as they can discern, is peopled with objects full of terror; even to the just, this dissolution is a serious and awful event. Providence has wisely appointed that, burdened as our present state is with various ills and frailties, we should, however, be naturally attached to it. Its final close is always attended with several melancholy ideas. Thou who now flourishest most in health and strength, must then have thy head laid low. From thy closing eyes, the light of the sun shall disappear for ever. That light shall continue to shine, the seasons to return, and the earth to flourish; but to thee no more, separated from the dwellings of men, and cut off from all thou wert accustomed to love, as though thou hadst never been—Such is the fate of man, considered merely as mortal; as dwelling in an earthly house which is about to be dissolved. The consolatory corrective of those humbling ideas, the ray that is to dissipate this gloom, we behold in the subsequent part of the text; that when this earthly house is dissolved, there is prepared for the righteous a building of God, an house not made with hands. But before proceeding to this part of the subject, let us pause for a little, and make some reflections on what has been already said.

Let the distinction between the soul and the body, which is so clearly marked in the text, be deeply imprinted on our minds. Few things in religion or morals are entitled to make a stronger impression than this distinction; and yet, with the bulk of men the impression it makes appears to be slight. They seem to think and act as if they consisted of no more than mere flesh and blood, and had no other concerns than what respect their embodied state. If their health be firm, if their senses be gratified, and their appetites indulged, all is well with them. Is not this to forget that the body is no more than an earthly house or tabernacle of the soul? The soul, that thinking part which they feel within them, and which it is impossible for them to confound with their flesh or their bones, is certainly far nobler than the tenement of clay which it inhabits.

The soul is the principle of all life, and knowledge, and action. The body is no more than its instrument or organ; and as much nobler as is the part which belongs to him who employs an instrument, than to the instrument which is employed, so much is the soul of greater dignity than the body. The one is only a frail and perishable machine; the other survives its ruin, and lives for ever.— During the time that the union continues between those two very different parts of our frame, I by no means say that it is incumbent upon us to disregard all that relates to the body. It is not possible, nor, though it were possible, would it be requisite or fit, for a man to act as if he were pure immaterial spirit. This is what the condition and laws of our nature permit not—But must not the greatest sensualist admit, that if the soul be the chief part of man, it must have interests of its own, which require to be carefully attended to? Can he imagine that he truly consults either his interest or his pleasure, if he employs the thinking part of his nature only to serve, and to minister to the bodily part? Must not this infer, not merely a degradation of the superior part, but an entire perversion of that whole constitution of nature which our Maker hath given us? Be assured, my brethren, that the soul hath a health and a sickness, hath pleasures and pains of its own, quite distinct from those of the body, and which have a powerful influence on the happiness or misery of man. He who pays no attention to these, and neglects all care of preserving the health and soundness of his soul, is not only preparing final misery for himself, when he shall enter into a disembodied estate, but is laying, even for his present state, the foundation of many a bitter distress. By folly and guilt he is wounding his spirit. Its wounds will often bleed when his body appears sound, and will give rise to inward pangs, which no animal comforts shall be able to assuage or heal.

When we impress our minds with a sense of this important distinction between the body and the soul, let us not forget, that closely united as they now are in our frame, their union is soon to terminate. The earthly house of this tabernacle is to be dissolved; but the soul which inhabits it remains. Let us therefore dwell in our earthly house with the sentiments of those who know they are about to dislodge. The endowments and improvements of the soul are the only possessions on which we can reckon as continuing to be our own. On every possession which belongs to our bodily estate, we ought to view this inscription as written by God: "This is an earthly house, which is tottering to its fall; This is a tabernacle which "is about to be taken down." Let us with pleasure turn our thoughts towards those higher prospects that are set before us, when this change shall have taken place in the human condition; which naturally brings us to the Head of Discourse—the great object of the hope of good men in a succeeding state. The earthly house is contrasted by the Apostle with a building of God; an house not made with hands: and the tabernacle which is to be dissolved, with a house eternal in the heavens.

The expressions here employed to signify what is promised to the righteous, a building of God, an house not made with hands, are expressions of a mysterious import. They suggest to us things which we cannot now conceive, far less describe. Into that house which is above, those habitations of eternity, no living man has entered, to explore them, and to report to us tidings of what he there beheld. A sacred veil conceals the mansions of glory. But, in general, these expressions of the Text plainly import that the spirits of good men shall, upon death, be translated from an imperfect to a glorious state. Whether we explain the building of God, the house not made with hands, to signify the incorruptible bodies which the just shall animate at the resurrection, or the habitations of celestial glory into which they enter, they are terms which convey ideas of high magnificence and felicity. This earth on which we dwell, is no more than an exterior region of the great kingdom of God. It is but an entrance, through which, after suitable preparation, we pass into the palace of an Almighty Sovereign. Admitted there, we may hope to behold far greater objects than we now can behold; and to enjoy in perfection those pleasures which we here view from afar, and pursue in vain. Such degrees of pleasure are allowed us at present as our state admits. But a state of trial required that pains should be intermixed with our pleasures, and that infirmity and distress should often be felt. The remains of our fall appear every where in our condition. The ruins of human nature present themselves on all hands. But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. With the fall of the earthly house, all its rotten and corruptible materials shall disappear. It is sown in corruption, says the Apostle, speaking of the happy change made upon good men at the resurrection; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural, it is raised a spiritual

body:— for this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality. Into that house not made with hands, that building of God, we have every reason to believe that there will be no room for such guests to intrude as care or sorrow. Nothing can be admitted to enter there, but what contributes to the full city of those whom the Almighty hath allowed to dwell in his presence, and to behold his face in righteousness.

Besides the glory and perfection of this future state, the text suggests its permanency. This house not made with hands, is a house eternal in the heavens. The tabernacle which we now inhabit, is every moment liable to fall: above, is the fixed mansion, the seat of perpetual rest. Beyond doubt, the certain prospect of death renders every thing inconsiderable which we here possess. Every enjoyment is saddened, when we think of its end approaching. We become sensible that we are always building on sand, never on a rock. Fluctuation and change characterise all that is around us; and at the moment when our attachment to any persons or objects is become the strongest, they are beginning to slide away from our hold. But in the mansions above, alteration and decay are unknown. Every thing there continues in a steady course. No schemes are there begun, and left unfinished; no pleasing connections just formed, and then broken off. The treasures possessed there shall never be diminished; the friends we enjoy there shall never die, and leave us to mourn. In those celestial regions, shines the sun that never sets; the calm reigns, which is never disturbed; the river of life flows with a stream which is always unruffled in its course.

Such are the prospects, imperfectly as we can now conceive them, which are set forth to good men in a future world. But how, it may be asked, shall we be satisfied that such prospects are not mere illusions with which our fancy flatters us. Upon what foundation rests this mighty edifice of hope, which the Apostle here rears up, for the consolation of Christians, and of which he speaks so confidently as to say, We know that if our earthly house of the tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God—To inquire into this was the proposed head of Discourse, to which we now proceed. And as the subject is in itself so important, and so pleasing to all good men, I shall take a view of the different kinds of evidence, upon which our faith of a happy immortality is grounded.

We must observe, in the first place, that the dissolution of the earthly tabernacle at death, affords no ground for thinking that the soul at the same time perishes, or is extinguished. I begin with this observation, because the strongest prejudices against the soul's immortality, arise from what is sometimes found to happen at that period. The soul and the body are at present united by the closest sympathy. When one suffers, the other is affected. Both seem to grow up together to the maturity of their powers; and together both seem often to decay. Such a shock is apparently suffered by the soul at death, as at first view might lead us to suspect that it was sharing the same fate with the body. Notwithstanding this, there are clear proofs that the body and the soul, though at present closely connected by divine appointment with one another, are, however, substances of different and dissimilar natures. Matter, of which the body is composed, is a substance altogether dead and passive, and cannot be put in motion without some external impulse. Whereas the soul hath within itself a principle of motion, activity, and life. Between the laws of matter, and the action of thought, there is so little resemblance, or rather so much opposition, „that mankind in general have agreed in holding the soul to be an immaterial substance; that is, a substance the nature of which we cannot explain or define, farther than that it is a substance quite distinct from matter. This being once admitted, it clearly follows, that since thought depends not on matter, from the dissolution of the material part, we have no ground to infer the destruction of the thinking part of man. As long as, by the ordination of the Creator, these different substances remain united, there is no wonder that the one should suffer from the disorder and indisposition of the other.

It is so far from following that the soul must cease to act on the dissolution of the body, that it seems rather to follow, that it will then act in a more perfect manner. In its present habitation, it is plainly limited and confined in its operations. When it is let loose from that earthly house, it is brought forth into greater liberty. To illustrate this by an instance which may be conceived as analogous: let us suppose a person shut up in an apartment, where he saw light only through some small windows. If these windows were foul or dimmed, he would see less: if they were altogether darkened, he could see none at all. But were he let out from this

confinement into the open air, he would be so far from being deprived of sight, that though at first overpowered by a sudden glare, he would soon see around him much more completely than before. The senses are as so many windows or apertures, through which the soul at present exercises its powers of perception. If the senses are disordered, the powers of the soul will be obstructed. But once separated from its earthly tenement, the soul will then exercise its powers without obstruction; will act with greater liberty, and in a wider sphere. I admit this argument only goes as far as to show, that although the body perish, there remains with the soul a capacity for separate existence. Whether that existence shall be actually continued to it after death, must depend on the will of Him who gave it life, and who certainly at his pleasure can take that life away. It is necessary, therefore, to inquire into what we have any reason to believe, may be the intention of our Creator concerning a future life.

I argue then, in the next place, that if the soul were to perish when the body dies, the state of man would be altogether unsuitable to the wisdom and perfection of the Author of his being. Man would be the only creature that would seem to have been made in vain. All the other works of God are contrived to answer exactly the purposes for which they were made. They are either incapable of knowledge at all; or, they know nothing higher than the state in which they are placed. Their powers are perfectly suited and adjusted to their condition. But it is not so with man. He has every appearance of being framed for something higher and greater than what he here attains. He sees the narrow bounds within which he is here confined; knows and laments all the imperfections of his present state. His thirst for knowledge, his desire of happiness, all stretch beyond his earthly station. He searches in vain for adequate objects to gratify him. His nature is perpetually tending and aspiring towards the enjoyment of some more complete felicity than this world can afford. In the midst of all his searches and aspirations, he is suddenly cut off. He is but of yesterday, and to-morrow is gone. Often in the entrance, often in the bloom of life, when he had just begun to act his part, and to expand his powers, darkness is made to cover him.—Can we believe, that when this period is come, all is finally over with the best and the worthiest of mankind? Endowed with so noble an apparatus of rational powers, taught to form high views, and enlarged desires, were they brought forth for no other purpose, than to breathe this gross and impure air for a short space, and then to be cut off from all existence? All his other works, God hath made in weight, number, and measure; the hand of the Almighty artificer every where appears. But on man, his chief work here below, he would, upon this supposition, appear to have bestowed no attention; and after having erected a stately palace in this universe, framed with so much magnificence, and decorated with so much beauty, to have introduced man, in the guise of a neglected wanderer, to become its inhabitant.

Let us farther consider the confused and promiscuous distribution of good and evil in this life. The enjoyments of the world, such as they are, are far from being always bestowed on the virtuous and the worthy. On the contrary, the bitterest portion is often their lot. In the midst of infirmities, diseases, and sorrows, they are left to drag their life, while ease and affluence are allowed to the ungodly.—I must ask, if such an arrangement of things, owing to the ordination, or, at least, to the permission of Providence, be consonant to any ideas we can form of the wisdom and goodness of a Supreme Ruler, on the supposition of there being no future state?—. But, as soon as the immortality of the soul, and a state of future retribution are established, all difficulties vanish; the mystery is unravelled; supreme wisdom, justice, and goodness, are discovered to be only concealed for a little while behind the curtain. If that curtain were never to be withdrawn, and immortality never to appear, the ways of God would be utterly inexplicable to man. We would be obliged to conclude, that either a God did not exist; or, though he existed, that he was not possessed of such perfections as we now ascribe to him, if, when a worthy and pious man had spent his whole life in virtuous deeds, and perhaps had died a martyr to the cause of religion and truth; he should, after long and severe sufferings, perish finally, unrewarded and forgotten; no attention shown to him by the Almighty; no building of God erected for him; no house eternal prepared in the Heavens!

These reasonings are much strengthened by the belief that has ever prevailed among all mankind, of the soul's immortality. It is not an opinion that took its rise from the thin-spun speculations of some abstract philosophers. Never has any nation been discovered on the face of the earth so rude and barbarous, that, in the midst of their wildest superstitions, there was not cherished among them some expectations of a state

after death, in which the virtuous were to enjoy happiness. So universal a consent in this belief, affords just ground to ascribe it to some innate principle implanted by God in the human breast. Had it no foundation in truth, we must suppose that the Creator found it necessary, for the purposes of his government, to carry on a principle of universal deception among his rational subjects. Many of the strongest passions of our nature are made to have a clear reference to a future existence of the soul. The love of fame, the ardent concern which so often prevails about futurity, all allude to somewhat in which men suppose themselves to be personally concerned, after death. The consciences both of the good and the bad, bear witness to a world that is to come. Seldom do men leave this world without some fears or hopes respecting it; some secret anticipations and presages of what is hereafter to befall them.

But though the reasonings which have been adduced to prove the immortality of the soul and a future state, are certainly of great weight, yet reasonings still they are, and no more, and in every human reasoning, suspicions may arise of some fallacy or error. In a point so momentous to us, as our existence after death, we never could, with absolute certainty and full satisfaction, have rested on any evidence except what was confirmed by the declaration of God himself.—For many and high blessings we are indebted to the Christian revelation; for none more than for its having brought life and immortality to light. The revelations made by God to the world in early ages, gave the first openings to this great article of faith and hope. In future periods, the light dawned more and more; but it was not until the sun of righteousness arose by the appearance of Christ on earth, that the great discovery was completed. Then, indeed, were made known the city of the living God, the new Jerusalem above, the mansions prepared for the spirits of just men made perfect. Nor was a state of future felicity only proclaimed by Christ and his apostles to good men, but was represented as purchased for them by the death of the Redeemer. / give, he was authorised to say, unto my sheep eternal life. In my father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. Accordingly, he lay down in the grave; rose as the first fruits of them that slept; and ascending into Heaven, entered there within the vail, as the forerunner of his followers, to assure them of all being friendly and well-disposed towards them in those upper regions. All, therefore, who live and die in the faith and obedience of Jesus, are entitled to say with the Apostle, we know; not only we hope and we reason, but

We know, that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.

The first and most natural improvement of all that has been said, is to produce in our hearts the most lasting gratitude, love, and reverence, towards that great Benefactor of mankind, who not only hath made known and published the blessings of a future state to the righteous, but, by his great undertaking for their redemption, hath erected in their behalf the house eternal in the heavens. The next improvement we should make, is to conduct our own life and behaviour as becomes those who have an interest in this happiness and this hope. From such persons, assuredly, is to be expected a pure, correct, and dignified behaviour in every situation; not a contempt of the employments, nor a renunciation of all the comforts of their present life. Opinions that produce such effects are connected only with the spirit of superstition and false religion. But to them it belongs, in midst of the affairs, enticements, and temptations of the world, to regulate their conduct as becomes the heirs of a divine inheritance; never debasing themselves among what is mean, nor defiling themselves with what is corrupt in the present state; but serving God with that fidelity, and behaving to men with that steady magnanimity of virtue, that generous beneficence and humanity which suits immortal beings, who are aspiring to rise in a future state to the perfection of their nature, in the presence of God.

**1820**

**Editor: Samuel C. Loveland**

**Magazine Masthead: In my Father's house are many mansions.—Jesus  
The Christian Repository, (Universalist Journal published in Vermont)**

**Volumes 1-2 - Page 1**

## **Introduction**

In presenting my friends and the public this new periodical work, I deem it proper to state something of its object and design. The destitute situation of many societies in this and the adjoining States, require for their assistance, the most unremitting and best directed labors of those, whose lives, in the gospel ministry, are devoted to their service. Nothing, we believe, has a greater tendency to promote the general interest of mankind than friendly intercourse; and in no way can such intercourse be more advantageously supported, than by periodical publications. The different denominations of Christians among us, have clearly seen this, and generally availed themselves of its benefits. "The Herald of Life and Immortality" by brother Smith, and "The Universalist Magazine" by brother Ballou, are vehicles of much good information; but they cannot be made so easy of access to the brethren in this part of the country, as a publication among them. The usefulness (If those publications in the vicinity of Massachusetts, can afford no just argument against the existence of another in Vermont). The editor hopes none will have reason to complain that this work is not conducted with the moderation and candor that is suited to the dignity of the subjects it contains. He, however, wishes to have it understood, that he calculates this work on two general principles, to exclude every writer, who does not, in all points, agree with him. But each writer must consider himself Accountable to the public for the ideas which he advances. Communications from all denominations of Christians will receive a place, when the editor can have the privilege of assigning the real name of the author. But adverse sentiments to those of the editor will not be admitted to such a degree as to occupy a large portion of the Christian Repository. Its columns, according to what is promised in the title page, will be devoted, principally, to doctrine, morality, and religious intelligence, mostly original from the pen of the editor and others. Obitual notices, interesting anecdotes, and aphorisms will occasionally find a place. The selection will be the best that he can make from the authors that are and shall fall into his hands. Those pieces in the Christian Repository that have no signature, or where no credit is given, will be understood to be from the editor. His object, in the work, is to be governed by the language of inspiration. He calculates to avoid strife, and to disagree with none, but those whom, he thinks, disagree with the truth, and with themselves.

With these views, the editor has now only to add, that he solicits the patronage of his brethren, that this work, through the divine blessing of God, may be a mean of opening the eyes of the morally blind; giving strength to the feeble; fortitude to the doubtful and fearful; consolation to the sorrowful; that it may powerfully awaken from the slumber of sin, the careless and indifferent; and afford to all inquirers some useful lessons of instruction in heavenly and divine things.

## **Sermon, No. IV**

### **1 Cor. xiii. IS. And now abideth faith hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.**

In this short sermon the discussion is proposed with reference to these three important articles; faith, hope, and charity.

I. Faith, in its most common-acceptation, is, an assent of the mind to, things communicated. An evangelical faith embraces, besides the bare assent of the mind, the objects believed in, embraced in gospel promises, with ardent desire and strong affection. This is a faith that works by love, and purifies the heart. Those things which address or present themselves immediately to the senses, are not considered the proper subjects of faith, but those which we are called upon to receive, by the testimony of such persons as have, in this manner, received them. Hence, besides the natural operation of faith in the mind, it always must have two essential properties; namely, evidence and object. This must be true of faith, whether it be spurious or genuine. But while true faith, is founded on real evidence, a false one is supported only by that which is imaginary. This imaginary evidence, so long as it appears real, will naturally strike the mind with the force of real evidence. Therefore, because a thing is believed, it is not an argument of its truth; neither because it is disbelieved, is it a proof of its falsity. Where evidence appears with any considerable energy, it will force an assent of the mind, whether the things believed in, be desirable or undesirable. It is equally as true, on the other side of the question, that where evidence does not appear, or cannot be found, faith cannot exist. But it is not always the case, that when evidence forces an assent to a proposition, that the mind embraces that proposition with affection. In such case faith is dead, and without works, being alone.

Should a query arise, how unbelief could ever be accounted sin, on these principles, the answer appears from the consideration, that the sin of unbelief consists in the negligent or wilful ignorance of the evidence, presented to substantiate important and interesting facts. Those things we feel to oppose, we lay, many times, continue to discredit or disbelieve by excluding the evidence from our notice. And we may sometimes persuade ourselves of the truth of something desirable, by giving all possible weight to every species of evidence in favor, and totally excluding from our inquiries, every thing of an opposite nature. By such a mode of procedure, where testimony appears to favor both sides of a question, we may frequently adopt and believe that side we please; but whether we hit on the right or wrong, we always do it in violence to sound reasoning. This, in doubtful or disputable cases, gives full weight to the testimony on both sides, and decides according to the balance.

The strong biases of mind in favor of preconceived opinions, we have reason to believe, often mislead us in our conclusions in theology; and this is one principal cause of the many errors in the Christian church. The object of faith can never be dependent on faith for its existence. What the gospel preaches to us, therefore, must be as true without our faith, as with it. If Jesus never proclaimed "good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people," the strongest faith man could possess, would never make the proclamation of such tidings true. Some who hold the doctrine of particular election and reprobation, consider those who believe, elected, and those who disbelieve, reprobated. No idea could involve more confusion. The person that is an unbeliever is reprobated from all eternity; but should he be converted he is elected from all eternity! If he believe to day, he is one of the elect; if he fall into sin and unbelief to morrow, he is a reprobate; and both of these are the eternal decrees of God! But we know it cannot be true of one man, that he is elected to eternal life, or reprobated to endless misery, according as he believes or disbelieves. If the doctrine be true, he either must be elected or reprobated, independent of his faith. If he were elected when a sinner, he was elected when a sinner; and if reprobated when a sinner, he never could be elected. A decree from all eternity could not take place after man's creation, nor be determined by his moral actions.

Similar arguments may be used relative to God's love or hate mankind according as they believe in his love or hatred, it introduces a proposition that carries in itself evident marks of absurdity. If he love the believer and hate the unbeliever, the first believing that God loves him, the second believing that God hates him, how can the unbeliever's view be any more false than the believer's? And how can he be converted, seeing he holds the truth? And besides, how can a man be called an unbeliever when he believes the truth? But if God love the sinner, (as the scriptures expressly teach) and a man does not believe it, then he is an unbeliever. Because he holds not the truth.

II. Hope, like faith, always presupposes evidence, and embraces objects. Tho we are obliged to believe, when sufficient evidence is visible, altho the object be undesirable, we can never hope contrary to desire. There may likewise be a difference between hope and desire. A hope must always embrace a desire; but a desire does not always imply a hope. For the former must be founded on some degree of evidence; whereas the latter is only supported by the common energies of sensibility. The hope we have in Christ, being founded on the solemn promises of the living God, is "as an anchor of the soul," and amounts, on such strong testimony, to full assurance.

111. It is written, "the just shall live by faith," and "we are saved by hope," yet charity is greater than faith and hope. The modern acceptance of charity is the bestowment of alms; but it is commonly used in scripture to signify the principle, whence the fruits of benevolence proceed, rather than the fruits themselves. It has been noticed by many, that charity and love are anonymous terms, and are frequently made the translation of the same original. It was charity then in our heavenly Father that dictated the benevolent design of man's salvation. Through charity he sent his beloved Son, "not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." Charity in man is that ennobling principle which renders his character amiable, and clothes him with Christian graces.

The preeminence of charity, which the Apostle pronounces, over faith and hope, is seen in different ways. Charity is the more excellent in its nature; because, without it, the voice of the most celebrated orator would be but sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; and the most splendid donations, mere ostentation arid show. It is the greater, because it is an everlasting principle, whereas faith and hope are not. St. Paul calls Jesus "the author and finisher" of our faith. We see then his testimony, that faith had a beginning, and must have an end. Reason teaches us the same is true of hope. When we receive the things hoped for, hope is finished in fruition, and if our hope be false, it must end in disappointment. Then when terrestrial things are no more; when the faithful receive the crown of life; and when the hope which is as an anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast, receives its anticipations; then will charity live, and bless the happy inhabitants of celestial glory.

We may consider charity greater than faith and hope, because it is an attribute of the Deity, exclusive of the others. Faith in the sense of credence, cannot belong to him, who absolutely knows all things; nor can he that enjoys the fulness of heaven and earth hope for that which he does not possess; for all things are his.

**1821**

**Unnamed Letter to the Editor**

**Covenant That Assigns To Greater Degrees Of Grace Here, Greater Degrees Of Glory Hereafter**

**The Christian Remembrancer**

**Volume 3, p. 69 By William Scott, Francis Garden, James Bowling Mozley**

To the Editor of the Remembrancer.

Sir, The name of Mr. Sumner is so well and deservedly known by his several valuable publications, and his last Sermon on the "Encouragements of the Christian Minister," presents a view of these so interesting and instructive, that I feel very unwilling to find fault, where there is so much that deserves commendation and praise. The higher, however, a writer stands in the public estimation, the more important is it, that his errors, if errors, should be detected. In the Sermon above mentioned, there is the following passage: "The sinner, acknowledging his guilt, finds the necessity of applying to Him, who underwent the chastisement of our peace, and of being clothed in a righteousness which will bear the piercing scrutiny of Omniscience and of seeking that 'holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.' If Mr. S. means by this righteousness, the imputed righteousness of Christ, in which the sinner is hereafter to be clothed, I would beg to submit to his consideration, the following excellent passage from Bishop Bull's Sermon on the "Different Degrees of Bliss in Heaven." Vol. i. p. 180. 8vo. "They thus argue," says the Bishop (speaking of those who held a contrary opinion from himself on the subject,) "The future glory" See Phil. iii. 9. of the saints is the purchase of Christ's righteousness, which of the saints is the purchase of Christ's righteousness, which is alike imputed to all true believers, and they have an equal share therein, and consequently they shall share equally in the future glory." Answer: the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ, as it hath been too commonly taught and understood, hath been a fruitful mother of many pernicious and dangerous errors in divinity. In the objection, it is supposed, that the righteousness of Christ is so imputed to every believer, that it becomes formally his righteousness, and that upon the sole account thereof he hath a right to the future glory. And if this were true, if Christ's righteousness were thus HIS, that righteousness, being the most perfect righteousness, nothing less could answer it than the highest reward in heaven; and so indeed it would necessarily follow, that the future glory of all the saints should be alike and equal. But the supposition hath no foundation in Scripture, yea, it is plainly false. And that it is so, if we had no other argument, the very doctrine we are now upon, were sufficient to evince. We have proved, by very plain texts of Scripture, that there will be a disparity of rewards in the life to come, according to the disparity of men's graces and good works in this life; and from hence we may safely conclude, that the doctrine of those who teach that the perfect righteousness of Christ is formally the righteousness of every believer, and that thereupon he hath a right to the highest reward in heaven, is certainly false. Nay, indeed, if that doctrine of theirs were true, a consequence would follow, which cannot be uttered without trembling, that every saint shall be equal to



Christ in glory; Christ's righteousness being his, and so he having a right to whatsoever that righteousness deserved. "But answer more directly to the objection; there is nothing more certain, than that the future glory of the saints is the purchase of Christ righteousness.' But how? By the meritorious obedience of Christ in his life- and death, a covenant of grace, mercy, and life eternal was procured, ratified and established between God and the sinful sons of men; the condition of the covenant is 'faith working by love,' or faith fruitful of good works. And there is also sufficient grace promised to all that shall heartily seek it, for the performance of that condition. It is from the covenant of infinite mercy in Christ Jesus alone that our imperfect good works have any ordination to so excellent a reward as the future glory; and it is mercy, the rich mercy, the royal bounty and liberality of God expressed in the same covenant that assigns to greater degrees of grace here, greater degrees of glory hereafter. This is the plain truth." If, on the other hand, Mr. S. intends that Christian righteousness which all in its several degrees, according to the proportion of their faith, and the use of God's grace may attain unto; that righteousness springing out of a true and living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ which, albeit that it deserved not heaven, yet through the perfect righteousness, and atoning blood of Christ, that effectual seal of the covenant of grace, shall obtain heaven; or, in the excellent words of St. Paul, "make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;" I think his words are liable to misconstruction, and I could wish he had expressed himself more fully. I can easily conceive how our righteousness, imperfect as it is, may be freely accepted for Christ's sake by Infinite Mercy; but not how it ever can be so perfect, as to bear "the piercing scrutiny of Omniscience."

### **1822 Publication date**

**Henry Kollock (1778-1819): Pastor of Independent Presbyterian Church**

**Sermon 82: Degrees of Glory in Heaven**

**Sermons on Various Subjects**

(Published in 1822 in Savannah, Georgia)

### **Sermon 82: Degrees of Glory in Heaven**

1 COR. xv. 41, 42: One star differeth from another star in glory. So also, is the resurrection of the dead.

How pleasant and animating is it to the Christian, to turn his thoughts occasionally from the sins and follies, the misery and anguish, which are found in this world, and fix them upon that blessed state reserved for the pious, into which guilt or wo shall never enter! How cheering, to meditate on the high occupations and sublime joys of those who, "having washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," now shout hallelujahs to his praise! And are all these redeemed sinners perfectly equal in splendour and felicity? Are there no different degrees of glory in heaven? This is the single question which we propose to examine in the ensuing discourse, and to which we are naturally led by the words of the text. "One star differeth from another star in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead."

That there will be different degrees of glory among the redeemed, is a truth which is established alike by scripture and reason, and which, far from being a merely speculative point, must, when firmly believed, have a strong influence on our practice. Let us,

1. Explain and prove it.
2. Answer the objections which have been made against it, and,
3. Apply it for the regulation of our affections, and the conduct of our lives.

### **First:**

When we maintain that our future glory will differ in degree, according to our holiness in this world, we are far from embracing the proud opinion of the papists, that this felicity, and these degrees of glory, are at all

merited by our works. Even an innocent creature, much less a sinner, can merit nothing from the holy God. Our salvation must be, entirely of grace. But we say, that as the Lord has Displayed his abounding mercy and his love to holiness, by rewarding a short and imperfect obedience by an eternal and inconceivable glory, so it is accordant with these perfections, to confer higher degrees of this glory on those whose obedience has been more constant, and whose piety more ardent. We say, that while every temporal as well as celestial blessing flows from sovereign grace, through the blood of the cross, God has been pleased in his wisdom, to establish a certain chain and order in the distribution and the degree of his gifts; so that those who are most zealously engaged in his cause, and who do most for the Redeemer, shall wear a brighter crown, and be elevated to a higher glory than those who, though sincere, are more cold in their love, less engaged in his service.

While we maintain that there will be different degrees of glory, we allow that all will nevertheless be perfectly happy, and receive that degree of felicity which is commensurate with their faculties, and power of enjoyment; so that there shall be no grief, no envyings, no uneasy and distressing desires, in any who shall surround the throne of God, and of the Lamb.

While we maintain that there will be different degrees of glory, we also maintain that in many things their felicity will be common. It will be common in its object, the blessed God and adorable Redeemer; in its subject, all the powers of the glorified body and soul; in its duration, which will be eternal; in its security, since all the blest are sustained by the divine promise and faithfulness; in the full satisfaction of soul which all will possess.

After this explanation of the doctrine, let us confirm it. It is proved:

1. By all those passages of scripture which lay down, in general terms, the great rule of God's proceedings with the children of men. Thus says the apostle Paul, (2 Cor. v. 10.) "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (Rom. ii. 6.) God "will render to every one according to his works." In 2 Cor. ix. 6. in speaking of benevolence to poor Christians, he lays down a general maxim: "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that soweth liberally, shall reap also liberally." That he here refers to the rewards of the future world, is evident from the manner in which he uses the same figure in Gal. vi. 7—9. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Indeed, in most instances where this figure is used, our good or our bad actions are represented as the seed whence our future felicity or misery must spring. But if such be the general rule of God's conduct, if there will be a proportion between the future world and the present, there must be degrees of glory; there must be a higher station for the fervent and seraphic Christian, than for those who drag heavily along in the path to heaven, and are by their walk scarcely distinguishable from the men of the world..
2. We argue from the account which this same apostle gives of the different rewards which will be given to the ministers of the gospel. This remarkable and figurative description is found, I Cor. iii. 12 —15. He speaks of those preachers who preserve the only foundation which is laid, Christ Jesus; and he compares them to architects, who build upon this good foundation materials very different. The exhortations of some are like "gold, silver, or precious stones," and are calculated to animate, encourage, and cheer, those who hear them. Those of the others resemble "wood, hay, and stubble," and injure more than advance edification. In the awful day of scrutiny, when "every man's work shall be tried as with fire," the first of these classes, adds the apostle, "shall receive a reward," evidently implying, one proportioned to his faithfulness, zeal, and usefulness in the gospel. The others, "having their work burnt, shall suffer loss;" but having been founded on Jesus, the rock of ages; having preserved the essential truths of religion, notwithstanding the errors they may have taught through ignorance or mistake, they shall be saved, yet so as by fire; with a difficulty and danger resembling that of a person who escapes from his

dwelling in flames, and only preserves his life, while his house is consumed, and his goods destroyed. In this representation of the apostle, do we not perceive that there are persons who obtain salvation, and yet have not the recompense which the wiser administrators of the word receive? And are we not authorized to conclude, that there will be the same difference between those who are hearers, according to the manner they have profited by the instructions given to them?

3. Is not this truth taught in Dan. xii. 3.? The prophet, having spoken of the two great classes into which men shall be divided at the general resurrection, when "some shall wake to everlasting life, and some to everlasting contempt," then declares the difference that shall appear even among the pious; "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars, for ever and ever." As there is a difference between the general brilliancy of the firmament, and the lustre of the stars, so there shall be a difference between those ordinary Christians who obtain felicity, and those zealous persons who have been the instruments of the conversion of many sinners.
4. Read the parable of the pounds in Luke xix. Our Saviour appears there fully to have decided this point. Under the emblem of a nobleman going into a far country to receive a kingdom, and giving to his ten servants ten pounds, to trade therewith till his return; he represents himself ascending into heaven to assume his kingdom, and committing to his servants many gifts with which to profit for their own salvation, and that of their neighbour, till he should return to judgment. Though nine of them had been diligent, they had been so in different degrees: they were all magnificently rewarded; and "because they had been faithful over few things, were made rulers over many things;" yet their reward was different. While he whose pound had gained ten was appointed over ten cities; he who had gained five was placed over five only. What could more fully show that while all believers shall "enter into the joy of their Lord," shall be surrounded by happiness and glory, there shall yet be various degrees of this glory?
5. The apostle Paul treating of the resurrection says, 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." Though he here speaks only of the difference in the glorified body, yet the same causes which render it fit for God to cause the glorified bodies of the saints to differ in brilliancy and lustre, make it proper for him to give different degrees of glory to their whole persons.
6. In perusing the scriptures, we find the patriarchs, the prophets, and the apostles, uniformly represented as occupying a more conspicuous situation in glory than ordinary believers. Are the felicities of heaven represented as a feast? Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, there hold the most honourable station. Is it exhibited as a kingdom? The apostles are there to sit conspicuously upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matt. xviii. 1—19. 28. Luke xxii. 30. Numerous similar expressions are used concerning them; and if these are to differ from other believers, because of their zeal and fidelity, must not believers, differ from each other? If a Paul shall shine more resplendent than a Watts, shall a Watts only occupy the station of one in whom the pulse of spiritual life scarcely beats?"
7. It is doubted by none that there will be degrees of punishment in hell; that some will there suffer more excruciating torments than others. But if the wicked are more punished in proportion to their crimes, must we not suppose that the saints are more rewarded in proportion to their virtues?
8. Let us carry still further this reasoning from analogy. Look at nature; and in what an infinite variety of methods do you see the Creator displaying his perfections? Look at the operations of grace; you see that "there are diversities of gifts, though but one Spirit." Look at Christians; how various in their attainments, their knowledge, their holiness, and joy, though all beloved by God! Look at the heavenly host; though all holy and happy, there are various orders among them -archangels, and angels, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers. Should we not then suppose, that in analogy to the other works of God, there would be degrees of glory among the West?

9. Finally, the transactions of the judgment-day, and the nature of the future felicity confirm this truth. We learn from the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, that in the decisive day the Lord will with approbation publish the works of believers to the universe. Must not this approbation be various? Does not the sense and remembrance of it constitute one of the joys of heaven? Can the soul that has heard it from the Saviour whom he loves, ever forget it? One of the chief sources of heavenly felicity is the glorifying of God. But if his glory be dear to us, must we not be happier in proportion as we have glorified him here below? Can a Christian, that is "saved as by fire," have the same raptures of soul that are felt by Paul and his associates, to whom, as the instruments in the hand, is owing the introduction of Christianity in Europe; the ten thousand times ten thousand believers, who have in successive ages there flourished through the instrumentality of those taught by him and their descendants; and the disciples of Jesus in this new world, which received the light of the gospel from that quarter of the globe which was taught by the apostle?

**Second:**

Let us very briefly, in the Second place, consider the objections that have been made against this doctrine.

1. Perhaps the most plausible has been drawn from the parable of the labourers in Matt. xx. 1—15. You recollect that in that parable the householder sent labourers into his vineyard at different hours, all of whom, however, received at last the same recompense. But surely those who make this objection have never attended to the circumstances of the parable. How can the reward signify eternal life, since it is given to the murmurers and envious; to those who, in verse 14, are ordered to depart from their Lord; to those who were not satisfied with the portion given to them? The great scope and design of the parable are to repress the pride of the Jews, and show the propriety of the vocation of the Gentiles. It has no reference whatever to the future rewards of the pious.
2. "But," it has been said, "we are saved by grace, and not by works; our only title to glory is the purchase made by the atonement of the Redeemer. How, then, can our glory be proportioned to our works? Are not all believers, through the merits of Christ, alike justified and adopted, and must they not therefore be alike glorified?" My brethren, the Scripture is perfectly consistent with itself. It asserts the doctrines of grace, the only refuge of the perishing sinner. It asserts, also, the inequality of future glory. And do the blessings of God spring less from grace, because he has established a wise order in the distribution of them? We are called, justified, adopted, only through the merits of Christ; yet notwithstanding this, there are different degrees of holiness and comfort enjoyed by Christians upon earth; notwithstanding this, then, there may be different degrees of glory in the world which is to come. The objection is precisely as strong against a difference in sanctification, a fact which comes daily under our eyes, as against a difference in glorification.
3. "But," say the opposers of this doctrine, "as all the blessed are perfectly holy, they must all be perfectly and alike happy." The conclusion by no means follows. Are the angels alike elevated, because they are all perfectly holy? We know that there are distinctions among them. Would it not be almost blasphemy to say, that any creature was as happy as the blessed God, provided like him it could be perfectly holy? If two diamonds are of the same water and perfection, does it follow, that there may not be a difference in their weight and value?
4. "But they all derive their felicity from the same source, the beatific vision of God, and therefore their felicity must be equal." Though one of the chief constituents of hell is the deprivation of the vision of God, are therefore the punishments of the accursed equal? May we not view the same sun, and receive its rays differently? When vessels of different capacity cast into the same ocean, are filled by the same mass of waters, must the quantity they receive be alike?
5. "But the titles given to the redeemed are the same; they are all called kings, the sons of God, the spouse, the members of Christ." And are not these names given to believers, even while they are on earth? and,

notwithstanding, do we not see a great diversity among them? Are all kings equal in power? Have all sons the same inheritance? Is not the robe of the spouse more richly embroidered in some parts than in others? Have all members of the body equal honour?

These, my brethren, are the principal objections against this doctrine. Let us now proceed, in the Third and last place, to a practical improvement of it.

**Third:**

1. It addresses the young. There is not one of you, my young friends, who does not intend to turn unto the Lord before you leave this world? There is not one of you that has formed the mad and guilty resolution to renounce the joys of heaven, and embrace the agonies of hell. But you resolve at present to devote yourselves to the world, and hereafter to think of religion. Let us suppose (and how many improbabilities are included in the supposition!) that these intentions are realized; that, after living many years in sin, you are not like so many others, given up to judicial hardness; that, after long contemning the offers of grace, and grieving the Holy Spirit, you are not abandoned by him; that, in a dying world, you are preserved in life by that God against whom you are in rebellion; that you are not surprised, as so many thousands now in hell have been surprised, before their promised and purposed return to God was accomplished: suppose all this, though I repeat, how many improbabilities are included in the supposition — yet still what irreparable losses will you have sustained, what sacrifices will you have made during your years of folly and vice! Instead of preparing for a higher glory, for a nearer approach and assimilation to God, you will have employed yourselves in plucking the jewels from that crown which might have sparkled on your brow, in diminishing the elevation to which you might have attained. Trifle no longer with things of eternal consequence; but in youth begin to aspire after high degrees of glory, honour, and immortality.
2. Let this subject solemnly address all who delay their repentance. You cry, To-morrow, and tomorrow; and thus many of you will continue to cry, till your last sickness seizes you, till you are laid on the bed of death. Even if you then preserve your reason and are sensible of your danger, what answer will you be able to give to conscience, when it shall ask you, what preparations you have made for eternity, what graces you have acquired, what holy duties you have performed? Is it not to mock God, to sin now with boldness, from the hope of conversion in our last hours? Is it not to trifle and sport with his grace, to expect from it a harvest, when we have never sown? I mistake; you have sown, and you shall reap; you have sown to the flesh, and of the flesh shall reap corruption; you have sown iniquity, you shall reap torment; you have sown sin, you shall reap death. Insult not the sanctity of God's attributes, by supposing that, after a criminal life, you will enjoy the rewards promised to holiness. Even if, by a miracle of grace, you should then be converted, (and such miracles are indeed rare, inconceivably more rare, than is ordinarily supposed,) yet still, how much glory and felicity will you have lost, by neglecting, during so many years, to lay up treasures in heaven! Delay not then, I beseech you by your everlasting interests, defer not for a moment longer your return to your God and your Redeemer.
3. This subject teaches us the unspeakable value of time, and the necessity of employing it in good works. Look at life in itself; it is but a shadow. Look at it as connected with a future world; it becomes of unutterable importance. Every thing we do gives a complexion to our eternal state. Here we receive the stamp and impression that shall endure for ever. Shall we then spend our days in idleness, in folly, in sin? Shall we not diligently improve every passing moment? Shall we not continually be scattering that seed, from which so glorious a harvest will spring? Yes; whilst we are cultivating our graces, mortifying our corruptions, instructing the ignorant, comforting the afflicted, protecting the oppressed, relieving the poor, and performing other acts of piety or benevolence, from Christian principles, we are doing that of which we shall hereafter reap the fruit; we are, in a sense, giving stability to our flying, vanishing hours, by employing them for the augmentation of our eternal happiness. But forget not, that, to produce this effect, these actions must proceed from proper and Christian principles. If our labours are attended with

pharisaical pride; if we expect to merit heaven by our good deeds; if we are animated by a self-righteous spirit; we shall at the final day reap no harvest except that of shame and disappointment. But if, unfeignedly believing in Jesus, and renouncing our own righteousness, we perform these works from love to God, and gratitude to the Redeemer, we shall obtain so rich a recompense, as to display the immensity of divine grace, and the riches of divine goodness.

Let this subject, then, inspire us with a high and holy ambition. "Covet earnestly the best gifts," said the apostle; and in the spirit of his exhortation, we say to you, covet the highest places in heaven; aim to sit next to cherubim and seraphim; nay, if it were possible, strive to get in heaven the same place which John, the beloved disciple, held here on earth, to lean on the very bosom of Christ himself. By that increase of grace, which will proportionably increase glory; by continually exercising holiness, strive continually to adorn your crown, to irradiate your diadem of stars with a lustre that shall outshine the sun in its brightness; and to acquire much of that glory, the least measure of which is precious and inestimable.

And, with these high aims, mingle the deepest humility. Aspire to the greatest of God's blessings; but at the same time confess that you are unworthy of the least of them. Seek to shine like the seraphim in splendour and glory, and emulate them in deep prostration of soul, under a sense of your unworthiness before the holy God. Acknowledge, in the midst of your high anticipations, that it is only through the abounding grace of God, and the infinite merits of Jesus, that heaven has been opened for you, or for any of the children of men.

#### **1824 Publication date**

**John Angell James (1785-1859): British Congregational Minister and prolific author**  
**In Dwelling Upon Two States Of Heaven & Hell, We Are Not To Conceive Of Them As**  
**Conditions Of Being, Where All Persons In Former Will Be Equally Happy, & All In**  
**Latter Equally Miserable; Different Degrees Of Glory In One, & Different Degrees Of**  
**Torment In Other**  
**The Christian Father's Present to His Children**

Republished in 1827 in Boston

Surely, surely my children, an old age thus placid and venerable, is an object worthy of your desires; surely these peaceful recollections, these sublime prospects, amidst the dreariness of age, are deserving your exertions. Early piety will have a considerable influence on your eternal felicity.

In dwelling upon the two different and contrary states of heaven and hell, we are not to conceive of them as conditions of being, where all persons in the former will be equally happy, and all in the latter equally miserable. There are different degrees of glory in one, and different degrees of torment in the other. This is proved by scripture, and accords with reason. Grace is glory in the bud; glory is grace in a state of fructification; and as in the natural world, so it is in the spiritual one, where there is little blossom, there cannot be much fruit.

Life is the seedtime for eternity; what a man soweth, that shall he also reap, not only in kind, but degree. Late sowings, as well as scanty ones, are generally followed with short crops. The reward of the righteous is all of grace, but then that grace which rewards the righteous rather than the wicked, may, with equal consistency, reward righteousness according to its degrees. We cannot think that the reward of the dying thief, who was converted in the dark Valley of the shadow of death, will be equal to that of Timothy or of Paul, who spent a long and laborious life in the service of Christ. Nor is it to be imagined, that the crown of the aged convert will be as bright or as heavy, as that of the Christian who is converted in youth, and continues, into good old age, in a course of consistent piety.

**1826 Publication date in New York**  
**Adam Clarke (1760-1832) British Methodist Biblical Scholar and Theologian**  
**Many Mansions & Degrees of Glory in Resurrection**  
**Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Whole Bible**

**Notes on John Chapter 14**

**Verse 1. Let not your heart be troubled**

After having answered St. Peter's question, he addresses himself again to his disciples, and tells them not to be afflicted at his leaving them, nor to lose courage because of what he said concerning Peter's denying him; that if they reposed their confidence in God, he would protect them; and that, howsoever they might see him treated, they should believe in him more firmly, as his sufferings, death, and resurrection should be to them the most positive proof of his being the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

**Ye believe in God, believe also in me.**

It is best to read both the verbs in the imperative mood:-Place your confidence in God, and in me as the Mediator between God and man, John 14:12-14; and expect the utmost support from God; but expect it all through me. The disciples began to lose all hope of a secular kingdom, and were discouraged in consequence: Christ promises them a spiritual and heavenly inheritance, and thus lifts up their drooping hearts.

**Verse 2. In my Fathers house, Many mansions**

Though I have said before that whither I am going ye cannot come now, yet do not think that we shall be for ever separated. I am going to that state of glory where there is not only a place of supreme eminence for myself, but also places for all my disciples;-various degrees of glory, suited to the various capacities and attainments of my followers.

Our Lord alludes here to the temple, which was called the house of God, in the precincts of which there were a great number of chambers, 1 Kings 6:5;; Ezra 8:29;; Jeremiah 35:2,4;; 36:10.

**If not I would have told you.**

If your places were not prepared in the kingdom of God, I would not have permitted you to have indulged a vain hope concerning future blessedness.

**Verse 3. And if I go**

And when I shall have gone and prepared a place for you-opened the kingdom of an eternal glory for your reception, and for the reception of all that shall die in the faith, I will come again, after my resurrection, and give you the fullest assurances of this state of blessedness; and confirm you in the faith, by my grace and the effusion of my Spirit. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, and with great probability too, that there is an allusion here to Numbers 10:33: And the ark of the Lord went before them to search out a resting place for them.

**Comments on 1 Corinthians 15**

**Verse 40. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial**

The apostle certainly does not speak of celestial and terrestrial bodies in the sense in which we use those terms: we invariably mean by the former the sun, moon, planets, and stars; by the latter, masses of inanimate matter. But the apostle speaks of human beings, some of which were clothed with celestial, others with terrestrial bodies. It is very likely, therefore, that he means by the celestial bodies such as those refined human bodies with which Enoch, Elijah, and Christ himself, appear in the realms of glory: to which we may add the bodies of those saints which arose after our Lord's resurrection; and, after having appeared to many,

doubtless were taken up to paradise. By terrestrial bodies we may understand those in which the saints now live.

**But the glory of the celestial is one**

The glory—the excellence, beauty, and perfection. Even the present frail human body possesses an indescribable degree of contrivance, art, economy, order, beauty, and excellence; but the celestial body, that in which Christ now appears, and according to which ours shall be raised, (3:21,) will exceed the excellence of this beyond all comparison. A glory or splendour will belong to that which does not belong to this: here there is a glory of excellence; there, there will be a glory of light and effulgence; for the bodies of the saints shall shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. See Matthew 13:43.

**Verse 41. There is one glory of the sun**

As if he had said: This may be illustrated by the present appearance of the celestial bodies which belong to our system. The sun has a greater degree of splendour than the moon; the moon than the planets; and the planets than the stars. And even in the fixed stars, one has a greater degree of splendour than another, which may proceed either from their different magnitudes, or from the comparative proximity of some of them to our earth; but from which of these causes, or from what other cause unknown, we cannot tell, as it is impossible to ascertain the distance of any of the fixed stars; even the nearest of them being too remote to afford any sensible parallax, without which their distances cannot be measured. See the concluding observations.

**Verse 42. So also is the resurrection of the dead.**

That is, the bodies of the dead, though all immortal, shall possess different degrees of splendour and glory, according to the state of holiness in which their respective souls were found. The rabbins have some crude notions concerning different degrees of glory, which the righteous shall possess in the kingdom of heaven. They make out seven degrees:

- "The first of which is possessed by tsaddi kim, the just, who observe the covenant of the holy, blessed God, and subjugate all evil affections."
- "The second is possessed by those who are yesharim, the upright; whose delight it is to walk in the ways of God and please him."
- "The third is for temimim, the perfect: those who, with integrity, walk in the ways of God, and do not curiously pry into his dispensations."
- "The fourth is for kedoshim, the holy ones; those who are the excellent of the earth, in whom is all God's delight." Psalms 16:3."
- "The fifth is for baaley teshubah, the chief of the penitents; who have broken through the brazen doors, and returned to the Lord."
- "The sixth is for tinukoth shel beith raban, the scholars and tender ones; who have not transgressed."
- "The seventh is for chasidim, the godly: and this is the innermost of all the departments."

These seven degrees require a comment by themselves.

There is a saying among the rabbins very like that of the apostle in this and the preceding verse Siphri, in Yalcut Simeoni, page 2, fol. 10: "The faces of the righteous shall be, in the world to come, like suns, moons, the heaven, stars, lightnings: and like the lilies and candlesticks of the temple."



**It is sown in corruption**

The body is buried in a state of degradation, decay, and corruption. The apostle uses the word sown to intimate that the body shall rise again, as a seed springs up that has been sown in the earth.

**It is raised in incorruption**

Being no more subject to corruption, dissolution, and death.

**Verse 43. It is sown in dishonour**

Being now stripped of all the glory it had as a machine, fearfully and wonderfully made by the hands of God; and also consigned to death and destruction because of sin. This is the most dishonourable circumstance.

**It is raised in glory**

It is raised a glorious body, because immortal, and for ever redeemed from the empire of death.

**It is sown in weakness**

The principles of dissolution, corruption, and decay, have prevailed over it; disease undermined it; and death made it his prey.

**It is raised in power**

To be no more liable to weakness, through labour; decay, by age; wasting, by disease; and dissolution, by death.

**Verse 44. It is sown a natural body**

An animal body, having a multiplicity of solids and fluids of different kinds, with different functions; composed of muscles, fibres, tendons, cartilages, bones, arteries, veins, nerves, blood, and various juices, requiring continual support from aliment; and hence the necessity of labour to provide food, and skill to prepare it; which food must be masticated, digested, and refined; what is proper for nourishment secreted, brought into the circulation, farther elaborated, and prepared to enter into the composition of every part; hence growth and nutrition; without which no organized body can possibly exist.

**It is raised a spiritual body.**

One perfect in all its parts; no longer dependent on natural productions for its support; being built up on indestructible principles, and existing in a region where there shall be no more death; no more causes of decay leading to dissolution; and consequently, no more necessity for food, nutrition, existence and spiritual support.

What the apostle says here is quite consistent with the views his countrymen had on this subject.

In Sohar Chadash, fol. 43, it is said: "So shall it be in the resurrection of the dead; only, the old uncleanness shall not be found."

R. Bechai, on the law, fol. 14, says: "When the godly shall arise, their bodies shall be pure and innocent; obedient to the instinct of the soul: there shall be no adversary, nor any evil disease."

Rab. Pinchas says: "The holy blessed God shall make the bodies of the righteous as beautiful as the body of Adam was when he entered into paradise."

Rab. Levi says: "When the soul is in heaven, it is clothed with celestial light; when it returns to the body, it shall have the same light; and then the body shall shine like the splendour of the firmament of heaven. Then shall men gain the knowledge of what is perfect." Sohar. Gen., fol. 69.

The Jews have an opinion that the os coxendicis, the lower joint of the backbone, survives the corruption of the body; and that it is out of this bone that the resurrection body is formed. In the place last quoted, fol. 70, we have the following teachings on this subject: "Let us borrow an example from what relates to the purifying of silver. First, the ore is cast into the burning furnace, that it may be separated from its earthly impurities; it is then silver, but not perfect silver. They put it into the furnace a second time, and then all its scoriae are separated from it, and it becomes perfect silver, without any adulteration. Thus does the holy blessed God: he first buries our bodies under the earth, where they putrefy and corrupt, that nothing remains but that one bone: from this a new body is produced, which is indeed a body, but not a perfect body. But in that great day, when all bodies are hidden in the earth, and the soul departs, then even that bone decays, and the body which was formed out of it remains, and is as the light of the sun, and the splendour of heaven. Thus, as the silver was purified, so is the body: and no imperfect mixture remains." See Schoettgen.

These things must not be treated as rabbinical dotages; the different similes used for the apostle have the same spirit and design: as the seed which is sown in the earth rots, and out of the germ contained in it God in his providence produces a root, stalk, leaves, ear, and a great numerical increase of grains; is it not likely that God, out of some essential parts of the body that now is, will produce the resurrection body; and will then give the soul a body as it pleaseth him; and so completely preserve the individuality of every human being, as he does of every grain; giving to each its own body? 1 Corinthians 15:38. that as surely as the grain of wheat shall produce wheat after it is cast in the earth, corrupts, and dies; so surely shall our bodies produce the same bodies as to their essential individuality. As the germination of seeds is produced by his wisdom and power, so shall the pure and perfect human body be in the resurrection. Hence he does not say the body is buried, but the body is sown; it is sown in weakness, it is sown in dishonour,

**There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.**

This very saying is found in so many words, in Yalcut Rubeni, fol. 126: "There are different kinds of men."

"There is a spiritual Adam, and there is also a corporeal Adam."

**Verse 45. The first man Adam was made a living soul**

These forms of expression are also common among the Jews: hence we find Adam harishon, "Adam the first;" and Adam kadmai, "Adam the last." They assert that there are two Adams: 1. The mystical heavenly Adam; and 2. The mystical earthly Adam. See Sohar Exod., fol. 29; and the several examples in Schoettgen. The apostle says this is written: The first man Adam was made a living soul: this is found Genesis 2:7, in the words nishmath chiyim, the breath of lives; which the apostle translates ἰψὺν ζῶντα, a living soul.

**The last Adam-a quickening spirit.**

This is also said to be written; but where, says Dr. Lightfoot, is this written in the whole sacred book? Schoettgen replies, In the very same verse, and in these words: vayehi ha-Adam le-nephesh chayah, and Adam became a living soul; which the apostle translates ἰψὺν ζῶντα, a quickening, or life-giving spirit. Among the cabalistic Jews nephesh is considered as implying greater dignity than nishma. The former may be considered as pointing out the rational, the latter the sensitive soul. All these references to Jewish opinions and forms of speech the apostle uses to convince them that the thing was possible; and that the resurrection of the body was generally credited by all their wise and learned men. The Jews, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, speak frequently of the Spirit of the Messiah; and they allow that it was this Spirit that moved on the face of the waters, Genesis 1:2. And they assert that the Messiah shall quicken those who dwell in the dust.

"It ought not to be passed by," says the same author, "that Adam, receiving from God the promise of Christ-The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent, and believing it, named his wife Chauvah, that is, life; so the Septuagint,. And Adam called the name of his wife, Life. What! Is she called Life that brought death into the world? But Adam perceived the last Adam exhibited to him in the promise, to be a quickening

or life-giving spirit; and had brought in a better life of the soul; and should at last bring in a better life of the body. Hence is that saying, John 1:4: In HIM was LIFE."

Some contend that the first Adam and the last Adam mean the same person in two different states: the first man with the body of his creation; the same person with the body of his resurrection. See Clarke on 1 Corinthians 15:49.

**Verse 46. That was not first which is spiritual**

The natural or animal body, described 1 Corinthians 15:44, was the first; it was the body with which Adam was created. The spiritual body is the last, and is that with which the soul is to be clothed in the resurrection.

**Verse 47. The first man is of the earth**

That is: Adam's body was made out of the dust of the earth; and hence the apostle says he was of the dust; for the body was made *aphar min ha-adamah*, dust from the ground; Genesis 2:7.

**The second man is-from heaven.**

Heavenly, as several good MSS. and versions read. The resurrection body shall be of a heavenly nature, and not subject to decay or death. What is formed of earth must live after an earthly manner; must be nourished and supported by the earth: what is from heaven is of a spiritual nature; and shall have no farther connection with, nor dependence upon, earth. I conceive both these clauses to relate to man; and to point out the difference between the animal body and the spiritual body, or between the bodies which we now have and the bodies which we shall have in the resurrection. But can this be the meaning of the clause, the second man is the Lord from heaven? In the quotation I have omitted the Lord, on the following authorities: MANUSCRIPTS-BCDEFG, and two others. VERSIONS-Coptic, Aethiopic, Armenian in the margin, Vulgate, and Itala. FATHERS-Origen, who quotes it once and omits it once; Athanasius, Basil, the two Gregories, Nyssen and Nazianzen; Isidore, Cyril, Tertullian, Cyprian, Hilary, Zeno, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Ambrosiaster, Philaster, Leo, Pacianus, Primasius, Sedulius, Bede, and others. See these authorities more at large in Wetstein. Some of the most eminent of modern critics leave out the word, and Tertullian says that it was put in by the heretic Marcion. I do think that the word is not legitimate in this place. The verse is read by the MSS., versions, and fathers referred to, thus: The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is of heaven, heavenly; being omitted and added. The first man and the second man of this verse are the same as the first Adam and the second Adam of 1 Corinthians 15:45, and it is not clear that Christ is meant in either place. Some suppose that there is a reference here to what Eve said when she brought forth Cain: I have gotten a man from the Lord, *kanithi ish eth Yehovah*, I have possessed or obtained a man, the Lord; that is, as Dr. Lightfoot explains it, that the Lord himself should become man: and he thinks that Eve had respect to the promise of Christ when she named her son; as Adam had when he named his wife. If Eve had this in view, we can only say she was sadly mistaken: indeed the conjecture is too refined.

The terms first man of the earth, and second man from heaven, are frequent among the Jews: the superior Adam; and Adam the inferior; that is, the earthly and the heavenly Adam: Adam before the resurrection, and Adam after it.

**Verse 48. As is the earthy,**

from the earth, so are all his descendants; frail, decaying, and subject to death.

**As is the heavenly**

As is the heavenly state of Adam and all glorified beings, so shall be the state of all those who, at the resurrection, are found fit for glory.

**Verse 49. And as we have borne the image of the earthy**

As being descendants from Adam we have all been born in his likeness, and subject to the same kind of corruption, disgrace, and death; we shall also be raised to a life immortal, such as he now enjoys in the

kingdom of God. This interpretation proceeds on the ground that what is here spoken belongs to Adam in his twofold state: viz. of mortality and immortality; of disgrace and honour; of earth and heaven.

But by many commentators the words are understood to refer to Adam and Christ, in 1 Corinthians 15:46-49. By these, Christ is called the second Adam, the quickening Spirit, the second man, and the heavenly; whose image of righteousness and true holiness we are to bear.

But when I consider, 1st. How all these terms are used and applied in the Jewish writings, it appears to me that as this was not their import among them, so it was not the design of Paul; and it would be very difficult to find any place where Jesus Christ is called the second Adam in either Old or New Testament. The discourse of the apostle, Romans 5:14-19, will not prove it, though in those verses there is a comparison drawn between Adam and Christ; but that comparison refers to the extent of the sin and condemnation brought upon all men by the transgression of the first; and the redemption purchased for all men by the sacrifice of the last; and the superabundant grace procured by that sacrifice. But here, the comparison most evidently is between the state of man in this mortal life, and his state after the resurrection. Here, all men are corrupt and mortal, and here, all men die. There, all men shall be incorrupt and immortal, and, whether holy or unholy, shall be eternally immortal.

Of the image of Adam, in his heavenly or paradisaical state, the rabbins talk largely: they say that "God created Adam with a double image, earthly and heavenly; that he was the most perfect of all beings; that his splendour shone from one extremity of the earth to the other; that all feared before him; that he knew all wisdom, both earthly and heavenly; but when he sinned, his glory was diminished, and his wisdom departed from him." Yalcut Rubeni, fol. 10.

They add farther, that "in the time in which Adam received the heavenly image, all creatures came to him, and acknowledged him king of the earth." Ibid., fol. 21.

2. From all this, and much more might be produced on the subject, (see Schoettgen,) it appears that the apostle follows, as far as it could comport with his design, the sentiments of his countrymen, and that he adopts their very phraseology; and that it is through the medium of these sentiments and this phraseology that he is to be understood and interpreted. Others may understand all these passages differently; and still consider them as a parallel between Adam and Christ, which is the general view of interpreters. The view which I have taken of them appears to me to be much more consistent with the nature of the discourse, and the scope and design of the apostle. The common opinion is orthodox: what I here propose is no heresy. There are many difficulties in the chapter, and not a few in the verses immediately under consideration.

### **Verse 50. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom**

This is a Hebrew periphrasis for man, and man in his present state of infirmity and decay. Man, in his present state, cannot inherit the kingdom of God; his nature is not suited to that place; he could not, in his present weak state, endure an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory. Therefore, it is necessary that he should die, or be changed; that he should have a celestial body suited to the celestial state. The apostle is certainly not speaking of flesh and blood in a moral sense, to signify corruption of mind and heart; but in a natural sense; as such, flesh and blood cannot inherit glory, for the reasons already assigned.

### **Verse 51. I show you a mystery**

That is, a thing which you have never known before. But what is this mystery? Why, that we shall not all sleep; we shall not all die; but we shall all be changed: of this the Jews had not distinct notions. For, as flesh and blood cannot inherit glory, and all shall not be found dead at the day of judgment, then all must be changed-undergo such a change that their bodies may become spiritual, like the bodies of those who shall be raised from the dead.

### **Verse 52. In a moment**

In an atom; that is, an indivisible point of time. In the twinkling of an eye; as soon as a man can wink; which expressions show that this mighty work is to be done by the almighty power of God, as he does all his works, He calls, and it is done. The resurrection of all the dead, from the foundation of the world to that time, and the change of all the living then upon earth, shall be the work of a single moment.

#### **At the last trump**

This, as well as all the rest of the peculiar phraseology of this chapter, is merely Jewish, and we must go to the Jewish writers to know what is intended. On this subject, the rabbins use the very same expression. Thus Rabbi Akiba: "How shall the holy blessed God raise the dead? We are taught that God has a trumpet a thousand ells long, according to the ell of God: this trumpet he shall blow, so that the sound of it shall extend from one extremity of the earth to the other. At the first blast the earth shall be shaken; at the second, the dust shall be separated; at the third, the bones shall be gathered together; at the fourth, the members shall wax warm; at the fifth, the heads shall be covered with skin; at the sixth, the souls shall be rejoined to their bodies; at the seventh, all shall revive and stand clothed." See Wetstein. This tradition shows us what we are to understand by the last trump of the apostle; it is the seventh of Rab. Akiba, when the dead shall be all raised, and, being clothed upon with their eternal vehicles, they shall be ready to appear before the judgment seat of God.

#### **For the trumpet shall sound**

By this the apostle confirms the substance of the tradition, there shall be the sound of a trumpet on this great day; and this other scriptures teach: see Zechariah 9:14; Matthew 24:31;; John 5:25;; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, in which latter place, the apostle treats this subject among the Thessalonians, as he does here among the Corinthians. See the notes there.

#### **Shall be raised incorruptible**

Fully clothed with a new body, to die no more.

#### **We shall be changed.**

That is, those who shall then be found alive.

#### **Verse 53. For this corruptible, cannot inherit glory;**

therefore, there must be a refinement by death, or a change without it.

#### **Verse 54. Death is swallowed up in victory.**

These words are a quotation from Isaiah 25:8, where the Hebrew is *billa hammaveth lanetsach*: He (God) hath swallowed up death in victory; or, for ever. These words in the Septuagint are thus translated: Death having prevailed, or conquered, hath swallowed up. But in the version of Theodotion, the words are the same with those of the apostle. The Hebrew *lanetsach* the Septuagint sometimes translate in victory, but most commonly for ever; both, as Bishop Pearce observes, in such kind of phrases, signifying the same thing, because eternity conquers all things; and accordingly, in 2 Samuel 2:26, where the Septuagint have our English version has, Shall the sword devour FOR EVER? And the same may be seen in Job 36:7;; Lamentations 5:20;; Amos 1:11;; 8:7; from which authority the bishop translates the clause here, Death is swallowed up FOR EVER.

Death is here personified and represented as a devouring being, swallowing up all the generations of men; and by the resurrection of the body and the destruction of the empire of death, God is represented as swallowing him up; or that eternity gulps him down; so that he is endlessly lost and absorbed in its illimitable waste. How glorious a time to the righteous, when the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick; when God shall have wiped away all tears from off all faces, and when there shall be no more death. This time must come. Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

#### **Verse 55. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?**

These words are generally supposed to be taken from Hosea 13:14, where the Hebrew text stands thus: ehi debareyca maueth; ehikatabca sheol: which we translate, O death! I will be thy plagues; O grave! I will be thy destruction; and which the Septuagint translate very nearly as the apostle, O death, where is thy revenge, or judicial process? O grave, where is thy sting? And it may be remarked that almost all the MSS., versions, and many of the fathers, interchange the two members of this sentence as they appear in the Septuagint, attributing victory to death; and the sting, to hades or the grave; only the Septuagint, probably by mistake or corruption of copyists, have dike, revenge or a judicial process, for nikos, victory: a mistake which the similarity of the words, both in letters and sound, might readily produce. We may observe, also, that the ehi (I will be) of the Hebrew text the Septuagint, and the apostle following them, have translated where, as if the word had been written where, the two last letters interchanged; but ehi, is rendered where in other places; and our translators, in the 10th verse of this same chapter 13:10) render ehi malca, "I will be thy king," but have this note in the margin, "Rather, where is thy king? King Hoshea being then in prison." The apostle, therefore, and the Septuagint, are sufficiently vindicated by the use of the word elsewhere: and the best Jewish commentators allow this use of the word. The Targum, Syriac, Arabic, Vulgate, and some MSS. of Kennicott and De Rossi, confirm this reading.

Having vindicated the translation, it is necessary to inquire into the meaning of the apostle's expressions. Both Death and Hades are here personified: Death is represented as having a sting, dagger, or goad, by which, like the driver of oxen, he is continually irritating and urging on; (these irritations are the diseases by which men are urged on till they fall into Hades, the empire of Death;) to Hades, victory is attributed, having overcome and conquered all human life, and subdued all to its own empire. By the transposition of these two members of the sentence, the victory is given to Death, who has extinguished all human life; and the sting is given to Hades, as in his empire the evil of death is fully displayed by the extinction of all animal life, and the destruction of all human bodies. We have often seen a personification of death in ancient paintings—a skeleton crowned, with a dart in his hand; probably taken from the apostle's description. The Jews represent the angel of death as having a sword, from which deadly drops of gall fall into the mouths of all men.

Hades, which we here translate grave, is generally understood to be the place of separate spirits. See Clarke on Matthew 11:23.

#### **Verse 56. The sting of death is sin**

The apostle explains himself particularly here: death could not have entered into the world if sin had not entered first; it was sin that not only introduced death, but has armed him with all his destroying force; the goad or dagger of death is sin; by this both body and soul are slain.

#### **The strength of sin is the law.**

The law of God forbids all transgression, and sentences those who commit it to temporal and eternal death. Sin has its controlling and binding power from the law. The law curses the transgressor, and provides no help for him; and if nothing else intervene, he must, through it, continue ever under the empire of death.

#### **Verse 57. But thanks be to God**

What the law could not do, because it is law, (and law cannot provide pardon,) is done by the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: he has died to slay death; he has risen again to bring mankind from under the empire of hades. All this he has done through his mere unmerited mercy; and eternal thanks are due to God for this unspeakable gift. He has given us the victory over sin, Satan, death, the grave, and hell.

#### **Verse 58. Be ye steadfast**

a seat; be settled; confide in the truth of this doctrine of the resurrection, and every thing that pertains to it, as confidently as a man sits down on a SEAT, which he knows to be solid, firm, and safe; and on which he has often sat.

#### **Unmovable**

from negative, and to move away; let nothing shake your faith; let nothing move you away from this hope of the Gospel which is given unto you. What I tell you I receive from God; your false teachers cannot say so: in a declaration of God you may unshakingly confide.

### **Always abounding in the work of the Lord**

The work of the Lord is obedience to his holy word; every believer in Christ is a workman of God. He that works not, to bring glory to God and good to man, is not acknowledged as a servant of Christ; and if he be not a servant, he is not a son; and if not a son, then not an heir. And he must not only work, but abound in that work; ever exceeding his former self; and this, not for a time, but always; beginning, continuing, and ending every act of life to God's glory and the good of his fellows.

### **Your labour is not in vain**

Your labour in the Lord is not in vain; you must not only work, but you must labour-put forth all your strength; and you must work and labour in the Lord-under his direction, and by his influence; for without him ye can do nothing. And this labour cannot be in vain; you shall have a resurrection unto eternal life: not because you have laboured, but because Christ died and gave you grace to be faithful.

1. THE chapter through which the reader has passed is a chapter of great importance and difficulty; and on its difficulties much has been written in the preceding notes. Though I have used all the helps in my power to guide me in explaining it, I have, upon the whole, been obliged to think for myself, and claim only the praise of severe labour, ever directed by honest intention and an earnest desire to find out the truth.

2. There are many questions connected with the doctrine of the resurrection which I could not introduce here without writing a book instead of short notes on a very long chapter. On such subjects, I again beg leave to direct the reader to Mr. Samuel Drew's Essay on that subject.

3. One remark I cannot help making; the doctrine of the resurrection appears to have been thought of much more consequence among the primitive Christians than it is now! How is this? The apostles were continually insisting on it, and exciting the followers of God to diligence, obedience, and cheerfulness through it. And their successors in the present day seldom mention it! So apostles preached, and so primitive Christians believed; so we preach, and so our hearers believe. There is not a doctrine in the Gospel on which more stress is laid; and there is not a doctrine in the present system of preaching which is treated with more neglect!

4. Though all men shall rise again, yet it will be in widely different circumstances: some will rise to glory and honour; others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those alone who here received the salvation of God, and continued faithful unto death, shall have a resurrection to everlasting glory; not every believer, but every loving obedient believer, shall enter into the paradise of God, and have a body fashioned like unto his Lord's glorious body.

5. All glorified spirits will not have the same degree of glory. Two things will necessarily cause great difference: 1. The quantum of mind; and 2. The quantum of grace.

(1.) It is idle to suppose that God has made all human souls with the same capacities: he has not. There is an infinite diversity; he who has the greatest mind can know most, do most, suffer most, and enjoy most.

(2.) The quantum of grace will be another great cause of diversity and glory. He who received most of Christ here, and was most devoted to his service, shall have the nearest approach to him in his own kingdom. But all equally holy and equally faithful souls shall not have equal degrees of glory; for the glory will be according to the capacity of the mind, as well as the degree of grace and improvement. The greater the capacity, provided it be properly influenced by the grace of Christ, the greater will be the enjoyment.

6. That there will be great diversity in the states of glorified saints is the apostle's doctrine; and he illustrates it by the different degrees of splendour between the sun, moon, planets, and stars. This needs little application. There are some of the heavenly bodies that give heat, light, and splendour, as the SUN; and are of the utmost service to the world: some that give light, and comparative splendour, without heat, as the MOON; and yet are of very great use to mankind: others, again, which give a steady but not a splendid light, at the PLANETS; and are serviceable in their particular spheres: and lastly, others which twinkle in their respective systems, as the stars of different magnitudes.

7. One star, says the apostle, differs from another in glory, i.e. in splendour, according to what is called their different magnitudes. I will state a remarkable fact: The northern and southern hemispheres of the heavens have been divided into 102 constellations, and in these constellations Professor Bode has set down the places of 17,240 stars; simple, nebulous, conglobate, and double. The stars have been distinguished by their apparent magnitudes or rather splendour, into stars of the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, these 17,240, only sixteen are, by astronomers in general, agreed to be of the first magnitude, all of which are set down in the following catalogue, with some of those that are remarkable in the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth magnitudes. The reader will observe that the name of the constellation or star is first mentioned; the Greek letters, distinguished on maps and globes; and they are, by astronomers, referred to by these letters and numbers. My inferences follow the table.

Observations on the preceding Table. The five stars of the second magnitude in the above list, marked with an asterisk, are by some writers denominated of the first magnitude; and those named of the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth magnitudes, (the stars of the last-mentioned order being barely visible to the naked eye,) are such as the moon can occult, or make a near appulse to; except the last sixteen, in the column of stars of the third magnitude, and the last twenty-nine in that of the sixth magnitude, which never set in the latitude of London. The stars Algol and  $\hat{I}_j$  Ceti are set down according to their brightest appearance; the former varying from the second to the fourth magnitude every two days, 20 hours, 48 minutes, 58 seconds, 18 thirds, and 25 fourths; and the latter, from the second to the seventh, and sometimes to the tenth, every 331 days, 10 hours, and 19 minutes. The stars of the first magnitude, Capella and Lyra, never set in the latitude of London; Acharnar, Canopus,  $\hat{I}^2$  in Argo, and  $\hat{I}^\pm$  in the Cross and Centaur, never rise. Of the stars of the second magnitude in the preceding list,  $\hat{I}^2$  in Medusa's head, or Algol,  $\hat{I}^\pm$  in Perseus, the two Pointers, the Dragon's tail, and the Swan's tail, never set; the head of the Phoenix and the bright star in the Crane never rise. The stars marked with an asterisk in the third column are between the third and fourth magnitudes; and those in the last column with the same mark are between the fifth and sixth magnitudes. Stars fainter than those of the sixth magnitude cannot be discerned without the help of a glass, and are therefore called telescopic. The 2h, and 3h, in Aquarius, are of this last description, both of the seventh magnitude, and such as the moon can occult.

8. This subject, as far as it concerns the present place, admits of few remarks or reflections. It has already been observed, that, of all the stars which our best astronomers have been able to describe and lay down in tables and maps, only sixteen are of the first magnitude; i.e. appear more luminous than any other stars in the firmament: some, indeed, increase the number to twenty-one, by taking in Castor and Pollux, the upper Pointer, Atteer, or Atair, in the Eagle, and  $\hat{I}^2$  in the ship Argo, which I have placed among those of the second magnitude, because astronomers are not agreed on the subject, some ranking them with stars of the first magnitude, others, with stars of the second.

The reader is probably amazed at the paucity of large stars in the whole firmament of heaven! Will he permit me to carry his mind a little farther, and either stand astonished at or deplore with me the fact, that, out of the millions of Christians in the vicinity and splendour of the eternal Sun of righteousness, how very few are found of the first order! How very few can stand examination by the test laid down in the 13th chapter of this epistle! How very few love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength; and their neighbour as themselves! How few mature Christians are found in the Church! How few are, in all things, living for eternity! How little light, how little heat, and how little influence and activity are to be found among them



that bear the name of Christ! How few stars of the FIRST magnitude will the Son of God have to deck the crown of his glory! Few are striving to excel in righteousness; and it seems to be a principal concern with many to find out how little grace they may have, and yet escape hell; how little conformity to the will of God they may have, and yet get to heaven! In the fear of God I register this testimony, that I have perceived it to be the labour of many to lower the standard of Christianity, and to soften down, or explain away, those promises of God that himself has linked with duties; and because they know that they cannot be saved by their good works, they are contented to have no good works at all: and thus the necessity of Christian obedience, and Christian holiness, makes no prominent part of some modern creeds. Let all those who retain the apostolic doctrine, that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin in this life, press every believer to go on to perfection, and expect to be saved, while here below, into the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Jesus. To all such my soul says, Labour to show yourselves approved unto God; workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth; and may the pleasure of the Lord prosper in your hands!-Amen.

## **Comments on 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12**

### **Verse 2. I knew a man in Christ**

I knew a Christian, or a Christian man; for to such alone God now revealed himself, for vision and prophecy had been shut up from the Jews.

### **Fourteen years ago**

On what occasion or in what place this transaction took place we cannot tell; there are many conjectures among learned men concerning it, but of what utility can they be when every thing is so palpably uncertain? Allowing this epistle to have been written some time in the year 57, fourteen years counted backward will lead this transaction to the year 42 or 43, which was about the time that Barnabas brought Paul from Tarsus to Antioch, Acts 11:25,26, and when he and Paul were sent by the Church of Antioch with alms to the poor Christians at Jerusalem. It is very possible that, on this journey, or while in Jerusalem, he had this vision, which was intended to be the means of establishing him in the faith, and supporting him in the many trials and difficulties through which he was to pass. This vision the apostle had kept secret for fourteen years.

### **Whether in the body I cannot tell**

That the apostle was in an ecstasy or trance, something like that of Peter, Acts 10:9, there is reason to believe; but we know that being carried literally into heaven was possible to the Almighty. But as he could not decide himself, it would be ridiculous in us to attempt it.

### **Caught up to the third heaven.**

He appeared to have been carried up to this place; but whether bodily he could not tell, or whether the spirit were not separated for the time, and taken up to the third heaven, he could not tell.

### **The third heaven-**

The Jews talk of seven heavens, and Mohammed has received the same from them; but these are not only fabulous but absurd. I shall enumerate those of the Jews.

- The Yelum, or curtain, "Which in the morning is folded up, and in the evening stretched out." Isaiah 40:22: He stretcheth out the heavens as a Curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.
- The firmament, or Expanse, "In which the sun, moon, stars, and constellations are fixed." Genesis 1:17: And God placed them in the Firmament of heaven.
- The Clouds, or Aether, "Where the mill-stones are which grind the manna for the righteous." Psalms 78:23, Though he had commended the Clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, and had rained down manna,

- The Habitation, "Where Jerusalem, and the temple, and the altar, were constructed and where Michael the great prince stands and offers sacrifices." 1 Kings 8:13: I have surely built thee a House To Dwell In, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever. "But where is heaven so called?" Answer: In Isaiah 63:15: Look down from Heaven, and behold from the Habitation, , of thy holiness.
- The Dwelling-Place, "Where the troops of angels sing throughout the night, but are silent in the day time, because of the glory of the Israelites." Psalms 42:8: The Lord will command his loving-kindness in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me. "But how is it proved that this means heaven?" Answer: From Deuteronomy 26:15. Look down from thy holy habitation, the Dwelling-Place of thy holiness; and from heaven, and bless thy people Israel.
- The Fixed Residence, "Where are the treasures of snow and hail, the repository of noxious dew, of drops, and whirlwinds; the grotto of exhalations," heavens thus denominated?" Answer: In 1 Kings 8:39,49, Then hear thou in Heaven Thy Dwelling-Place, Thy Fixed Residence.
- The Araboth, Where are justice, judgment, mercy, the treasures of life; peace and blessedness; the souls of the righteous, the souls and spirits which are reserved for the bodies yet to be formed, and the dew by which God is to vivify the dead." Psalms 89:14.; Isaiah 59:17.; Psalms 36:9.; Judges 6:24.; Psalms 24:4; 1 Samuel 25:29.; Isaiah 57:20: All of which are termed Araboth, Psalms 68:4. Extol him who rideth on the heavens, ba Araboth, by his name Jah.

All this is sufficiently unphilosophical, and in several cases ridiculous.

In the sacred writings three heavens only are mentioned. The first is the atmosphere, what appears to be intended by rekia, the firmament or expansion, Genesis 1:6. The second, the starry heaven; where are the sun, moon, planets, and stars; but these two are often expressed under the one term shamayim, the two heavens, or expansions, and in Genesis 1:17, they appear to be both expressed by rekia hashshamayim, the firmament of heaven. And, thirdly, the place of the blessed, or the throne of the Divine glory, probably expressed by the words shemei hashshamayim, the heavens of heavens. But on these subjects the Scripture affords us but little light; and on this distinction the reader is not desired to rely.

Much more may be seen in Schoettgen, who has exhausted the subject; and who has shown that ascending to heaven, or being caught up to heaven, is a form of speech among the Jewish writers to express the highest degrees of inspiration. They often say of Moses that he ascended on high, ascended on the firmament, ascended to heaven; where it is evident they mean only by it that he was favoured with the nearest intimacy with God, and the highest revelations relative to his will, understand St. Paul thus, it will remove much of the difficulty from this place; and perhaps the unspeakable words, 2 Corinthians 12:4, are thus to be understood. He had the most sublime communications from God, such as would be improper to mention, though it is very likely that we have the substance of these in his epistles. Indeed, the two epistles before us seem, in many places, to be the effect of most extraordinary revelations.

#### **Verse 4. Caught up into paradise**

The Jewish writers have no less than four paradises, as they have seven heavens; but it is needless to wade through their fables. On the word paradise See Clarke on Genesis 2:8. The Mohammedans call it [Arabic] jennet alferdoos, the garden of paradise, and say that God created it out of light, and that it is the habitation of the prophets and wise men.

Among Christian writers it generally means the place of the blessed, or the state of separate spirits. Whether the third heaven and paradise be the same place we cannot absolutely say; they probably are not; and it is likely that St. Paul, at the time referred to, had at least two of these raptures.

1829

**Alexander Campbell (1788 – 1866); Founder of Campbellite Restorationist Movement**  
**The Three Kingdoms**  
**The Christian Baptist**

Reprint of the periodical "The Christian Baptist," originally published April 1829

The Jewish people were often called "the kingdom of God," because God was in a peculiar sense their King. For certain purposes he selected them, distinguished them, and took them under his own immediate protection. He gave them laws, ordinances, and customs, which had both a specific and general influence, and were preparatory to a new and better order of society. The new order of society which arises out of the belief of the gospel, is often called "the reign or kingdom of Heaven." In this kingdom the subjects enjoy more exalted blessings, and stand in new and heavenly relations unknown before the coming of the Messiah.— There is also the "kingdom of heaven, or glory," properly so called. This is the resilience of angels, the abode of the saints, and the mansions of glory. The gates of admission into these three kingdoms are different—Flesh, Faith, and Works. To be born of the flesh, or to be a descendant of Abraham, introduced a child into the first kingdom of God. To be born of water and spirit, through faith in Jesus Christ, brings men and women into the second kingdom. But neither flesh, faith, nor water, without good work, will introduce a man or woman into the third kingdom. The nature of these three kingdoms, the privileges enjoyed by the subjects, and the terms of admission, are very imperfectly understood in the present day. These kingdoms are unhappily confounded in the minds of many. Hence we find that what is affirmed of the nature, subjects, and terms of admission of one, is frequently applied to another. This is one of the roots of popery, and all the hierarchies in Christendom have sprung from it.

The nature of the kingdom of God amongst the Jews is very different from the nature of the kingdom of God amongst the Christians, and both are different from the kingdom of glory.— The subjects are just as different. Under the first they were carnal; all the descendants of Jacob, without regard to regeneration, were lawful subjects of the first kingdom. None can be subjects of the second unless born again; and flesh and blood cannot inherit the third and ultimate kingdom.

I have discovered that the objections offered against the scriptural design and import of Christian immersion, are based upon a misapprehension of the nature and privileges of these three kingdoms. Under the first there were various ablutions, purgations, and sin-offerings, which never perfected the conscience; but which, for the time being, served as symbols or types of a real purgation which would be enjoyed under the Reign of Heaven, or second kingdom.— These sacrifices did not cleanse the worshippers, else, as Paul reasons, the worshippers, once cleansed, would have no more consciousness of sine. Under the Christian economy a real remission of sins is constantly enjoyed by all the subjects or citizens, and, as Paul argues, where remission of sins is enjoyed no more sacrifice for sin is needed. Now if the Jews by faith foresaw through the symbols the shedding of Christ's blood, the question is, Why could they not by faith in his sacrifice enjoy, as well as we, the remission of sins? The sacrifice of Christ, viewed prospectively, was as efficacious as when viewed retrospectively, to effect the cleansing of the conscience. And could they not, through one sacrifice, have more clearly understood the design of Christ's sacrifice, than by so many sacrifices. But it is a provision in the constitution of the Christian kingdom which greatly distinguishes it from the Jewish, "that the sins and iniquities of the citizens shall be remembered no more." No daily, weekly, nor annual remembrances of sins under the reign of favor. This, faith in the sacrifice of Christ discovers, and submission to his institution puts us into the actual possession of that remission which never was enjoyed before.

Now, as Paul teaches, under the Constitution of the New Kingdom, remission of sins is a natural birthright. Hence every one, so soon as he enters the second or Christian kingdom, or is born of water and spirit, is pardoned and accepted. So that those who are born into the kingdom of heaven, or Christian kingdom, have peace with God, and sin cannot lord it over them; for they are not under law, but under favor.

But many say, "What will become of our Paidobaptist brethren, and millions more, if these things be so?" This is a stale objection which has been urged against every reformation in religion from the days of John Huss down to this century. I will, however, answer the interrogatory. They cannot enjoy the blessings of the second kingdom; in other words, they cannot have or enjoy that light, peace, liberty, and love, which are the national privileges of all who intelligently enter the kingdom of favor.

But the objector means, Can they enter into the third kingdom, or kingdom of glory? I am prepared to say that my opinion is, and it is but in opinion, that infants, idiots, and some Jews and Pagans may, without either faith or baptism, be brought into the third kingdom, merely in consequence of the sacrifice of Christ; and I doubt not but many Paidobaptists of all sects will be admitted into the kingdom of glory.— Indeed all they who obey Jesus Christ, through faith in his blood, according to their knowledge, I am of opinion will be introduced into that kingdom. But when we talk of the forgiveness of sins which comes to Christians through immersion, we have no regard to any other than the second kingdom, or the kingdom of favor. I repeat it again—there are three kingdoms: the Kingdom of Law, the Kingdom of Favor, and the Kingdom of Glory; each has a different constitution, different subjects, privileges, and terms of admission. And who is so blind, in the Christian kingdom, as not to see that more is necessary to eternal salvation or to admission into the everlasting kingdom, than either faith, regeneration, or immersion? A man can enter into the second kingdom by being born of water and the spirit; but he cannot enter into the third and ultimate kingdom through faith, immersion, or regeneration. Hence says the Judge, Come you blessed of my Father, and inherit the kingdom of glory. Because you believed? No. Because you were immersed? No. Because you were born again by the Holy Spirit? No—but because I know your good works, your piety, and humanity. I was hungry, and you fed me, &c.

The plain state of the case is this:—The blood of Abraham brought a man into the kingdom of law, and gave him an inheritance in Canaan. Being born not of blood, but through water and the Spirit of God, brings a person into the kingdom of favor; which is righteousness, peace, joy, and a holy spirit, with a future inheritance in prospect. But if the justified draw back, or the washed return to the mire, or if faith die and bring forth no fruits—into the kingdom of glory he cannot enter. Hence good works through faith, or springing from faith in Jesus, give a right to enter into the holy city—and this is a right springing from grace or favor:—"Blessed are they who keep his commandments that they may have a right to the tree of life and enter through the gates into the city." This right, as observed, springs from a constitution of favor. And while men are saved by grace, or brought into the second kingdom, (for all in it are said to be saved in the New Testament style) by favor, they cannot enter the heavenly kingdom, but by patient continuance in well doing. So stands the decree of the Lord Almighty as I understand the Oracles.

Those who desire the enjoyment of remission of sins, peace with God, and abundance of joy, can obtain them through submission to an institution of pure favor, as already defined. But when we speak of admission into the everlasting kingdom, we must have a due respect to those grand and fundamental principles so clearly propounded in the New Institution. We must discriminate between the kingdom of favor, and the kingdom of glory.

This is in anticipation of my essays on the Jewish and Christian Dispensations, and I am compelled to divulge so much of the views which I have to lay before my readers under more appropriate heads, and as the results of premises not yet developed: I say, I am compelled to cross the Jordan, and to pull a cluster of the grapes to show those who are halting between two opinions, that there is good fruit in the land to which I invite them. The following narrative will shed more light on the three kingdoms:—

### **The Narrative of Simeon**

While musing upon the three kingdoms, I fancied myself in the kingdom of glory after the final judgment. Amongst my companions in that happy kingdom, I was introduced to one Simeon, a Jew, who had been converted to Christianity eight years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. While in conversation on the wonders of redemption, Simeon gave us the following narrative. "I have been," said he, "a subject of these

three kingdoms, and now I discern not only the true nature and design of each, but I am enraptured in contemplating the manifold wisdom developed in their respective constitutions. I was, when born of the flesh, born a citizen of the commonwealth of Israel. I was circumcised and made partaker of all the privileges of the first or prefatory kingdom of God. I distinctly remember all my views and feelings under that economy. When I waited at the altar and worshipped in the sanctuary, my conscience was often troubled, and its momentary pacifications were like the occasional appearances of the sun in a dark and cloudy day. If I felt peace at the altar, so soon as I mingled with my fellow-citizens, I contracted pollution, and my sin was ever before me; my iniquities took such hold upon me, that, at times, I could not lift up my eyes. Hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, alternated in my bosom. The thunders of Sinai and the flashing vengeance that destroyed in a moment thousands of my nation, often occurred to me. I prayed with fear and trembling. I expected a Redeemer, but knew not the nature of his redemption. But finally I believed that Jesus of Nazareth was he. I saw that his institution differed from that of Moses, as the sun excelled a star. I apprehended the reign of favor, and gladly became a citizen of the second kingdom. I was born of water and of the Spirit, and obtained a remission of sins, of which I had never formed an idea under the kingdom of law. The sacrifice of Jesus, and the divine testimony or assurance which I had from God our Father, in the proclamation of mercy, cured my conscience and implanted new life within me. I felt myself in a new kingdom, in a kingdom of favor. Sin did not now lord it over me as before, and my heart beat in unison with the favor which super-abounded; so that, in comparison of the former kingdom, my sun always shone in a bright and cloudless sky. If, in one thought, I felt myself seduced from the path of life, with the quickness of a glance of me mind, I remembered that Jesus died, and that I had died and been buried with him in his sacred institution. This always cured my conscience and gladdened my heart. I ran the race and finished my course. I slept in Jesus; and, lo! I awoke at the sound of the trumpet, and all my deeds came into remembrance, not one of them was forgotten by God. I was found worthy through conformity to that favor which brought me into the fold of God, to approach the tree of life. I have tasted its fruit and feel myself immortal. The contrast between the kingdom of law and the kingdom of favor prepared me to relish and to enjoy the contrast between the kingdom of favor and the kingdom of glory. And when I tell the wondrous story of nature and grace to those my companions who have come from the East and the West, from the North and the South, without circumcision or the proclamation of mercy through the gospel, their devotion in hearing and mine in telling, their joy in me, and my joy in them, swell our strains and raise our bliss to degrees ineffable and full of glory. I have been thrice born—once of the flesh, once of water and spirit, and once from the grave. Each birth brought me into a congenial society. My fellow citizens always resembled my nativity. I was surrounded once with the children of the flesh, then with those born from above, and now will thus be born from the ashes of the grave."

While proceeding to narrate some things I never before heard, my transports aroused me, but could not fancy again. Editor.

**1830**

**St. Philaret (Drozdov) of Moscow, Russian Orthodox Author**

**Will all be equally happy? No. There will be different degrees of happiness, in proportion as every one shall have here endured the fight of faith, love, and good works. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42.**

**The Longer Catechism of The Orthodox, Catholic, Eastern Church**

also known as the Catechism of St. Philaret (Drozdov) of Moscow

**Sections on the life-to-come and Heavenly Rewards**

Examined and Approved by the Most Holy Governing Synod, and Published for the Use of Schools, and of all Orthodox Christians, by Order of His Imperial Majesty (Moscow, at the Synodical Press, 1830.)

St. Philaret (Drozdov) of Moscow, russian icon. Source: days.ru[The large Russian Catechism of Philaret, approved by the holy Synod (although omitted by Kimmel in his Collection, and barely mentioned by Gass in his Greek Symbolics), is now the most authoritative doctrinal standard of the orthodox Græco-Russian Church, and has practically superseded the older Catechism, or Orthodox Confession of Mogila. Originally composed in Slavono-Russian, it was by authority translated into several languages. We have before us a Russian edition (Moscow, 1869), a Greek edition (Χριστιανικὴ κατ' ἕκτασιν κατήχησις τῆς ὀρθοδόξου, καθολικῆς καὶ ἀνατοικῆς ἐκκλησίας, Odessa, 1848), and a German edition (Ausführlicher christlicher Katechismus der orthodox-katholischen orientalischen Kirche, St. Petersburg, 1850).

The English translation here given was prepared by the Rev. R. W. Blackmore, B.A., formerly chaplain to the Russia Company in Kronstadt, and published at Aberdeen, 1845, in the work *The Doctrine of the Russian Church*. On comparing it with the authorized Greek and German translations, we found it faithful and idiomatic. The numbering of Questions, and the difference in type of Questions and Answers, are ours. In all other editions we have seen, the Questions are not numbered. As this Catechism has never before appeared in America, we thought it best to give it in full, although the Introduction and the First Part would be sufficient for this collection of doctrinal symbols.

### **On the Twelfth Article.**

378. What is the life of the world to come?

The life that shall be after the resurrection of the dead and the general judgment of Christ.

379. What kind of life shall this be?

For those who believe, who love God, and do what is good, it shall be so happy that we can not now even conceive such happiness. It doth not yet appear what we shall be. 1 John iii. 2. I knew a man in Christ, says the Apostle Paul, who was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4.

380. Whence shall proceed this so great happiness?

From the contemplation of God in light and glory, and from union with him. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as also I am known. 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. Matt. xiii. 43. God shall be all in all. 1 Cor. xv. 28.

381. Shall the body also share in the happiness of the soul?

Yes; it too will be glorified with the light of God, as Christ's body was at his transfiguration on Mount Tabor.

It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. 1 Cor. xv. 43. As we have borne the image of the earthy, that is, of Adam, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 1 Cor. xv. 49.

382. Will all be equally happy?

No. There will be different degrees of happiness, in proportion as every one shall have here endured the fight of faith, love, and good works. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42.

383. But what will be the lot of unbelievers and transgressors?

They will be given over to everlasting death--that is, to everlasting fire, to everlasting torment, with the devils.

Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. Rev. xx. 15. And, That is the second death. Rev. xx. 14. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Matt. xxv. 41. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. Matt. xxv. 46. It is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Mark ix. 47, 48.

384. Why will such severity be used with sinners?

Not because God willed them to perish; but they of their own will perish, because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 2 Thess. ii. 10.

385. Of what benefit will it be to us to meditate on death, on the resurrection, on the last judgment, on everlasting happiness, and on everlasting torment?

These meditations will assist us to abstain from sin, and to wean our affections from earthly things; they will console us for the absence or loss of worldly goods, incite us to keep our souls and bodies pure, to live to God and to eternity, and so to attain everlasting salvation.

1 The Greek and the German edition have the following addition: 'But those who freely accept the grace given them, who make good use of the means of grace granted unto them, and who walk in the appointed path of salvation, God has properly foreordained for salvation.'

**On the Doctrine of Blessedness  
(Blessedness in the Life-to-Come Based on Following the Beatitudes)**

435. What must we join with prayer in order to be grounded in the hope of salvation and blessedness?

Our own exertions for the attainment of blessedness.

Of this point the Lord himself says: Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Luke vi. 46. Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Matt. vii. 21.

436. What doctrine may we take as our guide in these exertions?

The doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is briefly set forth in his Beatitudes, or sentences on blessedness.

437. How many such sentences are there? The nine following:

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
3. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

4. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
5. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
6. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
8. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
9. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven. Matt. v. 3-12.

438. What is to be observed of all these sentences in order to their right understanding?

This: that the Lord proposed in these sentences a doctrine for the attainment of blessedness, as is expressly said in the Gospel: He opened his mouth, and taught; but, being meek and lowly of heart, he proposed his doctrine not in the form of commandment, but of blessing, to those who should of their own free will receive and fulfill it. Consequently in each sentence or Beatitude we must consider, first, the doctrine or precept; secondly, the blessing or promise of reward.

#### **On the First Beatitude.**

439. What is the Lord's first precept of blessedness?

They who would be blessed must be poor in spirit.

440. What is it to be poor in spirit?

It is to have a spiritual conviction that we have nothing of our own, nothing but what God bestows upon us, and that we can do nothing good without God's help and grace, thus counting ourselves as nothing, and in all throwing ourselves upon the mercy of God; in brief, as St. Chrysostom explains it, spiritual poverty is humility. (Hom. in Matt. xv.)

441. Can the rich, too, be poor in spirit?

Doubtless they can: if they consider that visible riches are corruptible and soon pass away, and can never compensate for the want of spiritual goods. What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul for what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Matt. xvi. 26.

442. May not bodily poverty serve to the perfection of spiritual?

It may, if the Christian choose it voluntarily, for God's sake. Of this, Jesus Christ himself said to the rich man: If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me. Matt. xix. 21.

443. What does our Lord promise to the poor in spirit?

The kingdom of heaven.

444. How is the kingdom of heaven theirs?



In the present life inwardly, and inchoately, by faith and hope; but in the life to come perfectly, by their being made partakers of everlasting blessedness.

**On the Second Beatitude.**

445. What is the Lord's second precept for blessedness?

They who would be blessed must mourn.

446. What is meant in this precept by the word mourn?

Sorrow and contrition of heart, with unfeigned tears, for that we so imperfectly and unworthily serve the Lord, or even rather deserve big anger by our sins, for godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of this world worketh death. 2 Cor. vii. 10.

447. What special promise does the Lord make to mourners?

That they shall be comforted.

448. What comfort is here to be understood?

That of grace, consisting in the pardon of sin, and in peace of conscience.

449. Why is this promise added to the precept for mourning?

In order that sorrow for sin may not reach to despair.  
On the Third Beatitude.

450. What is the Lord's third precept for blessedness?

They who would be blessed must be meek.

451. What is meekness?

A quiet disposition of spirit, joined with care neither to offend any man, nor be offended at any thing one's self.

452. What are the special effects of Christian meekness?

These: that we never murmur against God, nor even against men, when any thing falls out against our wishes, nor give way to anger, nor set ourselves up.

453. What is promised by the Lord to the meek?

That they shall inherit the earth.

454. How are we to understand this promise?

As regards Christ's followers generally it is a prediction which has been literally fulfilled; for the ever-meek Christians, instead of being destroyed by the fury of the heathen, have inherited the universe which the heathen formerly possessed. But the further sense of this promise, as regards Christians both generally and individually, is this, that they shall receive an inheritance, as the Psalmist says, in the land of the living; that

is, where men live and never die; in other words, that they shall receive everlasting blessedness. See Psalm xxvii. 13.

### **On the Fourth Beatitude.**

455. What is the Lord's fourth precept for blessedness?

They who would be blessed must hunger and thirst after righteousness.

456. What is meant here by the word righteousness?

Though this word may well stand for every virtue which the Christian ought to desire even as his meat and drink, yet should we here specially understand that righteousness of which, in the book of Daniel, it is said, An everlasting righteousness shall be brought in; that is, the justification of guilty man through grace and faith in Jesus Christ. Dan. ix. 24.

The Apostle Paul speaks thus: The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God/ being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past. Rom. iii. 22-25.

457. Who are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness?

They who, while they love to do good, yet count not themselves righteous, nor rest on their own good works, but acknowledge themselves sinners, and guilty before God; and who, by the wish and prayer of faith, hunger and thirst after the justification of grace through Jesus Christ, as after spiritual meat and drink.

458. What does the Lord promise to them who hunger and thirst after righteousness?

That they shall be filled.

459. What is meant here by being filled?

As the filling or satisfying of the body produces, first, the cessation of the sense of hunger and thirst; secondly, the strengthening the body by food, so the filling of the soul means, first, the inward peace of the pardoned sinner; secondly, the acquisition of strength to do good, given by justifying grace. The perfect filling, however, of the soul created for the enjoyment of endless good is to follow in the life eternal, according to the words of the Psalmist: When I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it. Psalm xvii. 15.

### **On the Fifth Beatitude.**

460. What is the Lord's fifth precept for blessedness?

They who would be blessed must be merciful.

461. How are we to fulfill this precept?

By works of mercy, corporal and spiritual; for, as St. Chrysostom says, the forms of mercy are manifold, and this commandment is broad. (Hom. in Matt. xv.)

462. Which are the corporal works of mercy t

1. To feed the hungry.
2. To give drink to the thirsty.
3. To clothe the naked, or such as have not necessary and decent clothing.
4. To visit them that are in prison.
5. To visit the sick, minister to them, and forward their recovery, or aid them to a Christian preparation for death.
6. To show hospitality to strangers.
7. To bury them that have died in poverty.

463. Which are the spiritual works of mercy?

1. By exhortation to convert the sinner from the error of his way. James v. 20.
2. To instruct the ignorant in truth and virtue.
3. To give our neighbor good and seasonable advice in difficulty, or in any danger of which he is unaware.
4. To pray for others to God.
5. To comfort the afflicted.
6. Not to return the evil which others may have done us.
7. To forgive injuries from our heart.

464. Is it not contrary to the precept of mercy for civil justice to punish criminals?

Not in the least; if this be done as of duty, and with a good intent, that is, in order to correct them, or to preserve the innocent from their crimes.

465. What does the Lord promise to the merciful?

That they shall obtain mercy.

466. What mercy is here to be understood?

That of being delivered from everlasting condemnation for sin at God's Judgment.

**On the Sixth Beatitude.**

467. What is the Lord's sixth precept for blessedness?

They who would be blessed must be pure in heart.

468. Is not purity of heart the same thing as sincerity?

Sincerity which feigns not any good dispositions foreign to the heart, but shows the really good dispositions of the heart by good deeds, is only the lowest degree of purity of heart. This last a man attains by constant and strict watchfulness over himself, driving away from his heart every unlawful wish and thought, and every affection for earthly things, and ever keeping there the remembrance of God and our Lord Jesus Christ with faith and charity.

469. What does the Lord promise to the pure in heart? That they shall see God.

470. How are we to understand this promise?

The Word of God compares the heart of man to the eye, and ascribes to perfect Christians enlightened, eyes of the heart. Eph. i. 18. As the eye that is clear can see the light, so the heart that is pure can behold God. But since the sight of God's countenance is the very source of everlasting blessedness, the promise of seeing God is the promise of the highest degree of everlasting blessedness.

### **On the Seventh Beatitude.**

471. What is the Lord's seventh precept for blessedness?

They who would be blessed must be peace-makers.

472. How are we to fulfill this commandment?

We must live friendly with all men, and give no occasion for disagreement: if any arise, we must try all possible ways to put a stop to it, even by yielding our own right, unless this be against duty, or hurtful to any other: if others are at enmity, we must do all we can to reconcile them; and if we fail, we must pray to God for their reconciliation.

473. What does the Lord promise to peace-makers?

That they shall be called the Sons of God.

474. What is signified by this promise?

The sublimity both of their office and of their reward. Since in what they do they imitate the only-begotten Son of God, who came upon earth to reconcile fallen man with God's justice, they are for this promised the gracious name of Sons of God, and without doubt a degree of blessedness answering thereto.

### **On the Eighth Beatitude.**

475. What is the Lord's eighth precept for blessedness?

They who would be blessed must be ready to endure persecution for righteousness' sake, without betraying it.

476. What qualities are required by this precept?

Love of righteousness, constancy and firmness in virtue, fortitude and patience, when one is subjected to calamity or danger for refusing to betray truth and virtue.

477. What does the Lord promise to those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake?

The kingdom of heaven, as if in recompense for what they lose through persecution; in like manner as the same is promised to the poor in spirit, to make up for the feeling of want and privation.

**On the Ninth Beatitude.**

478. What is the Lord's ninth precept for blessedness?

They who would be blessed must be ready to take with joy reproach, persecution, suffering, and death itself, for the name of Christ, and for the true orthodox faith.

479. What is the name for the course required by this precept?

The course of martyrdom.

480. What does the Lord promise for this course?

A great reward in heaven; that is, a special and high degree of blessedness.

**1832—1835**

**Joseph Smith (1805-1844), Latter-day Saint Founder**

**Doctrine and Covenants 76 Sources**

**Saints Without Halos website December 2009**

**Doctrine and Covenants 76 Sources**

February 16, 1832, Hiram, Ohio.

The eyes of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon are opened §. They see the history of the world and converse with Jesus Christ §. Pre-existence, fall of Lucifer §. Fate of the rebellious, sons of perdition §. Celestial, terrestrial, and telestial glories §.

Several others were in the room during the vision, including Philo Dibble, who reports that one would describe what he saw and the other would reply, "I see the same." ¶ Joseph Remembered: Philo Dibble

Evening and Morning Star 1, no. 2 (July 1832): {2-3}, heading: A Vision.

Kirtland Revelations Book, 1-10, heading: The Vision / A vision of Joseph & Sidney February 16th 1832 given in Portage County Hiram Township state of Ohio in North America which they saw concerning the church of the first born and concerning the economy of God and his vast creation throughout all eternity.

Not printed in Book of Commandments.

1835 Doctrine & Covenants 91 heading: A Vision.

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	<b>Evening and Morning Star</b>	<b>Kirtland Revelations Book</b>	<b>1835 D&amp;C 91</b>	
Listen up	1 ¶ HEAR, O ye Heavens, and	¶ Here o ye heavens and give ere o earth	Here, O ye heavens, and	1 Current LDS D&C verse

		give ear, O earth, and rejoice ye inhabitants thereof, for the Lord he is God, and beside him there is none else; and	and rejoice ye inhabitants thereof for the lord he is God and beside him there is <del>none else</del> Savior {and} for	give ere O earth, and rejoice ye inhabitants thereof, for the lord {he} is God and beside him there is no Savior;	numbers are left of the text. 1835 D&C verse numbers are right of the text.
God is wiser, does more than you can know	2	great is his wisdom; marvelous are his ways; and the extent of his doings, none can find out;	great is his wisdom, marvilous are his ways, and the extent of his doings none can find out	great is his wisdom: marvellous are his ways; and the extent of his doings, none can find out;	[Green]: editorial omission implemented Red: editorial change Purple: editorial change not implemented
He doesn't fail	3	his purposes fail not, neither are there any who can stay his hand:	his purposes fail not neither are there any who can stay his hand,	his purposes fail not, neither are there any who can stay his hand:	
He is always the same	4	from eternity to eternity, he is the same, and his years never fail.	from eternity to eternity, he is the same, and his years never fail.	from eternity to eternity, he is the same and his years never fail.	
He is merciful and gracious to the righteous	5	¶ I the Lord am merciful and gracious unto them who fear me, and delight to honor them who serve me in righteousness, and in truth;	<For thus saith the Lord,> I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto <del>them</del> <those> who fear me and delight to honor <del>them</del> <those> who serve me in righteousness and in truth <unto the end>	For thus saith the Lord, I the Lord am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness, and in truth unto the end;	2 Red: editorial change
They get rewarded	6	great shall be their reward, and eternal shall be their glory;	great shall be their reward and Eternal Shall be their glory	great shall be their reward, and eternal shall be their glory;	
They get the mysteries	7	and unto them will I reveal all mysteries; yea, all the hidden	and unto them will I reveal all misteries yea all the hidden misteries of my Kingdom from	and <del>unto</del> them will I reveal all mysteries; yea, all the hidden	[Green]: editorial omission implemented

		mysteries of my Kingdom from days of old; and for ages to come, will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will concerning all things;	days of old and for ages to come will I make Known unto them the good pleasure of my will concerning all things <del>to come</del> <pertaining to my Kingdom>	mysteries of my kingdom from days of old; and for ages to come will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom;	Red: editorial change Purple: editorial change not implemented
	8	yea, even the wonders of eternity shall they know, and things to come will I show them, even the things of many generations;	yea even the wonders of eternity shall they know and things to come will I shew them even the things of many generations	yea, even the wonders of eternity shall they know, and things to come will I show them, even the things of many generations;	Purple: editorial change not implemented
They will be wise	9	their wisdom shall be great, and their understanding reach to Heaven; before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall come to nought;	there wisdom shall be great and there understanding reach to heaven and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish and the understanding of the prudent shall come to naught	their wisdom shall be great, and their understanding reach to heaven: and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall come to nought;	Red: editorial change
I will enlighten them	10	for by my Spirit will I enlighten them, and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will; yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man.	for by my Spirit will I inlighten them and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will yea even those things, which eye has not seen, nor ear heard nor yet entered into the heart of man.	for by my Spirit will I enlighten them, and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will; yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man.	

Joseph and Sidney February 16, 1832	11	We, Joseph and Sidney, being in the Spirit on the sixteenth day of February, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and thirty two,	¶ We Joseph <Smith jr> & Sidney <Rigdon> being in the Spirit on the [2] sixteenth {day} of February in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty two	We, Joseph Smith, jr. and Sidney Rigdon, being in the Spirit on the sixteenth of February, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and thirty two,	3 Red: editorial change [Green]: editorial omission implemented
Eyes opened and understandings enlightened	12	and through the power of the Spirit our eyes were opened, and our understandings were enlightened, so as to see and understand the things of God;	<del>and through</del> by the power of the spirit our eyes were opened and our understandings were enlarged so as to see and understand the things of God	by the power of the Spirit our eyes were opened and our understandings were enlightened, so as to see and understand the things of God:	Red: editorial change Purple: editorial change not implemented Orange: original retained
History of the world	13	even things which were from the beginning [beginning], before the world was, which was ordained of the Father, through his only begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, even from the beginning,	even <del>the</del> <those> things which were from the begining before the world was which <del>was</del> <were> ordained of the Father through his only begotten son who was in the bosom of the father even from the begining	Even those things which were from the beginning before the world was, which were ordained of the Father, through his only begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, even from the beginning;	Red: editorial change
Coverse with Jesus Christ	14	of whom we bear record, and the record which we bear is the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is in the Son, whom we saw and with whom	of whom <del>he</del> <we> bear record and the record which we bear is the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ {which} who is {in} the son whom we saw and with whom we conversed in the heavenly vision	of whom we bear record, and the record which we bear is the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the Son, whom we saw and with whom we	Red: editorial change



		we conversed in the Heavenly Vision.		conversed in the heavenly vision;	
Translating John 5:29	15	for as we sat doing the work of translation, which the Lord had appointed unto us, we came to the twenty ninth verse of the fifth chapter of John, which was given unto us thus:	for <del>as</del> <while> we <del>sat</del> <were> doing the work of translation which the lord had appointed unto us we came to the twenty ninth verse of <del>in</del> the fifth chapter of John which was given unto us <del>thus</del> <as follows>	for while we were doing the work of translation, which the Lord had appointed, unto us, we came to the twenty ninth verse of the fifth chapter of John, which was given unto us as follows:—	Red: editorial change
Resurrection	16	speaking of the resurrection of the dead who should hear the voice of the Son of man,	speaking of the reserection of the dead <concerning those> who <del>should</del> <Shall> hear the voice of the son of man	speaking of the resurrection of the dead, concerning those who shall hear the voice of the Son of Man—	Red: editorial change
Just and unjust	17	and shall come forth; they who have done good in the resurrection of the just, and they who have done evil in the resurrection of the unjust.	and shall come forth they who have done good in the resurrection of the Just and they who have done evil in the resurrection of the unjust	and shall come forth; they who have done good in the resurrection of the just. and they who have done evil in the resurrection of the unjust.	John 5:29: "And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
	18	Now this caused us to marvel, for it was given us of the Spirit;	now this caused us to marvel for it was given <unto> us of the spirit	Now this caused us to marvel, for it was given unto us of the Spirit:	Red: editorial change
Meditate, Lord	19	and while we	and while we meditated	and while we	

touches eyes of understanding		meditated upon these things, the Lord touched the eyes of our understandings, and they were opened, and the glory of the Lord shone round about;	upon these things the Lord touched the eyes of our understandings and they were opened and the glory of the lord shone round about	meditated upon these things, the Lord touched the eyes of our understandings, and they were opened, and the glory of the Lord shone round about:	
Glory of the Son, Father	20	and we beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, and received of his fulness;	and we beheld the glory of the son on the right hand of the Father and received of his fulness	and we beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, and received of his fulness;	
Worshipping angels	21	and saw the holy angels, and they who are sanctified before his throne, worshiping God and the Lamb forever and ever.	and saw the holy Angels and they who are sanctified before his throne worshiping God and the Lamb <who worship him> for ever and ever.	and saw the holy angels, and they who are sanctified before his throne, worshiping God and the Lamb, who worship him forever and ever.	Red: editorial change
He lives	22	And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him, that he lives;	and now after the many testamonies which have been given of him this is the testamony last of all which we give of him that he lives	And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him, that he lives;	
We saw him	23	for we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the only begotten of the Father;	[3] for we saw him, even on the right hand of God & we heard the voice bearing record that he is the only begotten of the Father	for we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the only begotten of the Father;	
Creator	24	that by him, and	that by him and	that by him, and	Red:

		through him, and of him, the worlds are made and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.	through him and of him the worlds are <del>made</del> and were created and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.	through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created; and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.	editorial change
Rebellious angel cast down	25	And this we saw also, and bear record, that an angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God, who rebelled against the only begotten Son (whom the Father loved, and who was in the bosom of the Father,) and was thrust down from the presence of God and the Son,	and this we saw also and bear record that an angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God who rebelled against the only begotten son (whom the father loved and who was in the bosom <del>with</del> <of> the father) and was thrust down from the presence of <del>the father</del> God and the Son	And this we saw also, and bear record, that an angel of God, who was in authority in the presence of God, who rebelled against the only begotten Son—whom the Father loved, and who was in the bosom of the Father—and was thrust down from the presence of God and the Son,	
Called Perdition, Lucifer, son of morning	26	and was called Perdition; for the Heavens wept over him; for he was Lucifer, even the son of the morning;	and was called perdition for the heavens wept over him <del>for</del> he was Lucifer <del>even</del> <A> <del>the</del> son of the morning	and was called Perdition; for the heavens wept over him; he was Lucifer, a son of the morning;	Red: editorial change
Fallen	27	and we beheld, and lo, he is fallen! is fallen! even the son of the morning.	and we beheld and lo he is fallen is fallen even <del>the</del> <A> son of the morning,	and we beheld and lo, he is fallen! is fallen, even a son of the morning!	Red: editorial change
Commanded to write  Satan seeks God's kingdom	28	And while we were yet in the Spirit, the Lord commanded us that we should	and while we were yet in the Spirit the Lord commanded <us> that we should write the vision for {behold} we	And while we were yet in the Spirit, the Lord commanded us that we should	{Green]: editorial omission retained Red:

		write the Vision; for behold Satan, that old serpent, even the devil, who rebelled against God, and sought to take the kingdoms of our God, and of his Christ;	beheld Satan that old Serpent even the devel <del>who</del> who rebelled against God and saught to take the kingdom of our God and his christ	write the vision: for we beheld satan, that old serpent, even the devil, who rebelled against God, and sought to take the kingdom of our God and his Christ;	editorial change
Wars against the Saints	29	wherefore, he maketh war with the saints of God, and encompasses them round about:	wherefore he maketh war with the saints of God and encompasseth<s> them round about,	wherefore he maketh war with the saints of God and encompasses them round about,	
Sufferings	30	And we saw a vision of the eternal sufferings of those with whom he maketh war and overcometh, for thus came the voice of the Lord unto us.	and we saw a vision of the <del>eternal</del> sufferings of those with whom he {maketh} made war and {overcometh}overcame for thus came the voice of the Lord unto us	And we saw a vision of the sufferings of those with whom he made war and overcame, for thus came the voice of the Lord unto us.	Red: editorial change {Green]: editorial omission retained
	31	Thus saith the Lord concerning all those who know my power, and have been made partakers thereof, and suffered themselves through the power of the devil to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy my power—	thus saith the Lord concerning all those who <del>who</del> know my power and have been made partakers thereof and <del>have</del> suffered themselves through the power of the devel to be overcome <del>as to the</del> <del>denying of</del> <and to deny> the truth and <del>the</del> <del>defying of</del> my power	Thus saith the Lord, concerning all those who know my power, and have been made partakers thereof, and suffered themselves, through the power of the devil, to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy my power:	
Sons of perdition	32	They are they who are the sons	they are they who are the sons of perdition of	they are they who are the sons	

		of perdition, of whom I say that it had been better for them never to have been born;	whom I say {that} it had been better for them <del>to have</del> never <to have> been born	of perdition, of whom I say it had been better for them never to have been born;	
Suffer in eternity	33	For they are vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity;	for they are vessels of wrath doomed to suffer the wrath of God with the Devel and his angels [4] through <del>out</del> <del>all</del> eternity	for they are vessels of wrath doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels, in eternity:	Purple: change not implemented
No forgiveness	34	Concerning whom I have said there is no forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come—	concerning whom I have said there is no forgiveness <del>for them</del> in this world nor in the world to come	concerning whom I have said there is no forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come:	
Deny Holy Spirit, the Son	35	Having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it, and having denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father, having crucified him unto themselves and put him to an open shame.	having denied the holy <del>ghost</del> <Spirit> after having received it and having denied the only begotten son of the father <del>crucifying</del> <haveing crucified> him unto themselves and <del>putting</del> him to an open shame	having denied the Holy Spirit, after having received it, and having denied the only begotten Son of the Father, having crucified him unto themselves, and put him to an open shame:	
Lake of fire and brimstone	36	These are they who shall go away into the lake of fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels—	these are they who shall go away into the lake of fire and brimstone with the devel and his andels	these are they who shall go away into the lake of fire and brimstone, with the devel and his angels,	
Second death	37	And the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power;	and the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power	and the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power:	

Not to be redeemed	38 Yea, verily, the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, after the sufferings of his wrath.	yea verily the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord after the sufferings of his wrath	yea, verily the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, after the sufferings of his wrath;	
All others to be resurrected	39 For all the rest shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead, through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb, who was slain, who was in the bosom of the Father before the worlds were made.	[for all the rest] who shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead through the triumph and the glory of the lamb who was slain who was in the bosom of the father before the worlds were made	for all the rest shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead, through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb, who was slain, who was in the bosom of the Father before the worlds were made.	Purple: editorial change not implemented
	40 And this is the gospel, the glad tidings, which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us—	and this is the gospel the glad tidings which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us	And this is the gospel, the glad tidings which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us	
Jesus came to be crucified, sanctify the world	41 That he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness;	that he came in to the world even Jesus to be crucified for the world and to bear the sins of the world and to sanctify the world and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness	that he came in to the world, even Jesus to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness;	
Save all that Father designates	42 That through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power and made by him;	that through him all might be saved whom the father had put into his power and made by him	that through him all might be saved, whom the Father had put into his power, and made by him;	

Not sons of perdition	43 who glorifieth the Father, and saveth all the work of his hands, except those sons of perdition, who denieth the Son after the Father hath revealed him:	who glorify <del>eth</del> <es> the father and saveth<s> all the works of his hands except those sons of perdition who {denieth} deny <del>it</del> the son after the father hath<s> revealed him	who glorifies the Father, and saves all the works of his hands, except those sons of perdition, who deny the Son after the Father has revealed him:	Red: editorial change
Everlasting punishment	44 wherefore he saveth all save them, and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, which is endless punishment, which is eternal punishment, to reign with the devil and his angels throughout eternity, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched, which is their torment,	wherefore he saveth<s> all <del>save</del> <except> them, <del>and</del> {these} they shall go away into everlasting punishment which is <del>eternal</del> <En[d]less> punishment <which is Eternal punishment> to reign with the devil and his angels <del>throughout all</del> <in> eternity [5] where <del>the</del> <their> worm <del>dieth</del> <dies> not and the fire is not quenched which is their torment	wherefore he saves all except them; they shall go away into everlasting punishment, which is endless punishment, which is eternal punishment, to reign with the devil and his angels in eternity, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched which is their torment,	Red: editorial change Purple: change not implemented
No one knows their torment	45 but the end thereof, neither the place thereof, and their torment, no man knoweth,	{but} and the end thereof neither the place thereof <del>and</del> <nor> their torment no man knoweth<s>	and the end thereof, neither the place thereof, nor their torment, no man knows,	{Green]: omitted EMS Red: added EMS <del>Blue</del> : canceled EMS Red: added EMS
	46 neither was it revealed, neither is, neither will be revealed unto man, save to them who are made partakers thereof:	neither was <it> reveiled neither is neither will be reveiled unto none <del>save</del> <except> to them <del>to</del> who are made partakers thereof	neither was it revealed, neither is, neither will be revealed unto man, except to them who are made partakers thereof:	Purple: change ignored <del>Blue</del> : canceled EMS Red: changed

					EMS { Green] omitted EMS
Only by vision	47	nevertheless I the Lord showeth it by vision unto many but straightway shutteth it up again:	nevertheless I the Lord showeth it by vision unto many but straightway shutteth it up again	nevertheless I the Lord show it by vision unto many, but straightway shut it up again:	<del>Blue</del> : canceled EMS
Misery	48	wherefore the end, the width, the height, the depth, and the misery thereof he understandeth not neither any man save them who are ordained unto this condemnation.	wherefore the end the width the height the depth and the misery thereof he understandeth not neither any man <del>save</del> <except> them who are ordained unto this condemnation	wherefore the end, the width, the height, the depth, and the misery thereof {he] they understand not, neither any man except them who are ordained unto this condemnation.	{ Green] and Red: changed <del>Blue</del> : canceled EMS <del>Blue</del> and Red: changed EMS
Write the vision	49	And we heard the voice saying, Write the vision for lo, this is the end of the vision of the eternal sufferings of the ungodly!	and we heard the voice saying write the vision for lo this is the end of the vision of the <del>eternal</del> sufferings of the undodly [ungodly]	And we heard the voice saying, Write the vision for lo! this is the end of the vision of the sufferings of the ungodly!	<del>Blue</del> : canceled EMS
Resurrection of the just	50	¶ And again we bear record, for we saw and heard, and this is the testimony of the gospel of Christ, concerning them who come forth in the resurrection of the just:	and again we bear record for we saw and heard and this is the <del>gospel</del> testamony of the gospel of Jesus Christ concerning them who come forth in the resurection of the just	And again, we bear record for we saw and heard, and this, is the testimony of the gospel of Christ, concerning them who come forth in the resurrection of the just:	5 <del>Orange</del> : error canceled KRB Purple: change not implemented
Receive	51	they are they	they <del>were</del> <are> they	they are they	<del>Purple</del> :



testimony of Jesus		who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he hath given,	who received the testimony of Jesus and believed on his name <and> were baptized after the manner of his burial being buried in the water in his name and this according to the commandment which he hath given	who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name, and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he {hath] has given,	change canceled KRB { Green] and Red: changed
Keep commandments, cleansed from sin, receive Holy Spirit	52	that, by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power;	that by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins and receive the holy ghost by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power	that, by keeping the commandments, they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power;	Purple: change ignored KRB
Sealed by Holy Spirit of promise	53	And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.	and who overcome by faith and are sealed by {the] that holy spirit of promise which the father shedeth forth upon all those <del>who</del> who are just and tru[e]	and who overcome by faith, and are sealed by that Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true:	{ Green] and Red: changed EMS Purple: change not implemented <del>Orange:</del> error canceled
Church of the firstborn	54	They are they who are the church of the Firstborn.	they are they who are the church of the first born	they are they who are the church of the first-born:	
Father gives all things	55	They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things—	they are they into whose hands the father hath given all things	they are they into whose hands the Father has given all things:	Purple: change not implemented

Fulness of his glory	56	They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory;	they are they who are priests and kings who having <recieved> of his fulness and of his glory	they are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory,	Purple: change not implemented
Order of Melchizedek	57	And are priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son.	and are priests of the most high after the order of Melchisedeck which was after the order of Enoch which was after the order of of [sic] the [6] only begotten son	and are priests of the Most High after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the only begotten Son:	
Sons of God	58	Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God—	wherefore as it is written they are Gods even the sons of God	wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God:	
All things are theirs	59	Wherefore, all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's.	wherefore all things are theres whether life or death or things present or things to come, all are thers and they are christ's and christ is Gods	wherefore all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's;	
Overcome all	60	And they shall overcome all things.	and they shall overcome all things	and they shall overcome all things:	
	61	Wherefore, let no man glory in man, but rather let him glory in God, who shall subdue all enemies under his feet.	wherefore let no man glory in man but rather let him glory in god who shall subdue all enimies under his feet	wherefore let no man glory in man, but rather let him glory in God, who shall subdue all enemies under his feet:	
Dwell in presence of God	62	These shall dwell in the	these Shall dwell in the presence of God and	these shall dwell in the presence	

and Christ		presence of God and his Christ forever and ever.	his christ for ever and ever	of God and his Christ forever and ever:	
Come in clouds to reign on earth	63	These are they whom he shall bring with him, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven to reign on the earth over his people.	these are they whom he shall bring with him when he shall come in the clouds of heaven to reign on the earth over his people	these are they whom he shall bring with him, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven, to reign on the earth over his people:	
First resurrection	64	These are they who shall have part in the first resurrection	these are they who shall have part in the first resurrection	these are they who shall have part in the first resurrection:	
Resurrection of the just	65	These are they who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just:	these are they who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just	these are they who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just:	
Come to Mount Zion	66	these are they who are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly place, the holiest of all:	these are they who are come unto mount Zion and unto the city of the Living God the heavenly place the holiest of all	these are they who are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly place, the holiest of all:	
Come with angels to church of Enoch and Firstborn	67	these are they who have come to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of Enoch, and of the first born:	these are they who <del>are</del> <have> come to an innumerable company of Angels to the general assembly and church of Enoch and of the first born	these are they who have come to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of Enoch, and of the first born:	
Names written in heaven	68	These are they whose names are written in heaven, where	these are they whose names are written in heaven where God and Christ <del>is</del> <are the>	these are they whose names are written in heaven, where	<del>Purple:</del> change canceled KRB

		God and Christ are the judge of all.	judge of all	God and Christ are the judge of all:	
Just men made perfect	69	These are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood.	these are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood	these are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood:	
Celestial bodies	70	These are they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all, whose glory the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical.	these are they whose bodies are celestial whose glory is that of the sun even <the glory of> God the highest of all whose glory the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical	these are they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God the highest of all; whose glory the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical.	See also ¶ <u>D&amp;C 88:1-126.</u>
Terrestrial world like moon	71	And again, we saw the terrestrial world, and behold and lo, these are they who are of the terrestrial, whose glory differs from that of the church of the Firstborn who have received the fulness of the Father, even as that of the moon differs from the sun in the firmament.	and again we saw the terrestrial world and behold <and> lo these are they who are of the Terrestrial [7] whose glory differeth from that of the church of the first born who have received the fulness of the father even as that of the moon differ<s>eth from the sun in the firmament	And again, we saw the terrestrial world, and behold and lo! these are they who are of the terrestrial, whose glory differs from that of the church of the first born, who have received the fulness of the Father, even as that of the moon differs from the sun in the firmament.	6 Purple: change ignored KRB Purple: change canceled KRB

Die without the law	72	Behold, these are they who died without law;	behold these are they who died without Law	Behold, these are they who died without law;	
Spirits kept in prison	73	And also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh;	and also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison whom the son visited and preached the gospel unto them that they might be judged according to men in the flesh	and also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh,	
Receive Jesus after life	74	Who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it.	who received not the testamony of Jesus in the flesh but afterwards received it	who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it:	
Honorable men	75	These are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men.	these are they who are honorable men of the earth who were blinded by the craftiness of men	these are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men:	
Receive glory, but not fulness	76	These are they who receive of his glory, but not of his fulness.	these are they who receive of <del>this</del> <his> glory but not of this fulness	these are they who receive of his glory, but not of his fulness;	<del>Orange:</del> error canceled <del>Orange:</del> error
Son's, but not Father's presence	77	These are they who receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fulness of the Father.	these are they who receive of the presence of the son but not of the fulness of the father	these are they who receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fulness of the Father:	
Terrestrial bodies	78	Wherefore, they are bodies terrestrial, and not bodies	wherefore they are bodies Terrestrial and not bodies Celestial and differeth in glory	wherefore they are bodies terrestrial, and not bodies	<del>Purple:</del> change canceled KRB

		celestial, and differ in glory as the moon differs from the sun.	as the moon differ <del>eth</del> <s> from the sun	celestial, and differ in glory as the moon differs from the sun:	
Not valiant in testimony of Jesus	79	These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God.	these are they who <del>were</del> <are> not valiant in the testamony of Jesus wherefore they obtain<ed> not the crown over the kingdom of our God,	these are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus: wherefore, they obtained not the crown over the kingdom of our God.	<del>Purple:</del> change canceled KRB Red: addition EMS
	80	And now this is the end of the vision which we saw of the terrestrial, that the Lord commanded us to write while we were yet in the Spirit.	and now this is the end of the vision which we saw of the Terrestrial that the lord commanded us to write while we were yet in the spirit.	And now this is the end of the vision which we saw of the terrestrial, that the Lord commanded us to write while we were yet in the Spirit.	
Telestial glory like stars	81	And again, we saw the glory of the telestial, which glory is that of the lesser, even as the glory of the stars differs from that of the glory of the moon in the firmament.	and again we saw the glory of the Telestial which glory is that of the lesser, even as the glory of the stars differ{s} <del>eth</del> from that of the <glory of the> moon in the firmament	And again, we saw the glory of the telestial, which glory is that of the lesser, even as the glory of the stars differ from that of the glory of the moon in the firmament;	7 [Green]: omitted <del>Purple:</del> change not implemented
Do not receive gospel	82	These are they who received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus.	these are they who receive not the gospel of christ neither the testamony of Jesus	these are they who received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus:	<del>Purple:</del> change not implemented
Do not deny Holy Spirit	83	These are they who deny not the Holy Spirit.	these are they who deny not the holy ghost,	these are they who deny not the Holy Spirit:	<del>Purple:</del> change not implemented
Those in hell	84	These are they	these are they who are	these are they	

		who are thrust down to hell.	thrust down to hell	who are thrust down to hell:	
Redeemed at last resurrection	85	These are they who shall not be redeemed from the devil until the last resurrection, until the Lord, even Christ the Lamb, shall have finished his work.	these are they who shall not be redeemed from the devel untill the last reserection untill the lord even christ the lamb shall have finished his work.	these are they who shall not be redeemed from the devil, until the last resurrection, until the Lord, even Christ the Lamb, shall have finished his work:	
Holy Spirit ministers to	86	These are they who receive not of his fulness in the eternal world, but of the Holy Spirit through the ministration of the terrestrial;	these are they who receive not of his fullness in the eternal [8] world, but of the holy ghost through the ministration of the Terestrial	these are they who receive not of his fulness in the eternal world, but of the Holy Spirit through the ministration of the terrestrial;	Purple: change not implemented
	97	And the terrestrial through the ministration of the celestial.	and the Terestrial through the <del>æ</del> ministration of the Celestial	and the terrestrial through the ministration of the celestial;	
Ministering angels	88	And also the telestial receive it of the administering of angels who are appointed to minister for them, or who are appointed to be ministering spirits for them; for they shall be heirs of salvation.	and also the Telestial receive it of the administering of angels who are appointed to minister for them or who are appointed to be ministering spirits for them for they shall be heirs of salvation	and also the telestial receive it of the administering of angels, who are appointed to minister for them, or who are appointed to be ministering spirits for them, for they shall be heirs of salvation.	
Surpasses all understanding	89	And thus we saw, in the heavenly vision, the glory of the telestial, which surpasses all	and thus we saw in the heavenly vision the glory of the Telestial which surpasseth all understanding	And thus we saw in the heavenly vision, the glory of the telestial, which surpasses all	Purple: change not implemented

		understanding;		understanding;	
	90	And no man knows it except him to whom God has revealed it.	and no man knoweth it except him to whom God hath revealed it	and no man knows it except him to whom God has revealed it.	Purple: change not implemented
Terrestrial excels telesial	91	And thus we saw the glory of the terrestrial which excels in all things the glory of the telesial, even in glory, and in power, and in might, and in dominion.	and thus we saw the glory of the Terrestrial which exceleth<s> in all things the glory of the telesial even in glory and in power and in might and in dominion	And thus we saw the glory of the terrestrial, which excels in all things the glory of the telesial, even in glory, and in power, and in might, and in dominion.	Purple: change canceled KRB Green: inadvertent omission KRB
Celestial excels all	92	And thus we saw the glory of the celestial, which excels in all things— where God, even the Father, reigns upon his throne forever and ever;	and thus we saw the glory of the Celestial which exceleth<s> in all things where God even the father reigneth upon his throne forever and ever—	And thus we saw the glory of the celestial, which excels in all things, where God, even the Father, reigns upon his throne forever and ever:	Purple: change canceled KRB Purple: change not implemented
	93	Before whose throne all things bow in humble reverence, and give him glory forever and ever.	before his <whose> throne all things bow in humble reverence and giveth <him> glory forever and ever,	before whose throne all things bow in humble reverence and give him glory forever and ever.	Purple: change canceled KRB
	94	They who dwell in his presence are the church of the Firstborn; and they see as they are seen, and know as they are known, having received of his fulness and of his grace;	they who dwell in his presence are the church of the first born and they see as they are seen and know as they are known having received of his fulness and of his grace	They who dwell in his presence are the church of the first born; and they see as they are seen, and know as they are known, having received of his fulness and of his grace;	
	95	And he makes	and he maketh them	and he makes	Purple:



	them equal in power, and in might, and in dominion.	equal in power—and in might and in dominion.	them equal in power, and in might, and in dominion.	change canceled KRB
	96 And the glory of the celestial is one, even as the glory of the sun is one.	and the glory of the celestial is one even as the glory of the son [sun] is one,	And the glory of the celestial is one, even as the glory of the sun is one.	
	97 And the glory of the terrestrial is one, even as the glory of the moon is one.	and the glory of the Terrestrial is one even as the glory of the of the moon is one.	And the glory of the terrestrial is one, even as the glory of the moon is one.	<del>Orange:</del> error canceled
Telestial like stars	98 And the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one; for as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one from another in glory in the telestial world;	and the glory of the Telestial is one even as the glory of the stars is <are> one for as one star differ<s> <del>eth</del> from another star in glory, even so differ<s> <del>eth</del> one from another in glory in the Telestial world	And the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one for as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one from another in glory in the telestial world:	<del>Blue:</del> canceled <del>Purple:</del> change canceled KRB Purple: change ignored EMS
	99 For these are they who are of Paul, and of Apollos, and of Cephas.	for these are they who are of Paul, and of Apolus and of cephus	for these are they who are of Paul, and of Apollos, and of Cephas:	
	100 These are they who say they are some of one and some of another—some of Christ and some of John, and some of Moses, and some of Elias, and some of Esaias, and some of Isaiah, and some of Enoch;	these are they who say they are some of one and some of another some of Christ & some of John and some of Moses and some of Elias and some of Esaias [9] and some of Isaiah and some of Enoch	these are they who say they are some of one and some of another; some of Christ; and some of John; and some of Moses; and some of Elias; and some of Esaias; and some of Isaiah; and some of Enoch,	

Receive not the gospel	101	But received not the gospel, neither the testimony of Jesus, neither the prophets, neither the everlasting covenant.	but received not the gospel neither the testamony of Jesus neither the prophets neither the everlasting covenants	but received not the gospel; neither the testimony of Jesus; neither the prophets: neither the everlasting covenant;	
Refuse to gather	102	Last of all, these all are they who will not be gathered with the saints, to be caught up into {3} the church of the Firstborn, and received into the cloud.	last of all these <all> are they who will not be gathered with the saints to be caught up unto the church of the first born and received into the cloud	last of all, these all are they who will not be gathered with the saints, to be caught up unto the church of the first born, and received into the cloud:	
Liars, sorcerers, adulterers, etc.	103	These are they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie.	these are they who are liars and sorsers and adu<l>terers and whoremongers and whosoever love<s>eth and make<s>eth a lie	these are they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie:	<del>Purple:</del> change canceled KRB
Earthly punishment	104	These are they who suffer the wrath of God on earth.	these are they who suffer the wrath of God on the earth.	these are they who suffer the wrath of God on earth:	Purple: change not implemented
Eternal fire	105	These are they who suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.	these are they who suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.	these are they who suffer the vengeance of eternal fire:	
In hell until the end	106	These are they who are cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of Almighty God, until the fulness of times, when Christ shall have subdued all enemies under	these are they who are cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of Almighty God untill the fulness of times when christ shall have subdued all enemies under his feet and shall have perfected his work	these are they who are cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of Almighty God until the fulness of times, when Christ shall have subdued all enemies under	

		his feet, and shall have perfected his work;		his feet, and shall have perfected his work,	
When Christ's work is finished	107	When he shall deliver up the kingdom, and present it unto the Father, spotless, saying: I have overcome and have trodden the wine-press alone, even the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God.	when he shall deliver up the kingdom and present it unto the father spotless saying I have overcome and have trodden the winepress alone even the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God	when he shall deliver up the kingdom and present it unto the Father spotless, saying: I have overcome and have trodden the wine-press alone, even the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God:	
And he is crowned	108	Then shall he be crowned with the crown of his glory, to sit on the throne of his power to reign forever and ever.	then shall he be crowned with the crown of his glory to sit on the throne of his power to reign for ever and ever,	then shall he be crowned with the crown of his glory, to sit on the throne of his power to reign for ever and ever.	
Innumerable members of telestial world	109	But behold, and lo, we saw the glory and the inhabitants of the telestial world, that they were as innumerable as the stars in the firmament of heaven, or as the sand upon the seashore;	but behold and lo we saw the glory <and the inhabitants> of the Telestial world that they were in number as innumerable as the stars in the firmament of heaven, or as the sand upon the sea shore	But behold and lo, we saw the glory and the inhabitants of the telestial world, that they were as innumerable as the stars in the firmament of heaven, or as the sand upon the sea shore,	Purple: change not implemented
	110	And heard the voice of the Lord saying: These all shall bow the knee, and every tongue shall confess to him	and herd the voice of the Lord saying these all shall bow the knee and evry tongue shall confess to him who sitteth upon the throne for ever and ever	and heard the voice of the Lord saying: These all shall bow the knee, and every tongue shall confess to him	Purple: change ignored KRB

		who sits upon the throne forever and ever;		who sits upon the throne forever and ever:	
Judged by works	111	For they shall be judged according to their works, and every man shall receive according to his own works, his own dominion, in the mansions which are prepared;	for they shall be judged according to their works, and every man shall receive according to his own works, and his own dominion in the mansions which are prepared,	for they shall be judged according to their works; and every man shall receive according to his own works, and his own dominion, in the mansions which are prepared,	Red: added EMS
Never get to be with God or Christ	112	And they shall be servants of the Most High; but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end.	<and> they shall be servants of the most high but where God and christ dwell[1]s they cannot come worlds without end	and they shall be servants of the Most High, but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end.	Purple: change not implemented
End of vision	113	This is the end of the vision which we saw, which we were commanded to write while we were yet in the Spirit.	this is the end of the vision which we saw which we were commanded to write while we were yet in the spirit,	This is the end of the vision which we saw, which we were commanded to write while we were yet in the Spirit.	
Showed us many things	114	But great and marvelous are the works of the Lord, and the mysteries of his kingdom which he showed unto us, which surpass all understanding in glory, and in might, and in dominion;	[10] But great and marvelous are the works of the Lord and the mistries of his kingdom which he shewed unto us which surpasse<s>th all understanding in glory and <in> might and in dominion	But great and marvellous are the works of the Lord, and the mysteries of his kingdom which he showed unto us, which surpass all understanding in glory, and in might, and in dominion,	8 Purple: change ignored KRB Purple: change canceled KRB
Commanded	115	Which he	which he commanded	which he	

not to write		commanded us we should not write while we were yet in the Spirit, and are not lawful for man to utter;	us we should not write while we were yet in the spirit and are not lawful for man to utter	commanded us we should not write while, we were yet in the Spirit, and are not lawful for man to utter;	
Only to be seen and understood by the Spirit	116	Neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy Spirit, which God bestows on those who love him, and purify themselves before him;	neither is man capable to make them known for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the holy <del>ghost</del> <Spirit> which God bestows on those who love him and purifies themselves before him	neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy Spirit, which God bestows on those who love him and purify themselves before him;	Purple: change not implemented
	117	To whom he grants this privilege of seeing and knowing for themselves;	to whom he grants the privilege of seeing and knowing for themselves	to whom he grants this privilege of seeing and knowing for themselves;	Purple: change not implemented
	118	That through the power and manifestation of the Spirit, while in the flesh, they may be able to bear his presence in the world of glory.	that through the power and manifestation of the spirit while in the flesh they may be able to bear his presence in the world of glory	that through the power and manifestation of the Spirit, while in the flesh, they may be able to bear his presence in the world of glory.	
	119	And to God and the Lamb be glory, and honor, and dominion forever and ever. Amen.	and to God and the Lamb be glory and honor and dominion forver and ever Amen	And to God and the Lamb be glory, and honor, and dominion forever and ever.— Amen.	

Sidney Rigdon  
Joseph Smith Jr

### Which version came first?

The versions in the Evening and Morning Star (first column) and in the Kirtland Revelations Book (second column) were produced the same year (1832). The Star was published in July, but we don't know the month or day that the KRB version was written. Both versions are copies, so regardless of which was produced first, we don't know which is closer to the "original."

But by comparing the changes, can we tell whether the EMS or KRB is closer to the 1835 D&C? This might suggest an evolution from the "earliest" to the "middle" to the final (D&C) version.

### Priority of KRB

There are 31 instances in which Star and D&C agree against KRB, suggesting the Star is closer to the D&C, and KRB is therefore earlier. These instances are in purple except one occurrence of a word present in Star and D&C but missing in KRB. Roughly 40% (12) of these occur in the first 47% (56) of the revelation; 60% (19) occur in the last 43%.

In 1 instance KRB omits a word (he) that is present in the Star and is also omitted in the D&C. There is also 1 instance of unto in Star given as to in the KRB and D&C. These are in blue in the KRB (second column).

Note: Green/Red favors EMS; Purple favors KRB

### Priority of EMS

Twenty-two times KRB ~~strikes out~~ text consistent with the Star and inserts new text which is also present in the D&C. All occur in the first 40% (48) of verses.

1833

**John Davis, Editor & Frequently Author**

**Besides Sanctuary, Temple Contained Numerous Courts & Piles Of Buildings, Appropriated To Variety Of Purposes. To This Vast Number Of Apartments Our Lord Is Supposed To Allude, John Xiv. 2, Where He Speaks Of Many Mansions In Heaven**

**The Visitor: or, Monthly instructor . By Religious Tract Society (Great Britain)**

### **The Temple and Its Courts**

The Temple at Jerusalem stood on Mount Moriah, on the ground David purchased of Araunah, the Jebusite. The first temple was built by Solomon in seven years, and finished B. C. 1004. It is described in the Book of Kings and Chronicles, and was destroyed by the Chaldeans, B. C. 588.

The second temple was built on the same site by Zerubbabel, but was far inferior in every respect: see Ezra iii. 12. It was profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes, in B. C. 163, and purified and repaired by Judas Maccabeus three years subsequently.

The Jewish writers note five things which had been in the first temple, but were wanting in the second. 1. The ark. 2. The shechinah, or manifestation of the Divine presence. 3. The sacred fire kindled from heaven. 4. The urim and thummim. 5. The spirit of prophecy. This latter, however, was not entirely wanting. Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi, may all be accounted prophets of the second temple; the effusions of the Spirit on Zacharias, Simeon, and Anna, may also be enumerated, but especially the presence of our blessed Lord himself, whereby the latter house excelled the first in glory, as foretold by Haggai, ii. 9.

After the lapse of five centuries from its erection, this temple had become much decayed, when Herod the Great, some years before the birth of our Saviour, undertook to repair, or rather gradually to rebuild it, for nine years; fifty thousand workmen were employed, and no cost was spared to render it most magnificent. Josephus speaks in the strongest terms of its curious structure and beauty. The Jews continued to enlarge and ornament the temple long after Herod's death, so that in fact it had been forty and six years in building, before the time our Saviour spoke respecting it, John ii. 20.

When the great body of workmen were discharged, on the completion of these works, for want of employment, they began those tumults and seditions which ended in the destruction of the city, the temple, and the Jewish polity.

Besides the sanctuary, the temple contained numerous courts and piles of buildings, appropriated to a variety of purposes. To this vast number of apartments our Lord is supposed to allude, John xiv. 2, where he speaks of the many mansions in heaven. In mentioning the events which occurred in the temple, these courts and apartments are spoken of under the general denomination of the temple.

The second temple being erected on the same site as the first, was situated on a very hard rock, mostly encompassed by steep precipices. A part of the foundation was a wall of very large stones raised from the valley beneath, to a height of 450 feet, and in some places, as much as 700. The temple, strictly so-called, consisting only of the portico, the sanctuary, and the holy of holies, was but a small pile, surrounded by courts, making in the whole a square of about half a mile in circumference, or forming an area of about nineteen acres, according to others. The outer enclosure was entered by eight gates; the whole pile of building in each of these gates, according to Josephus, was about fifty feet in height, and eighteen wide, including the towers over the gateways. There were also buildings adjoining to all the gates. The gate called the Beautiful gate, Acts iii. 2, led from the outer to the inner courts. It was very splendid, and composed of Corinthian brass, the most valuable metallic composition in ancient times.

The first, or outer court, was the court of the gentiles, beyond which strangers were not allowed to pass. It was enclosed by a wall more than forty feet high, and surrounded on the inside by spacious porticoes or cloisters; above which were galleries or apartments supported by marble pillars. One of these ranges was called Solomon's porch or piazza, because it stood on the terrace that monarch built up from the valley beneath as already mentioned, to enlarge the area of the mountain. This terrace was the only work of Solomon in the second temple, and therefore retained the name of that prince: see John x. 23, Acts iii. 11. The south-east corner of the roof is supposed to have been the place from whence Satan endeavoured to persuade our Lord to cast himself down: see Matt. iv. 5. In this court, assigned to gentile proselytes, the Jews, who did not worship in it themselves, allowed the money changers, and sellers of animals for sacrifices, to take their stations; but our Lord drove them from thence, telling them that the temple was a house of prayer for all nations, and they had made it a den of thieves, sufficiently indicating the spirit in which their traffic was conducted.

The beautiful effect of the ranges of white marble pillars in the piazzas is described by Josephus, who says, "Their effect was incredible to those who never saw them, and an amazement to those who did. Each pillar was six cubits in diameter, and the width of the cloisters or covered walk was thirty cubits on three sides, but on the southern it was more than seventy cubits. A cubit was about twenty-one inches. The roof of a part of these cloisters was destroyed by the Romans, in a commotion which took place soon after the death of Herod the Great, but was repaired before the commencement of our Lord's ministry.

The inner courts were divided from the court of the gentiles by a space or terrace, called the Hil, or sacred fence, ten cubits wide, alluded to in the epistle to the Ephesians, ii. 13, 14. The outer wall of this was a fence of lattice work, three cubits high. The natural rock rising higher than in the outer court, the floor of this space was six cubits above that of the court of the gentiles; the ascent to the Hil was by twelve steps.

There were five steps, each half a cubit, from the terrace to the next court, called the court of the women, as females were not allowed to go further. It is designated by that name by Jewish writers, but in the scriptures it is called the new court, 2 Chron. xx. 5; the outer court, Ezek. xlvi. 21; and the treasury, John viii. 20. The Beautiful gate was on the east side of this enclosure. There were also nine other gates from the terrace or Hil, to the courts within it; they were richly adorned with gold and silver. This court was 135 cubits square, containing about an acre and a quarter. In each corner was a smaller court, with buildings, and the spaces between them were occupied on three sides by piazzas, with galleries above, where the women stood, divided into ranges or stories, the number of which is not mentioned, while the men stood on the area below.

Next was the court of Israel. This was fifteen steps, or seven cubits and a half higher than the court of the women, and it was enclosed by a wall, twenty five cubits high, on the inside. The principal entrance was by the gate Nicanor, under a stately tower. The gate itself was forty cubits in height, and so very heavy as to require twenty men to open and shut it. Among the prodigies before the destruction of Jerusalem, it is recorded that this gate was opened by some invisible power. The court of Israel, properly so called, appears only to have been a narrow space or piazza, eight cubits broad, the line of separation between this and the inner space, called the court of the priests, being marked by the pillars which supported the roof, and a railing between the pillars, called the ranges; 2 Kings xi. 8, 15. Here the Israelites stood while their sacrifices were burning on the altar. In this court, and that called the court of the women, the people were praying while Zacharias burned incense in the sanctuary, Luke i. 10: and on such occasions, especially on the sabbaths, the number of persons present was very great.

The court of the priests was within that of Israel, and inclosed thereby as a picture by a frame. Its floor was two cubits and a half higher, and was ascended by steps at the east end, which extended the whole width of the court. These steps formed a space eleven cubits broad, occupied by the musicians during the public services.

Immediately before the space stood the brazen altar, exactly on the spot where Araunah's threshing floor had been. In Herod's time it was larger than at any former period, being thirty-two cubits square at the base, and ten in height. A cubit at the south-east corner was cut off, showing the line which separated the tribe of Benjamin from that of Judah, that the whole of the altar might be in the former tribe. The priests ascended the altar by a gradually rising ascent. On the north side of the altar the sacrifices were slain.

Between the altar and the porch was a space of twenty-two cubits, which was considered peculiarly sacred. It is mentioned Ezek. viii. 16, Joel ii. 17, Matt. xxiii. 35.

The porch, or "portico, as "rebuilt by Herod, appears to have been 100 cubits in length, 128 in height, and 22 in breadth, forming a centre, the width of the body of the temple, and two wings. It was entered by an ascent of twelve steps from the court of the priests, extending nearly to the altar. Thus a person at the gates of the porch was twenty-four cubits and a half above the pavement of the court of the gentiles; an elevation which must have added to the impressive character of the building itself. This gate had no doors, but stood always



open, that it might be, as Josephus says, an emblem of heaven. The entrance from the porch to the sanctuary was covered by a veil, or piece of richly wrought tapestry, embroidered with a golden vine laden with grapes. The porch contained the vestibule leading to the sanctuary, and numerous apartments used for various purposes.

The ground beneath the temple and its courts was excavated into a number of vaults and caverns; this was principally done lest any dead body should be buried immediately beneath the worshippers, as by passing over a grave, a Jew contracted ceremonial defilement. These vaults also served for many other purposes.

The holy place, or sanctuary, was the same length and breadth as that in Solomon's temple, but double the height, which allowed it to be lighted by windows in the upper part of the wall, over the chambers built round the sanctuary on the outside. In the holy place was the sacred furniture, similar to that of the first temple, and the whole was ornamented with much magnificence. The holy of holies was separated by a double veil, very thick and strong, which was rent at the time of our Lord's expiring on the cross. We need not go into detail respecting the interior of the sanctuary, or the articles it contained. The height was double that of Solomon's temple; and the outer walls, of white marble, are compared by Josephus to a mountain of snow white and glistening, while the gilded roof dazzled the eyes of the spectator who beheld it when the sun shone upon it. The roof was covered with gilded spikes, to prevent birds from settling thereon.

In the construction of the temple, many stones of a prodigious size were used; Josephus describes some as forty-five cubits long, five high, and six broad. The reader will remember the words of the disciples, "Master, see what stones (what great stones) and what buildings are here!" Mark xi. 1. How improbable our Lord's words, that not one of these stones should be left upon each other, must then have seemed! yet they were literally fulfilled, A.d. 70, in the same month, and on the same day of the month, that Solomon's temple had been destroyed. The superstitious reverence which the Jews attached to the temple, is strongly shown by their alleging against our Lord on his trial, the words he had said John ii. 19: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up;" which they considered as contemptuous, and never forgot or forgave. See Matt, xxvii. 40; also Acts vi. 13, xxi. 28.

The tower, or castle of Antonia, stood on a steep rock at the north-west corner of the temple. It was built by John Hyrcanus, B.C. 135, on the site of a citadel erected by Antiochus Epiphanes, and used for keeping the sacred vestments and other articles. Herod the Great enlarged and repaired it. Antonia was both a palace and a fortification; a large body of Roman soldiers always were quartered there. It overlooked the two outer courts of the temple, and had communications with the cloisters by secret passages, so that it entirely commanded the temple, as well as the stairs from which the apostle Paul addressed the multitude; Acts xxi, 40. The castle at Norwich is supposed to have been built similar in form to that of Antonia.

As many circumstances related in the gospel history refer to the temple and its courts, the reader will be interested by having some idea of the wonderful structure; and the preceding description, it is hoped, will convey sufficient information. Minute accounts of the several parts, and the uses to which they were applied, will be found in Lightfoot, and other authors who have written on the subject; but in many respects they are founded upon conjecture. The usual plans of this edifice are drawn from descriptions in Josephus, and the Talmud, with some particulars recorded in scripture. As these descriptions are obscure in several parts, considerable difference will be observed in the plans of various authors.

**1833 (London)**

**Richard Mant, D.D., M.R.I.A. (1776-1848) Lord Bishop of Down and Connor; English churchman and writer**

**Different Degrees Of Happiness Among The Blessed**

**The Happiness Of The Blessed Considered As To The Particulars Of Their State**

What thou canst attain. which best may serve  
To glorify the Maker. and infer  
Thee also happier. shall not be withheld  
Thy hearing beyond abstain  
To ask, nor let thine own invention hope  
Things not reveal'd. which the invisible King.  
Only omniscient. hath suppress'd in night.  
To none communicable in earth and heaven:  
Enough is left besides to search or know.  
Milton. Par. Lost. vii. 115—125.

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## Chapter IV

### Different Degrees Of Happiness Among The Blessed

#### Section I. Introduction.—Statement of the case of the sons of Zebedee, and doctrine of different degrees of future happiness founded thereon.

An inquiry into the future happiness of the blessed should seem to be incomplete and defective, if it omitted a notice of the doctrine, which ascribes DIFFERENT DEGREES of happiness to DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS. An examination of this doctrine, therefore, will naturally follow our previous course of inquiry. The doctrine also is one of no trivial interest and moment in itself; but is calculated, I apprehend, in a high degree, to elevate the affections, and stimulate the exertions, of those Christians, who may be impressed with a well-founded and deep persuasion of its truth.

It is accordingly my purpose in the following chapter to consider the doctrine which teaches that different degrees of happiness will be bestowed on the blessed in a future life; and to state the scriptural ground on which I apprehend that it may be established. And then, supposing the doctrine to be true, it is my purpose to state the qualifications requisite in those who would attain to a superior degree of happiness: and the principles, according to which it will be bestowed by the bounty of God on the disciples of the Redeemer. May God, by his holy Spirit, dispose the minds both of the writer and the reader to a serious contemplation and a corresponding application of the truth,"that when Christ who is our life shall appear, then may we also appear with him in glory."

There are various independent passages in Holy Writ, which, in the progress of our examination, will be found to give support to the doctrine in question. But there is one passage in particular which appears to me possessed of special and singular efficacy in deciding the question before us in the affirmative. I propose, therefore, in the first place to state that passage, and to examine it more particularly; and then to confirm the doctrine conveyed in it by other corroborative observations.

The passage to which I allude is contained in the twentieth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and, with some unimportant variations, in the tenth chapter of St. Mark's. In the former it runs in this wise."Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered, and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink

indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but for whom it is prepared of my Father<sup>1</sup>." The reader will observe that I give the concluding clause without the additional words which are inserted into our translation, and which are indicated to be not in the original Greek by the Italick character, the customary index employed by our translators on all such occasions. Accordingly the sentence correctly runs, "to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but," that is, except to those," for whom it is prepared of my Father." This correction does not immediately affect the particular subject of our present inquiry. But as, in referring hereafter to the text, I would wish to refer to it in its most correct form, I judge it advisable that this matter should be adjusted in the outset.

For a clearer understanding of this narrative, and for its application to our present inquiry, I now proceed to observe, that the royal character and state which had been ascribed to the promised Messiah by the Hebrew prophets, and the image of a kingdom under which his future dispensation had been foreshadowed, had impressed the Jews with an expectation, that our Lord, when he made his appearance upon earth in fulfilment of their national predictions, would establish a temporal sovereignty over the world. His apostles partook in this general prepossession and anticipation of their countrymen. They expected that the establishment of an earthly sovereignty would consummate his pretensions to superior wisdom, authority, and power: and they were with difficulty at length induced to surrender the flattering vision, which they had persisted in fondly cherishing during their Lord's ministry, that a season of national prosperity would succeed to that of their national humiliation and depression; and that the Messiah, however he might delay the restoration, would nevertheless eventually "restore again the kingdom to Israel."

Meanwhile that they, who had been the chosen, the constant, and generally the faithful attendants of their Lord through his lowlier course, should be partakers of his elevation, and be admitted to a proportionate share in the glory of his royal dignity, was a reasonable, perhaps, at least a natural expectation. The highest stations of honour in his kingdom, a nearer approach to his royal person, a more intimate communication of the imperial favour of their Lord, would naturally be an object of ambition with them all.

Such in effect was the consequence of their expectation of his temporal sovereignty. Hence the repeated disputes and strifes among them all in general," which should be accounted the greatest" in their Master's anticipated kingdom. And hence in particular the petition of two of the most favoured of their number, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, as recorded in the narrative before us: a petition expressive of their own most fervent desire, for from St. Mark's relation it appears to have been urged by themselves in person, and pressed upon the notice of the Saviour by the additional most lowly solicitation of their mother Salome, who, as St. Matthew relates," came to him worshipping him," and beseeching that he would "grant that these her two sons might sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on the left," or, according to the usage of worldly potentates, in the two stations of the highest power and dignity" in his kingdom."

To this petition of the two brethren their Lord made answer by a question on his part, relative to their qualifications for the solicited preeminence. "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" alluding to that bitter cup of suffering, of which, in compliance with the awful dispensation of divine mercy and wisdom, he was about to drink: and to that agonizing baptism, wherewith he was soon to be baptized in his own blood. "They say unto him, We are able:" they probably did not perceive the full import of the question; or they presumed too confidently on their own resolution and strength.

But our Lord accepted this tender of their readiness to partake of his sufferings; and ratified it by a prediction of its fulfilment in their future destiny: "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with." But at the same time, adopting the phraseology of their petition, and leaving the proper exposition of it, and its liberation from the erroneous notions concerning a temporal kingdom, with which it was encumbered in the minds of the Apostles, to future opportunities, he added, "but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but for whom," or except to those for whom, "it is prepared of

my Father." They appear to have supposed that the distinction which they sought would be bestowed by their Master absolutely and arbitrarily, in pursuance of a feeling of partiality and fondness for his followers, and in compliance with the importunity of friends and interested advocates, after the manner of earthly sovereigns: he gives them to understand, that the distinction which he should in reality bestow, would be bestowed upon very different principles, and agreeably to the general rules adapted to the perfections of the divine nature, and prescribed by God for the distribution of future glory and happiness.

And now, that we may apply this to our immediate purpose, the language employed by our blessed Lord in this memorable dialogue, appears clearly to warrant the opinion, that different degrees of felicity and glory are prepared for those, who shall be admitted to the fruition of the Godhead in a future state of existence.

The two brethren, we have seen, petitioned of their Lord to "grant that they might sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on the left, in his kingdom." Concerning the nature of the kingdom, in which these stations of preeminence were desired, he made no remark, leaving that to be unfolded in due time more clearly to their apprehension. But the existence of such stations as they desired, stations of distinguished and preeminent dignity, his answer appears to recognise: for he distinctly speaks of those to whom "it should be given," and "for whom it was prepared," "to sit on his right hand and on his left," in contradistinction as it should seem from those, to whom other stations would be assigned in his realm of glory. If the two apostles sought by their petition, as unquestionably they did seek, stations of dignified preeminence above their fellows in the Messiah's kingdom, though of that kingdom itself they mistook the nature; the answer of their Lord appears to be a manifest indication, that in his kingdom, rightly understood, stations of superior dignity would be assigned to some individuals over others, more nearly approaching to his own unparalleled state of elevation, and more intimately partaking of the enjoyment of his presence.

### **The Ambitious Disciples.**

Rash was the tongue, and unadvisedly bold,  
Which sought, Salome, for thy favour'd twain  
Above their fellows in Messiah's reign  
On right, on left, the foremost place to hold.  
More rash perhaps, and bolder, that which told  
Of pow'r the Saviour's bitter cup to drain,  
And, passing stretch of human strength, sustain  
His bath baptismal. Lord, by thee enroll'd  
Thy servant, grant me thy Almighty grace,  
My destin'd portion of thy griefs to bear,  
Ev'n what thou wilt! But chiefly grant, thy face  
Within thy glory's realm to see, where'er  
Most meet thy wisdom deems; whate'er the place,  
It must be blest, for thou, my God, art there.

### **Section II: Doctrine of different degrees of future happiness, corroborated by other arguments.**

The doctrine, that there will be different degrees of happiness and glory in the world to come, may be thought to derive satisfactory testimony from the foregoing declaration of our blessed Lord to the sons of Zebedee. It is confirmed by the following corroborative arguments, which are now to be submitted to the reader's consideration.

First, it is analogous to the constitution and course of nature, as settled by the will of divine Providence; wherein we perceive diversities of gifts, of administrations, and of operations; differences in the talents intrusted to different agents, and corresponding differences in the employments whereon they are exercised, and in the rewards wherewith they are recompensed: so that by the variety, which we actually perceive in the present state, we are prepared for a similar dispensation in the future.

It is agreeable also to the anticipations of reason, that from the Being, who is an all-wise, an all righteous, an all-bountiful Judge and "Rewarder of them that diligently seek him1," the most diligent, the most laborious, the most arduous, the most persevering efforts should be rewarded by the most distinguished success: that they who have "let their light shine" most brightly"before men, that they may see their good works most conspicuously, and most worthily "glorify their Father which is in heaven," should be admitted to the highest degree of favour by their heavenly Father: that them who have most delighted to "honour" God,"God" should be most delighted to "honour2:" that they, who have "hungered and thirsted" most intensely after their inheritance of righteousness and glory, should be most abundantly "filled3."

But what is of still more importance is the fact, that this notion of different degrees of glory in a future state, indicated, as we have seen with much clearness by our Lord in his dialogue with the sons of Zebedee, is in conformity with other intimations also in the Word Of God.

True, indeed, it is, that the happiness of that state is sometimes represented generally, and without any distinction among those who shall be advanced to its inheritance, under the lofty figures of "a kingdom4," and "a throne5," and "a crown of life6," "of righteousness," and "of glory8:" and we doubt not, that the very lowest inmate of that blissful abode, the very "door-keeper," if I may so express myself, "of the house of God9," will have ample reason to "rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great will be his reward in heaven10." Still, while all who are admitted into that blessed state will doubtless find a sufficiency of fruition in "the joy of their Lord11," the Scriptures seem to sanction the opinion, that a preeminence of bliss and glory will be allotted to some over others.

If, on "the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, he will render unto every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour, and immortality, eternal life;" and "glory, honour, and peace shall be recompensed to every man that worketh good:" it seems to follow from this rule of distribution, that the most abundant glory will be awarded to those, who by the most patient continuance in well-doing have been the most diligent in seeking it, and have wrought good the most abundantly.

If at "the judgment seat of Christ every one shall receive according to the good that he hath done in the body";" it should seem that the blessing, which every one is to receive, will be in some way apportioned to the good which he has done: conformably to the rule which is elsewhere stated by the Apostle,"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap3;" and again,"He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully4."

When the Saviour saith,"Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be5:" it should seem to be his purpose to announce, that a scale of recompence will be established ascending with the qualifications of those who are the objects of it; and that the reward of every man will be regulated by his previous work: conformably to the Apostle's position, that"every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour1."

Not that any ground is here intended to be supplied for the notion, that whatever be the works of the best of men, or whatever be their reward, the former can establish a claim to a meritorious recompence, or the latter is to be regarded as the price of their deservings. Doubtless the reward is in every case to be ascribed to the free grace of God and the sole merits of the Redeemer. Nevertheless, speaking of the consequences of this dispensation of the divine love, we judge it to be the doctrine of Holy Writ, that the grace of God, for the sake of the Redeemer's merits, will apportion his reward according to the deeds of his servants.

In answer to the question of Peter,"Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?" the Redeemer said unto his disciples,"Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters,

or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life<sup>2</sup>." Thus again then it seems to be announced, that the future reward shall be regulated according to the character and deeds of the person to be rewarded: that greater sacrifices for Christ's sake shall receive & greater remuneration.

Meanwhile, in further proof of the different degrees of dignity and bliss in a future state, let it be observed, that our Saviour on several occasions speaks, as of "the least" so of "the greatest and the chief in the kingdom of heaven<sup>1</sup>:" and that the "authority" described by him in the parable, as conferred, emblematically of the future reward of fidelity, upon the servant who was constituted ruler "over ten cities," appears to indicate a condition of preeminence over him who was made ruler only "overdue<sup>5</sup>."

Further, "our vile bodies," we are told, "shall be changed" at the appearance of the Saviour, and "shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body," in incorruption and honour: but we are likewise told, that "there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead<sup>3</sup>."

And, since "they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead," shall be "as the angels of God in heaven<sup>4</sup>," this similitude appears to imply different distinctions and degrees of rank among "the spirits of just men made perfect;" after the manner of the gradation which prevails among that "innumerable company<sup>5</sup>" of the Lord's hosts, ascending from the lowest order of "ministering spirits<sup>6</sup>," up to the princes of the celestial hierarchy, "whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers<sup>1</sup>."

#### **Degrees Of Heavenly Happiness.**

If loftier posts superior state declare;  
More virtuous acts if ampler meeds requite;  
If brightest crowns on noblest prowess light,  
And well-sown fields a fuller harvest bear;  
If thrones, dominions, princedoms, powers there are,  
Which God's inferior hosts excel in might;  
If day's bright orb outshine the lamp of night,  
And Hesper's radiance the remotest star:  
Then shall the younger brethren of the sky,  
If right I scan the records of their fate,  
In varied ranks of social harmony  
God's mount encircle. Glorious is the state  
Ev'n of the lowest there: but seats more nigh  
The Sovereign's throne his greater servants wait.

#### **Section III: Qualifications for higher degrees of happiness.**

Having considered the grounds of the doctrine that there will be different degrees of happiness and glory in the life to come, I pass on to consider the Qualifications requisite for those, who would attain the highest degrees of honour in the Messiah's kingdom. And this consideration is the more deserving of our regard, and the more indispensable for every Christian, because, whilst the qualifications requisite for attaining the most eminent honours are in the most eminent degree requisite for those, who aspire to sit at the right hand and at the left of the Saviour in his kingdom, the diligent pursuit and the acquisition of the same qualifications, though in an inferior and less perfect degree, are necessary for those also, who will be admitted to fill the lowest stations in his kingdom. The holy city must be approached by the way of holiness. Superior degrees of excellence will be advanced, so we may humbly believe, through the merits of the Redeemer, to superior degrees of the Divine favour, and will occupy a preeminent station in the "many mansions of his Father's house V But the highway to it is one which the unclean shall not pass over: and" there shall in no wise enter

into the city any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life<sup>2</sup>."

With respect then to the qualifications in question, they have been anticipated in a general way in the foregoing section, where notice has been taken of higher degrees of happiness, as the consequence of the most diligent, laborious, arduous, and unwearied efforts in the service of God: of the most intense thirst after the promised inheritance of glory; of the most patient perseverance and the most abundant fruitfulness in well doing; of the greatest sacrifices for Christ's sake.

But for a fuller exposition of the subject, I would again advert to our Lord's dialogue with the sons of Zebedee. For therein our attention is directed to the nature of the qualifications requisite for those disciples of Christ, who desire to be admitted into the Saviour's future kingdom, and especially for those who aspire to stations of preeminence in that kingdom, by his question addressed to the two brethren, whose request has been made the foundation of our present reflections."Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask." Their view had been limited to the wished for object, instead of being extended to the qualifying means. To these latter, therefore, their thoughts were to be drawn by the ensuing inquiry,"Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

The "cup" of the Saviour, as we have already had occasion to notice, was that bitter cup of suffering which he was about to drink for man's salvation in compliance with the awful dispensation of the divine will: and the Saviour's "baptism" was that agonising sacrifice, wherein he was soon to be baptized in his own blood. And the question in its literal and primary bearing points to those losses and privations, to those mortifications and distresses, to which his first followers were exposed: when they were called on to "forsake houses, and brethren, and sisters, and father, and mother, and wife, and children, and lands for his sake and the gospel's<sup>1</sup>;" or, as elsewhere expressed,"for the kingdom of God's sake<sup>2</sup>:" and when, for his sake also and the gospel's, they were called on to suffer persecution under its various forms of false accusations and injurious revilings, of stripes, and bonds, and imprisonment, and banishment, and finally of a violent and cruel death. These are the persons to whom the language of our Saviour appears to point literally in the first place; and to indicate "the martyrs of Jesus<sup>1</sup>," "them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held<sup>2</sup>," who "loved not their lives unto the death<sup>3</sup>," but who "came out of great tribulation, and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb<sup>4</sup>," as intitled to peculiar distinction "before the throne of God."

But the qualification may be regarded perhaps as of a less limited extent, and may be understood to comprehend those disciples of Christ also, who in after ages, for the sake of Christ and his gospel, and of the kingdom of Christ, should suffer persecution: whether such persecution might lead to the actual laying down of their lives in defence of the Christian verity; or might stop short of the last extremity of suffering, and thus not render necessary a "resistance unto blood<sup>5</sup>."

Or, again, in more peaceable times of the gospel, the conformity to the Saviour, intimated by the figurative expressions of the question, may probably be accomplished, not so much by a resolute and constant endurance of the perils of persecution, as by a patient, composed, and devout submission to those sufferings, which are more usually incidental to our nature and to our present state of existence.

Or, again, it may be the will of God for such conformity to be manifested, less by the patient endurance of extraordinary persecutions, or even by that of any intense degree of affliction, than by a strict imitation of the example of holiness which Christ has left us, in the general course of our Christian duty, and in a punctual following of his steps, notwithstanding the temptations of our spiritual enemies, through the ordinary offices of a "sober, righteous, and godly life<sup>1</sup>," and with the meekness and humility of "little children<sup>2</sup>."

Thus much indeed may be accounted certain, that an endeavour to "be conformed to the image of the Son of God<sup>3</sup>" through this season of discipline and probation, in such respects and to such a degree, as the state of

life, in which it hath pleased God to place us, shall render practicable, is a necessary qualification for all those his disciples, who desire to be admitted to a participation of his glory. And the more completely the Christian can succeed by God's grace, in becoming "conformed to the image of his Son," by submitting with devout resignation to severer trials, if in the good pleasure of God severer trials await him; or, if not, by "patient continuance in well-doing," unterrified by the dangers, and unseduced by the allurements of the world; the more properly may he be said to "drink of the cup of which his Saviour drank, and to be baptized with the baptism which his Saviour was baptized with:" and the more lively hope may he reasonably cherish, that he is a partaker of the qualifications which are necessary for his admission to a station of eminence in his Saviour's everlasting kingdom.

**Conformity To Christ's Example, The Way To His Glory.**

Seek thou the image of the Lord to share,  
And thou shall share his glory! If the will  
Of God require thee thy heart's blood to spill  
For him, a willing martyr; or to bear  
Thy cross, thro' sickness, penury, and care,  
And drink affliction's cup: or thro' the still  
Calm vale thy course of righteousness fulfil,  
And his mild yoke in love and pureness wear:  
Hold fast the Great Exemplar!—Blest are they,  
Who stem serenely the world's uproar wild,  
Nor fears dishearten them, nor pains dismay:  
Nor they less blest, who, humbly as a child,  
Far from the world pursue their blameless way,  
And by the world's allurements undefil'd.

**Section IV: Principle on which higher degrees of happiness will be bestowed.**

And this leads us to a consideration of the Principle, according to which we presume that stations of eminence will be bestowed by the bounty of God through the merits and on the disciples of the Redeemer.

Here I would again advert to the circumstances of the narrative on which we have already commented; and to the condition of the two brethren, the sons of Zebedee, for whom, favoured as they were by the special notice and friendship of their Lord during his earthly ministry, special marks of distinction were sought by them and by their mother in their Lord's expected kingdom. Their request on this occasion was evidently founded on their experience of his previous personal regard: and it seems to have been their apprehension that the desired distinction would be conferred on those, whom their Lord should absolutely and arbitrarily choose to be the objects of it, actuated by a feeling of partiality and fondness for their persons, and induced moreover by the solicitations and importunity of their friends.

To correct this erroneous apprehension appears to have been our Lord's purpose; and to assure them that the preeminence in his kingdom would not be bestowed in such a manner and from such motives as they vainly imagined, but according to certain rules prescribed by Divine Providence for bestowing them. "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but for whom it is prepared of my Father." As if he had said, "Such preeminence in my kingdom is not mine to give," as you fondly suppose, by any absolute will of mine, or by any arbitrary selection of objects: by any undue partiality or fondness for the persons to be admitted; or out of any undue compliance with the earnest solicitation of others: "but" these rewards are regulated by the counsels of divine wisdom, which pervade the dispensation whereof I am the Mediator; and, accordingly, in the execution of my mediatorial office, it is mine to give it unto them for whom it is prepared of my Father."

Now, who are they, for whom future blessedness and glory are "prepared of his Father," he has not left us to conjecture, but has elsewhere graciously informed us.



They are they who love God: for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him<sup>1</sup>." They are they who love their brethren, the brethren of Christ as he is not ashamed to call them, and practise towards them the offices of benevolence and love: for this shall be the language addressed to them by the King, the Son of man, when he shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and all nations shall be gathered before him; "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me<sup>2</sup>." They are they, who on their passage through this terrestrial scene confess by their conduct that "they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth," and "desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city<sup>3</sup>."

These are they, for whom is prepared of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ a future abode of blessedness and glory: these are they, to whom that abode shall be given by our Lord Jesus Christ himself. And according as they shall have been more distinguished for their love of God, for their gratitude to their Saviour testified by acts of benevolence to their brethren, and for their elevation above earthly things, and their devout aspiration after the things of heaven, the more distinguished, we may conceive, will be their recompence; the brighter will be "the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give them in that day;" and the nearer will be their approximation to the glory of the Redeemer's throne.

In short, they who shall have "drunk" most deeply "of the cup" of Christ, and shall have been most thoroughly "baptized with his baptism," or, in other words, they who shall have been most perfectly "conformed to the image of the Son of God," and shall have been thus best qualified to attain preeminence in his kingdom, are also they, for whom, after a course of love to God and man, and of affection for things above, the glory of "sitting on his right hand and on his left" is prepared of his Father: a glory, which is prepared and will be bestowed, not in compliance with any partial favour, but in pursuance of that principle of divine wisdom and equity, which provides that the best things be "prepared" for those who are best prepared to receive them; and which has been propounded by the Judge himself in his own impressive annunciation, "He that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me; to give every man according as his work shall be V

### **Happiness Prepared Of The Father For Christ's Disciples.**

God for his own elect prepares a throne  
Of glorious brightness: what the Sire prepares,  
The Son bestows; so strict an union theirs,  
In nature, substance, will, and actions one.  
Would'st thou that throne of glory make thy own?  
Purge off each earthly passion, that impairs  
Thy heavenly likeness; to salvation's heirs  
Perform the angel's part; and in the Son  
Love God! The pure, the merciful, the meek,  
The poor in spirit, and the rich in love,  
Are his delight, his children. Such bespeak  
The holy influence of the mystick Dove:  
Such best below his heavenly kingdom seek,  
Such come most near Him in the realm above.

### **Section V: Proper effect of the foregoing reflections.**

The Proper Effect of such reflections, as have been now occupying our minds, is that the disciple of Christ should be animated with a very fervent desire and longing to "sit on the right hand or on the left" of his Master in his kingdom of glory; and accordingly should strive to invest himself, through the power of the Spirit of Christ, with that "conformity to Christ's image," which will qualify him for such a station of dignity;

and to acquire those Christian graces of piety, charity, and spiritual-mindedness, for the possessors of which it is prepared.

The desire of preeminence is inherent in our nature; but the indulgence of it is too frequently an introduction to a disregard of the laws of God, to injurious treatment of our brethren, to a neglect of our blessed Saviour's example, to an abandonment of the graces and virtues of the Christian life.

Even where no positive disobedience to God's laws, and no positive injustice towards others, result from the indulgence of temporal ambition, its pursuits have a natural tendency to secularize the mind of its votary, to weigh and press it down to the things of earth, and to produce an indifference, a disinclination, a neglect, a contempt, for high and heavenly things.

Disappointment also and mortification are the frequent consequences of its efforts: whilst, after all, even where disappointment is avoided, and the object of pursuit is attained, how little satisfactory is the consequent enjoyment, how ill calculated to fill up the cravings of a reasonable soul, how transitory and perishable in its duration!

Nor is it without its accompaniment of painful reflection to the mind of a considerate and generous competitor, that whatever gratification prosperity may produce from the contemplation of his own success, very different feelings are the natural consequence of failure in those who have been defeated in the pursuit of the object, which he has succeeded in attaining.

But to the object of desire, which is held forth to the Christian disciple as the scope of his loftiest ambition, no such derogatory and depreciating considerations can be applied.

A desire to attain that object, as it is in full accordance with the will of our Creator, so does it lead, in its regular course, to an observance of his commandments, to active benevolence for our fellow-creatures, to a cultivation of all Christian graces, to an imitation of the example of Christ.

The more perfect and earnest is our desire for such preeminence in Christ's kingdom, the more is the soul elevated above a desire for earthly things, and partakes more of the nature of those high and heavenly things, to which it is lifted up and aspires.

The object itself is in its nature most valuable, in its duration eternal; calculated to satisfy the most longing hunger and thirst of a creature, formed in the image, after the likeness, of his Creator, and gifted with immortality.

And although the very notion which we are considering supposes a superiority of reward in some, and of course an inferiority in others, and although therefore we may ourselves not be foremost in the competition, or may be sensible that others have failed in their efforts for the most distinguished prize; yet will a sense of such difference not be liable to produce the painful effects, which follow the variable success of worldly competitions; for we may be sure that they, who earnestly strive after the highest stations, will not fail of obtaining a reward fully sufficient for their eventual satisfaction and delight: since of the "many mansions," which our blessed Lord has assured us that there "are in his Father's house," however some may be distinguished by circumstances of preeminence, there is none which will not secure for its possessor an abundance of joy. If a brighter crown await the martyred Apostle, who "fought the good fight, and finished his course," amid distresses, afflictions, and persecutions, "always bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus," and "always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake1;" still a crown of righteousness and of glory, incorruptible, eternal, and that fadeth not away, shall be given by "the Lord, the righteous Judge," not to him, the martyred Apostle only, but "unto all them also, who love the Lord's appearing2;" and who testify such their affection by "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

**The Christian's Aim.**

Aim at the highest prize: if there thou fail,  
Thou'lt haply reach to one not far below.  
Strive first the goal to compass: if too slow  
Thy speed, the attempt may ne'ertheless avail  
The next best post to conquer. Let not quail  
Eye, heart, or limb; but still right onward go:  
The Judge shall heed thee, and a crown bestow,  
And bid thy name the loud-voic'd herald hail.  
To the wish'd mark one racer only came  
Of old victorious: to intertwine his brow  
One only grasp'd the crown, and won the game,  
Isthmian or proud Olympian. Happier thou  
Pursu'st thy course with no uncertain aim,  
Secure to seize an amaranthine bough.

**Section: Concluding Exhortation.**

I Have thus completed the proposed inquiry concerning the different degrees of happiness which will probably be assigned to different individuals in a future state; and withal the general inquiry concerning the happiness of the blessed. And I would now conclude the subject, by leaving on the mind of the reader, in summary application of the whole, the Inference with which St. Paul concludes his sublime argument to the Corinthians upon the resurrection of the dead. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

"Be ye stedfast, unmoveable," in contemplating, in longing after, and in pursuing, "the things which God hath prepared for them that love him:" especially, "be ye stedfast, unmoveable," in setting before your eyes, as objects of your never-ceasing desire, the highest glories in the Redeemer's kingdom.

"Be ye stedfast, unmoveable," in endeavouring, by the grace of his Holy Spirit, to become qualified for partaking in those glories, by becoming conformed to the Redeemer's image.

"Be ye stedfast, unmoveable," in endeavouring to acquire that love of God and of your brethren in Christ Jesus, and that affection for things above, which are indispensable in those, for whom a participation of such glories is prepared of the Father.

Thus, "be ye always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord;" but that it will be abundantly recompensed in that day, when the Son of man shall come in his glory to dispense "the kingdom prepared for the blessed of his Father from the foundation of the world1:" when "every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour2;" when "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father8;" and "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and

**Christian Ambition.**

"Ambition is the vice of noble souls!"  
If 'tis a vice, then let those souls beware,  
Thrice noble tho' they be, and passing fair  
In the world's eye, and high upon the scrolls,  
Her favour'd minions where the world inrolls,  
Lest it conduct to shame! Be thine the care,  
Soldier of Christ, that nobler strife to dare,  
Which the rash spirit of the world controls,

And makes ambition virtue! Be it thine  
To win thy bright unfading diadem  
By works of love!—Around his brows shall shine  
In heaven from glory's source the purest beam,  
Whose aspect here, with beauty most divine,  
Reflects the image of the Good Supreme.

**The following Collects, selected from our Book of Common Prayer, are recommended to the notice of the Reader, as applicable to the subjects of the foregoing Inquiry.**

PRAYER

For the blessed hope of everlasting life through the Scriptures. (Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent.)

“Blessed Lord, who hast caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that > may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them; that by patience, and comfort of thy Holy Word, > may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given TMe 5- in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.”

PRAYER

For grace in this mortal life, in order to the life immortal. (Collect for the First Sunday in Advent.)

“Almighty God, give^j grace that ^\ may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon me \ the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility: that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty, to judge both the quick and dead, may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.”

PRAYER

For God's guidance through temporal things. (Collect for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity.)

“O God, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; increase and multiply upon us thy mercy: that thou being my ruler and guide, may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal: Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. Amen.”

PRAYER

For God's grace and defence in this mortal life. (Collect from the Post Communion.)

“Assist mercifully, O Lord, in these supplications and prayers, and dispose the way of thy servant in the attainment of everlasting salvation; that, among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, we may ever be defended by thy most gracious and ready help; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

PRAYER

For love of God.

(Collect for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity.)

“O God, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass man's understanding; pour into our hearts} such love toward thee that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

PRAYER

For the enjoyment of God in Heaven. (Collect for the Epiphany.)

“O God, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles; mercifully grant, that we, which know thee now by faith may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

PRAYER

For love of God's commandments. (Collect for the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.)

“Almighty and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, and make us to love that which thou dost command; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen”

PRAYER

For obedience to God's commandments. (Collect for the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.)

“O God, who declarest thy Almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity; mercifully grant unto us such a measure of thy grace, that we, running the way of thy commandments, may obtain thy gracious promises, and be made partakers of thy heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

PRAYER

For good desires. (Collect for Easter.)

“Almighty God, who through thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; we humbly beseech thee, that, as by thy special grace preventing thou dost put unto our good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God,

PRAYER

For heavenly-mindedness. (Collect for Ascension-Day.)

“Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, like as do believe thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.”

PRAYER

For grace to follow the Saints in virtue and godliness. (Collect for All-Saints' Day.)

“O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord; Grant grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

PRAYER

For likeness to Christ in purity and glory. (Collect for the Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.)

“O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life; grant we beseech thee, that, having this hope, > us, we j b r we may purify ourselves even as he is pure; that when he shall appear again with power and great glory, may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. Amen.”

PRAYER

For acceptance at the general resurrection. (Collect from the Burial-Service, and from that on the day of King Charles's Martyrdom.)

“O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life; in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in him, shall not die eternally; who also hath taught us by his holy Apostle St. Paul, not to be sorry, as men without hope, for them that sleep in him; > meekly beseech thee,

O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. And teach us O Lord, so to number our days, that we may apply unto wisdom. And grant, that neither the splendour thing that is good in me may withdraw its eyes us^ i our I from looking upon myself as sinful dust and ashes; but that we may press forward towards the prize of the high calling that is before us with faith and patience, with humility and meekness, with mortification and self-denial, with charity and constant perseverance unto the end; that so,

when we shall depart this life, may sleep in the Lord; and at the general resurrection in the last day may be found acceptable in thy sight; and receive that blessing, which thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all that love and fear thee, saying, Come ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Grant this, we beseech thee, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer.. Amen"

**1833 (Cambridge; Available in U.S.)**

**Bernard Whitman (1796 - 1834), Unitarian Minister, Educator, Apologist, And Missionary**  
**Rewards and Punishments**

**Friendly Letters to a Universalist on Divine Rewards and Punishments**

Cambridge:  
Brown,, Shattuck, and Company.  
1833.

### **Letter I**

**My Dear Sir,**

Your candid and patient attention is invited to a friendly discussion of the important question of divine rewards and punishments. You profess to be a universalist of the modern school. You believe that a perfect retribution takes place in this world. You believe that the righteous are always and equitably and fully rewarded by their righteousness in this mortal life. You believe that the wicked are always and equitably and fully punished by their wickedness, in their present existence. Not only so. You also believe that there will be no future retribution for the deeds done in the body. You believe that the righteous will not be rewarded hereafter by the righteousness which they have here acquired. You believe that the wicked will not be punished hereafter by the wickedness which they have here committed. In short you believe that the future condition of mankind will not be affected by the characters which they have here formed. You believe that all rational beings will be made pure and holy and happy when they enter upon the next conscious existence. You assure me that these two articles of your belief constitute the distinguishing features of modern, American universalism. And you request me to express my honest convictions on this controverted subject.

Now, my dear Sir, I firmly believe that your system of universalism has no foundation in fact or revelation. I will therefore frankly give you some of the reasons for my belief. In the following pages I will endeavor to illustrate the nature of temporal rewards and punishments; to prove that no perfect retribution takes place in this world; to explain the meaning of christian salvation; to produce some of the arguments from common sense and scripture in proof of a future righteous retribution; to refute the principal objections which your writers have made to this doctrine; to answer the arguments which they have adduced in support of your system; to state my objections to modern, American universalism, and to conclude with some remarks on the natural tendency of the different views of divine retribution. I shall aim to manifest my friendship by using great plainness of speech, and by declaring explicitly my opinions and impressions on the various questions that may arise. I know you will give my Letters a fair and thorough examination. I believe you will cheerfully renounce your present sentiments on the points at issue if I should prove them to be erroneous. I think you will gladly embrace whatever truth may be elicited and established by my remarks. And I may reasonably expect, that all the members of your denomination who think and judge for themselves, will peruse my observations with candor and attention, since some of your preachers have repeatedly called upon me to engage in this discussion.

In the first place, you will naturally inquire what I understand by divine rewards and punishments? In answer to this question I will appeal directly to your own experience and observation. I trust you have an undoubting faith in the infinite perfections of One universal Father. Has-not this impartial Parent given you existence? Has he not created you for happiness? Has he not endowed you with an animal, an intellectual, a moral nature, so that you may answer the design of your creation? Has he not admirably adapted all your appetites,

passions, propensities, affections, corporeal and mental and religious capacities for the accomplishment of this glorious purpose? Has he not implanted in your bosom an unconquerable desire for higher degrees of enjoyment? Has he not mercifully provided all the necessary means for its gratification? Does he not wish you to be continually happy? And does he not do every thing which is consistent with your moral freedom to promote your happiness? Surely an affirmative answer must be returned to these several inquiries. How then can you secure happiness and avoid misery? In but one way. You must obey the laws of your nature. But whence arise these laws? Where are they recorded? How can we ascertain their adaptation? What is their extent? They originated with your heavenly Father when he created man in his own image. They are enstamped on your very constitution. They are indicated in the works of nature. They are plainly revealed in the gospel. They are known by experience to be adapted to your necessities. They extend to every principle of humanity; to all the relations you sustain towards your fellow men and your allwise Creator and benefactor. Hence there is a right course in every thing, and a wrong course in every thing. The right consists in thinking, feeling, believing, conversing, and acting in all things and at all times as your Maker designed you should think, feel, believe, converse and act under the existing circumstances. The wrong consists either in omitting these particulars, or in pursuing a different course in these several respects from what you were made to pursue. When you follow the right you obey in a greater or less degree the laws of your nature, and this obedience is generally attended or followed with more or less happiness. When you adhere to the wrong you disobey in a greater or less degree the laws of your nature, and this disobedience is generally attended or followed with more or less misery.

Now, my dear Sir, you know that this happiness is the natural consequence of your obedience. This happiness then is the natural retribution or the paying you for your righteousness. And this natural consequence, this natural retribution, I call the divine reward of your obedience to the laws of your nature. You also perceive that this misery is the natural consequence of your disobedience. This misery then is the natural retribution or the paying you for your wickedness. And this natural consequence, this natural retribution, I call the divine punishment of your disregard of the laws of your constitution. You must likewise observe that religion consists in conforming to the rule of right in all things and at all times; and that irreligion consists either in neglecting the right or in pursuing the wrong. The sole design of religion then is to enable you to receive happiness and avoid misery. To be a christian is to obey the laws of your nature, and happiness is the reward of your obedience. To be a sinner is to disregard these laws, and misery is the punishment of your transgression. Consequently we cannot receive the happiness for which we were created without obedience to the divine laws.

But perhaps you will inquire, why I call these rewards and punishments divine? Does our heavenly Father interpose to furnish happiness when we obey his laws and misery when we disobey them? Not directly, but through second causes. You know that he is the author of your constitution. You know that he has made you for holiness, and that all sin is directly contrary to your very nature. You know that you are a free agent and have power to choose and practise righteousness, and also to discover and avoid wickedness. You know that the righteous course is generally attended or followed with happiness, and the wicked course as generally attended or followed with misery. And you know that all this is the arrangement of divine providence. Consequently the happiness you enjoy when you have done righteously is as much divine as though the Deity had interposed directly to confer this reward for your obedience. And the misery you suffer when you have done wickedly is as much divine as though your Father had interfered directly to inflict this punishment for your transgression. Besides these rewards and punishments through second causes, the Almighty has occasionally interfered in a miraculous manner to punish the guilty and reward the innocent; and surely all such retributions are entitled to the name divine. I think you must understand what I mean by divine rewards and punishments. The natural or miraculous consequences of obedience to the laws of God I call divine rewards. The natural or miraculous consequences of transgression I call divine punishments. When these consequences are confined to this world I call them a temporal retribution; and when they extend beyond the grave I call them a future retribution. I conclude therefore that no candid and intelligent reader can mistake my meaning of the various phrases used in the present discussion.

Let me now endeavor to illustrate the nature of temporal rewards and punishments.

I. I will first direct your attention to the natural rewards of obedience, and to the natural punishments of transgression. I will arrange my remarks according to the different relations we sustain, and the corresponding duties we are under obligation to perform.

1. The duties which you owe to yourself are the first in order. You were made to enjoy uninterrupted happiness. You can secure this invaluable boon by conforming to whatever is right in every particular, and in avoiding whatever is wrong at all times and under all circumstances. It becomes your highest interest then to practise righteousness and shun iniquity, so that you may obtain the enjoyment for which you were created, and glorify your heavenly Father by living in all instances as he intended. Let me now give you a few illustrations of these remarks.

In the first place, you were made to enjoy uninterrupted health. If your parents and ancestors have obeyed the laws of their physical nature, you have doubtless inherited a perfect animal constitution, and are therefore prepared to enjoy more or less of the rewards of their obedience, and to transmit them to posterity. If they have disobeyed these laws, you have probably inherited an imperfect constitution, and must consequently suffer more or less of the punishments of their transgression, and transmit them much beyond the third and fourth generation. Whoever knows any thing of human nature must know that the iniquities of the fathers are visited upon their children. It will be sufficient in this place to mention the predisposition to the gout, scrofula, consumption and insanity. Now if you scrupulously obey the laws of your Maker which relate to your animal nature, you receive uninterrupted health; and the natural consequence of health is a high degree of satisfaction and a preparation for all the other rational enjoyments of life. If you disobey these laws you suffer the penalty; and the natural consequence of your transgression will consist in a greater or less degree of pain and sickness, and an unfitness for participation in the various blessings of life. Suppose then your constitution is perfect, and you endeavor to render the required obedience. You eat the right kind of food, at proper times and in suitable quantities. You will drink wholesome liquids, in moderate portions and at appointed seasons. You will take sufficient exercise, in various ways and at convenient hours. You will sleep no more nor less than nature requires. You will always regulate your dress according to the present temperature. You will avoid all improper exposure to heat or cold, to moisture or dryness, to impure air or contagious disease. You will shun every thing which can impart disease or give physical suffering. You will practise all things which were designed to increase your corporeal enjoyments, and preserve your animal functions in full vigor and strength. And what will be the natural consequence of this obedience to the laws of your constitution? Health, which is itself a source of happiness and a necessary qualification for enjoying the pleasures which arise from all other sources. This health then I pronounce the divine reward of your obedience.

Now suppose you should pay no particular regard to the laws of your physical being. You would eat unhealthy food, at improper times, and in quantities either too great or too small. You would drink injurious liquids, in excessive or scanty portions, and at periods the most irregular and dangerous. You would be unduly and unreasonably exposed to all the varieties of heat and cold, to moisture and dryness, and also to impure atmosphere and pestilential vapors. Your sleep and exercise would be neither regular nor productive of beneficial results. In short you would disregard all the known and necessary laws of health. And what would be the consequence of this disobedience? More or less pain and disease and sickness. You would be unqualified in a greater or less degree for the performance of your incumbent duties, and for rational enjoyment. Perhaps death itself would come suddenly and perhaps you would linger many years in wretchedness. All this suffering and loss I consider to be the divine punishment of your transgression. Now I believe it is as much a part of religion to obey these laws of your physical nature, as any other of your Father's requisitions. You must be convinced from your own experience and observation that the penalties of disobedience are severe and almost certain to be inflicted. I imagine there is more suffering from this one source of sinfulness than from the transgression of many other commands. And it is not merely the body that experiences the sad consequences of the wickedness. The mind very frequently feels itself guilty; the man is



conscious of having knowingly done wrong; he sensibly realizes that he has unfitted himself for the performance of his necessary duties, and his compunctions of conscience are most poignant. And must not this consequence extend to the next existence? Although physical suffering may cease with the dissolution of the body, yet I can see no reason why the soul, which in many cases has been the sinner, which has suffered severely even here for its transgressions, must not hereafter lament its disobedience of the divine laws. This surely would be nothing more nor less than the natural consequence of its disregard of the commands of heaven. And must not he who has so preserved his health as to make great advances in knowledge and goodness feel rewarded by the consciousness of having done righteously and by the possession of high degrees of wisdom and holiness? Without pressing this question, I have said sufficient to illustrate one particular of temporal rewards and punishments.

In the second place, you were made to derive happiness from the proper gratification of your appetites. They are given you for this purpose in connexion with other important uses. You may secure this reward by observing rigidly the laws which your Creator has ordained for their regulation. Suppose then you should render perfect obedience. You would be temperate in the use of all nourishing food and drinks. You would abstain wholly from whatever is injurious or unhealthy. And what would be the natural consequence? You would possess a pure and delicate taste, and a keen and well regulated appetite. Your meals would afford you a high degree of pleasure. Their immediate and remote effects on your system would be pleasing and beneficial. Your animal nature would be nourished and invigorated. You would thus be qualified for intellectual and moral advancement. All this enjoyment and preparation for duty I pronounce the divine reward of your obedience.

Now suppose you should disregard the laws of temperance. Suppose you should become an intemperate drinker of ardent spirits. You would experience much pain and sickness. Your health would be injured and your constitution undermined. Your temper would become fretful and your mental powers would be enervated. Your moral feelings would be blunted and brutified, and your social affections wasted and destroyed. Your property would be dissipated, your family and friends disgraced, and your neighbors injured. You would be unfitted for the performance of your obligatory duties. You would not answer the design of your creation. Your enjoyments would be diminished and your misery increased in various ways. All this and much more would be the natural consequence of your intemperance. This suffering and degradation I consider the divine punishment for your disobedience. Now it is as much a part of duty to govern your appetites as to observe any other of the divine laws. Intemperance in both eating and drinking, but particularly in eating, is a crying sin of our land. Thousands and tens of thousands of immortal beings are annually hastened to the grave by an excessive gratification of the appetites. And it is not the physical nature alone which suffers from this wickedness. By no means. Let a man become intoxicated by accident and the natural consequences of drunkenness on his body cannot be avoided. But let him knowingly indulge to excess a second time, and he is so constituted that he will experience the most severe compunctions of conscience. Almost every confirmed drunkard in moments of soberness suffers the most excruciating mental agony. And what can prevent these consequences from extending to the next existence? It is the free soul which sins. And can the mind of man when in a sound state ever view intemperance with complacency? Can a person find satisfaction in meditating upon the injury which he inflicted upon himself, his friends and society? Can the recollection of a wasted and degraded life, of duties neglected and sins committed, afford comfort to a religious mind? Surely not. Then how can the drunkard escape from himself, from a remembrance of his aggravated wickedness, from the horror and remorse of a guilty and self-condemned conscience? On the contrary, must not the man who has qualified himself by strict temperance for a christian life ever rejoice in his successful resistance to temptation, and in his mental and moral attainments. I see not how these natural consequences can possibly be avoided. I have however said sufficient to illustrate another instance of temporal rewards and punishments.

In the third place, your mind was made to be educated. You may expand its powers almost indefinitely by discipline. You may acquire an unlimited degree of useful knowledge by industry and application. You may qualify yourself by education for the most exquisite intellectual enjoyment and the most distinguished

usefulness. If then you obey the laws which regulate your mental operations you will find the greatest satisfaction in your obedience. The whole process of culture will be attended with a high degree of pleasure. Your increasing information will afford you great delight. And your ability to enjoy, and to communicate, and to benefit, will be the natural consequence of your application. This happiness and capacity for felicity, and mental and moral power, I call the divine reward of your obedience.

Now suppose you should altogether disregard the laws of your mind. You would spend no time in reading or meditation. You would acquire very little valuable instruction. You would be unfitted for many of the important duties of life. You would live and die in ignorance. And what would be the natural consequence of this course of transgression? You would lose all the pleasures which arise from mental cultivation, from valuable information, from intellectual power. And you would suffer many inconveniences and vexations for want of more education. And if you had wilfully abused your privileges, and wasted your time, and neglected the cultivation of your talents, you would experience many hours of self-condemnation and wretchedness. All this suffering, incapacity and loss of the purest enjoyments, I should consider the divine punishment of your disobedience. Now it is as much a part of christian duty to obey the laws which relate to the improvement of the mind as it is to observe any of the other precepts of the gospel. Almost infinite evils arise from this transgression. And what can prevent these consequences from extending to another world? You have seen the man whose youth was spent in idleness and dissipation, lamenting most bitterly his iniquity, and suffering most severely for his negligence and wickedness. And when he enters a spiritual life beyond the grave can he look with approbation on what he now condemns? Must he not feel more sensibly his ingratitude and sinfulness? Must not his wilful ignorance, which unfits him in some degree for the most refined pleasures of the soul on earth, equally disqualify him for the same enjoyments in heaven? On the contrary must not the individual who has done most for his own mental and moral advancement be best prepared for the enjoyment of mental and moral happiness? But on this ground, you will ask what must be the future conditions of the millions who die in utter ignorance. Look among savage nations, and although their ignorance is unavoidable, you perceive that they suffer the natural consequences of their disobedience to the laws of their intellectual nature. You notice the great enjoyments of which they are deprived, and the great wretchedness which they suffer, on account of this transgression. As their ignorance is not wilful but necessary they feel no compunctions of conscience; and surely they can feel none on this account when admitted to a brighter existence. And although they are unfitted for the higher degrees of celestial enjoyments, still is it not in the power of the universal Father to place them in the most favorable situations for improvement, so as eventually to equalize their advantages with those of the rest of mankind? If he can make such distinctions in this respect as now exist on earth, he surely can do the same thing in another world. And will not this course be necessary to establish his impartial and paternal character? I can pursue this topic no farther at present. Thus I have given you three illustrations of the duties which you owe to yourself. Several more might be sketched did my limits permit. These however are sufficient to convince you that obedience to the laws of your nature is generally attended or followed with more or less happiness; and that disobedience is usually attended or followed with more or less misery. Consequently you see the necessity of living righteously in every particular if you would secure the divine reward and avoid the divine punishment; and I believe you will find no way in which the natural consequences of your conduct can be prevented from attending you into another existence.

2. The duties which you owe your fellow men come next in order. You were made to love your brethren as yourself. You were created to do unto them in all things and at all times as you would have them do unto you. So far as you obey these laws of your nature, so far you secure the reward of your obedience. So far as you neglect or transgress these laws, so far you incur blame and punishment. Unless your obedience be perfect your happiness will be imperfect. It is your highest interest therefore to observe these laws, so as to secure the enjoyment for which you were created, promote the welfare of your equal fellows in which your own is more or less involved, and glorify your Father in heaven by living in these several particulars as he intended. Let me give you a few illustrations of these observations.

In the first place you were made to be honest in your dealings with your fellow men. You are surrounded with temptations to cheat and defraud. You have in your own mind motives to resistance sufficiently powerful. You have merely to place yourself in the situation of your neighbor and the victory is gained. Now would you desire your brother to deceive you in a bargain? Would you have him make you believe an article is of superior quality when he knows it is wholly worthless? Should you wish him to induce you to pay much more than the real value of the purchase? Are you willing he should defraud you in any manner whatever or to any amount however small? Certainly not. If then you are guilty of any of those sins which you would unhesitatingly condemn in him, do you not knowingly violate the law of benevolence? And what follows? You feel a degree of oppression at your heart. Your mind reproaches you for having wilfully done wrong. Your iniquity is sooner or later discovered. You resolve upon restoring some of your ill-gotten gains. You have not moral courage to carry your resolutions into execution. You despise yourself, and you fear many others have the same feelings towards you. You cannot look to heaven for a blessing upon such unhallowed means of obtaining property. Your character suffers in the estimation of your acquaintances. Little or no confidence is reposed in your integrity. You know very few if any real friends. In hours of reflection or danger or sickness, your dishonest dealings cause you the most painful reflections and the most fearful forebodings. All this and much more is the natural consequence of your iniquity; and all this I pronounce the divine punishment of your disobedience.

Now suppose you should be perfectly honest in all your transactions with your fellow men. Suppose you should do unto them in all your dealings as you would have them do unto you. You would speak the truth, and the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, on every occasion. And what would follow? You would feel a high degree of satisfaction in the consciousness of always doing right. You would experience an elevation of spirits too little known among men of business. You would daily seek the blessing of an omniscient Father on ' your labors, to whom you would appeal in proof of the sincerity of your intentions. You would look your customers in the face with an undaunted eye and an unblushing countenance. Your character would be respected by all, even the intriguing and deceitful. Unlimited confidence would be reposed in your word. Your business would be increased. And in times of self-examination, or affliction, or approaching dissolution, you would review your truly christian course with approbation. You would experience the smiles of an enlightened conscience. All this and much more is the natural consequence of your honesty; and all this I pronounce the divine reward of your obedience. And what can prevent these consequences from extending to another existence? Whatever the gospel authorizes you to regard with satisfaction in the hour of death must increase your enjoyment in a purer and more spiritual region. And if you condemn yourself for your dishonest and fraudulent practices when standing on the brink of the grave, if you then suffer the most exquisite torments on account of your unjust and sinful dealings, what is to change your views and feelings on your entrance into a state in which wickedness will appear in its true deformity? Can you then look with approbation on the many instances in which you deceived and injured your brethren? Will it give you happiness to remember how great riches you acquired by falsehood? I see no way in which you can escape these natural consequences of your obedience or transgression.

In the second place, you were made to obtain your living by some useful occupation. You may employ your body or your mind, or both in connexion. The philosopher in his study has done more for the advancement of the human family than thousands who have devoted themselves to manual employments. In what condition would the world have been, had not the inventions of printing, the mariner's compass, the machinery for cotton and woolen fabrics, and a thousand others, never been known? All useful employments are equally honorable, and the day laborer is as much entitled to respect for his honest industry as the overseer of the most complicated mechanism on earth. Suppose then you follow agriculture, the most ancient occupation of man, and without which all others must terminate. You secure health and competence. You escape a thousand temptations to which others are exposed. Many occurrences naturally lead your thoughts up through nature to the supreme ruler of the universe. You are not dependent on your fellow men for your daily bread. Circumstances conspire - to produce contentment, domestic enjoyment, and much mental and moral improvement. Now the result of all these things is rational happiness. This then I pronounce the divine reward of your obedience.

But suppose you should pursue a different course. Suppose you should endeavor to gain a subsistence by the useless and pernicious vice of gambling. While engaged in this business you do nothing to increase provision, clothing, or improvement in knowledge or goodness. On the contrary you aim to obtain the property of your neighbor without returning him any equivalent, or without his giving it to you as a present; and consequently what you receive is fraudulently acquired. You are taken from your family at unseasonable hours, and often return with a peevish and crabbed disposition. You set an example which you dare not let your children observe or imitate. You are tempted to indulge in lying, profanity, obscenity and excessive drinking. Your character is ruined in the estimation of all wise and christian persons. You are instrumental in seducing the promising youth from the paths of virtue and honest industry. You are accessory to the destruction of his moral principles, his brightest prospects for this world, and his best hopes for another. With all this accumulated load of guilt on your head, how can you enjoy a moment's real happiness? It is impossible. You cannot ask the blessing of your Father upon your undertaking. In your own soul you know it is a wicked and ruinous occupation. You can never look back with satisfaction either upon your gains or losses. You can never think of your habits and practices without severe compunctions, of conscience. You fear sickness and death and futurity. All this is the natural consequence of your iniquity; the divine punishment for your disobedience of the laws of your Creator. And can these consequences cease with the death of the body? Will you take delight in heaven in contemplating your wretched and depraved existence on earth? Will not the industrious and virtuous laborer who has done good to others find himself qualified for pure and holy pleasures? I put these questions to your common sense.

3. In the third place, you were made to love your neighbor as you love yourself. If this affection exists in your bosom it will manifest itself in your feelings, dispositions, conversation and conduct. How then would you discover your friendship for yourself? Would you endeavor to waste your property, injure your influence, and destroy your character? These are acts of the insane and wicked who hate their own existence. Suppose then you disregard this law of your nature; suppose you really hate your brother; the fruits of your enmity will appear in your behaviour. You will feel uneasy and restless whenever his name passes through your memory. You will be watching for opportunities to diminish his wealth or popularity or respect. You will throw out hints, insinuations and even direct charges respecting his purity or innocence or honesty or integrity. You will rejoice to hear of his misfortunes and his ill success in the business of life. In short your hatred will fill your bosom with more or less wretchedness. And besides this your fellow men will lose their respect for your character. They will receive your statements with caution. They will feel less kindly towards you, and be less ready to aid you in even your good undertakings. They will pity and in some instances despise you. All this and much more is the natural consequence of your wickedness; and all this I consider the divine punishment of your disobedience.

Now suppose you should strictly observe this divine command. You would regard your neighbor as a child - of your Father; equally dear by nature to your common parent, and entitled to equal rights and privileges and hopes. You would feel that your own happiness depended in no small degree on his mental, moral and temporal prosperity. You would accordingly regard his feelings, his property, his character, as sacred as your own. You would endeavor in every possible way to advance his best welfare. And what would follow? You would feel at ease in your own mind. You would derive improvement and enjoyment from your friendship. You would realize that you had one on whom you could depend in every situation. You would view your intercourse towards him with satisfaction. All this and much more would be the natural consequence of your affection; the divine reward of your obedience. And must not these consequences extend beyond the grave? Will you not renew your intimacy with the virtuous brother? Will not a recollection of your past kindness and love increase your celestial joys? Will you not be better prepared for the felicity of a heavenly existence? On the contrary, can you ever look with approbation upon your hatred and enmities? Will it afford you pleasure to remember your unchristian feelings and your infernal dispositions? I see no way in which you can ever become so perfect as not to loathe all ill will and revenge. I have given you a few specimens of the duties which we owe to our fellow men. Similar remarks might be made respecting the remainder did my limits permit. Sufficient however have been mentioned for all present purposes.

3. The duties which you owe to your heavenly Father are now to be considered. You were created to believe in one impartial parent; to love him with supreme affection; to worship him in spirit and truth; to confide in his goodness with implicit confidence; to remember his manifold blessings with lively gratitude; to submit to his various dispensations with cheerfulness, and to render unreserved obedience to his beneficial commands. If you comply with these requisitions of your nature, you secure the happiness for which you were created, and glorify your Maker by living in all things as he intended. In the first place, you were made to believe in the existence of One all-perfect Father. Many of your fellow men have not this belief. Some few in christian lands profess to have no faith in a Supreme Being. They have made themselves atheists either by false reasoning or depraved living. Their minds are in a state of confusion. They cannot give vent to the natural devotion of the human heart. All the works of creation are in disorder. They have no support in trials. They have no consolations in afflictions. They have no friend in danger, no hope in the grave, no Father in heaven. How deplorable their condition. There are others in heathen countries who believe in many gods. They worship idols of their own making or creation or deification. Some they flatter and some they fear; some they despise and some they imitate; and nothing but wretchedness is the natural result of their erroneous belief. There are others again who believe in the One true God, but have no correct views of his real character. They ascribe to him actions which would disgrace a human parent. They consider him as both partial and revengeful. They fear he will not deal so well with his own children as they should did they possess his power. And for these and other reasons they suffer many hours of anxiety and misery. In all these cases the unhappiness and degradation are the natural consequences of unbelief or misbelief; the divine punishment for their disobedience to the laws of their mental constitution.

Now if you believe the representations of your Savior respecting your heavenly Father, you will entertain correct notions of his character and perfections and government. You will regard him as a self-existent creator, preserver and benefactor. You will view him as the merciful parent of his human family. You believe that he loves all his children with an infinite affection; that he overrules the events of this world in wisdom and benevolence; and that he never afflicts in anger or wrath or resentment. You believe that he sent his well beloved son to be the Savior of the world. It gives you delight to meditate upon his unbounded benevolence. So long as you render him gratitude, affection and obedience you preserve an unfailing confidence in his unchangeable love. In hours of sickness and death you know that your friend and Father will be with you for your support and consolation. All this and much more is the natural consequence of your correct faith on this subject; the divine reward of your obedience to the laws of your intellectual and moral nature. And what can prevent these consequences from extending to another life? So far indeed as unbelief or misbelief are necessary no one can suffer the compunctions of conscience on their account either here or in the world to come. So far as any one has neglected or abused the light and evidence granted for his guidance, so far he must feel guilty and condemn his own wickedness. And so far as the true belief has aided any one in securing the happiness of this life and preparing for heaven, so far he carries the reward of his obedience in his own soul. Enough however has been said to illustrate this particular.

In the second place, you were made to love your heavenly Father supremely. Affections for this purpose have been implanted in your bosom. Motives to its cultivation are multiplied. You are free to conform to this law of your nature or to disregard its directions. Suppose you should neglect to cultivate the required affection. You would give your thoughts to earthly concerns. You would find the pleasures of this world transient and unsatisfactory. You would feel an aching void in your heart which no temporal blessings can ever supply. You would become uneasy, restless, discontented. You are not prepared for the changes and trials of life, and their occurrence brings dismay and anguish. All this and much more is the natural consequence of your neglect and ingratitude; the divine punishment of your disobedience.

But suppose you should endeavor to comply with the divine injunction. You will carefully study the works of your Father so as to have the evidence of his infinite perfections deeply impressed upon your mind. You will meditate upon the various displays of his goodness in the world around. You will contemplate his unspeakable love in appearing for the salvation of a perishing world. You will examine the descriptions

given of his paternal character by your divine Savior. You will call to mind the favors you have received at his hands. You will often raise your thoughts to him in spiritual devotion. You will aim to see him in every thing and every thing in him. In this way you will acquire a pure and ardent love for the only true God. And this affection will give rise to all your conduct; will sustain you under the greatest afflictions; will animate you in the discharge of incumbent duties; will console you under the heaviest afflictions, and will render you happy in some degree at all times. All this and much more is the natural consequence of your love; the divine reward for your obedience to the laws which were given to regulate your affections. And can these consequences be prevented from extending to the other existence? Can he who has blasphemed the name of his maker, despised his providence, disregarded his commands, join at once with those who have learned by long practice to love and worship their heavenly father? Impossible. I have thus given you a few illustrations of the duties which we owe to our Creator. I might make similar remarks concerning the remainder did my limits permit; but enough has been said to explain the first division of my subject.

Thus, my dear sir, have I given you a few brief illustrations of the natural rewards of obedience, and the natural punishments of transgression. Now if you could prove that the laws of your nature are perfect in their operation; if you could prove that the obedient always enjoyed a full and equitable reward; if you could prove that the wicked always suffered a full and equitable punishment; still the argument for a future retribution would remain unaffected. For you know that the consequences of both goodness and wickedness extend far beyond the period of action. You know that the consequences of a virtuous or dissipated youth extend through the whole of mortal life. Now before you can convince me that there is to be no future retribution, you must establish the three following positions. You must prove that the present life has no connexion whatever with the next existence; and is not this supposition contrary to both reason and revelation? You must also prove that we shall have no remembrance in the next life of what took place on earth; and is not this also contrary to truth and scripture? You must likewise prove that we experience a moral change in our passage from this world to the other; and is not this likewise most absurd? As these positions never have been proved true, I trust they never will while sound reasoning is respected. But you cannot prove the first particular, that the laws of your nature are perfect in their operation. No; this cannot be accomplished. It is perfectly evident that various causes exist to modify their effects, so that the wicked are not always and fully punished, nor the righteous always and fully rewarded. Consequently a future retribution seems to my mind absolutely necessary to justify the ways of God to man. But as these topics will be more fully discussed hereafter I forbear, and request your continued attention to the remainder of the present subject.

II. I will now direct your attention to some instances of happiness and misery which are not generally considered to be the natural consequences of obedience and transgression. Some of these are undoubtedly caused by the miraculous interposition of our Father in favor of goodness and against wickedness. Some are evidently the natural consequences of human conduct either wholly or in part, and the necessary results of the ordinary operations of the natural laws of the Creator. And some are neither the natural consequences either of observing or disregarding the divine commands, nor the miraculous interpositions of Deity either for reward or punishment. Let me give you a few brief illustrations of these several assertions.

1. I will first notice some of those instances in which our heavenly Father has miraculously interfered to reward the righteous and punish the wicked. All the examples of this character which are mentioned in the bible I receive as certain facts; for I find sufficient evidence to satisfy my mind that the scriptures contain the record of a divine revelation. There may have been other cases of a similar nature which are not contained in the sacred writings; but as I have no convincing proof of a miraculous interference in any given instance, I must withhold my assent from all such relations.

In the first place, look at some of the instances in which our heavenly Father interfered miraculously for the preservation and happiness of his obedient children. Enoch and Elijah were translated to heaven without passing through the pangs of a temporal death. Joseph received supernatural aid to interpret dreams which paved the way for his future greatness and glory. Daniel remained unharmed in a den of lions. Shadrach,

Meshach and Abednego, were uninjured in the midst of a burning fiery furnace. The Hebrews were conveyed through the Red Sea in safety. - Manna from heaven was given them for food. Constant use diminished not the widow's oil. Many of the believing received favors through the commissioned Savior. The prison doors were opened to the persecuted apostle. Now we must consider these and all similar cases recorded in scripture as miraculous interpositions of our Father, not merely to manifest his approbation of moral goodness, but to furnish satisfactory evidence of a divine revelation. Are the rewards of obedience equitably distributed in this world? Why then have not the righteous when in extreme danger and distress oflener received supernatural assistance? Here is surely strong indications of partiality, if this is the only state of retribution. In the second place, look at some of those instances in which our Father has miraculously interfered to punish the wicked. The antedeluvians were destroyed with a flood. The Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea. The cities of the plain were overwhelmed with fire and brimstone. Korah and his company were swallowed by an earthquake. Ananias and Sapphira were instantly levelled with the dust. These and all similar examples recorded in the sacred writings must be considered miraculous interpositions of heaven. But for what purpose? As a punishment of the disobedient. Such is the declaration of revelation. But if your belief of no future retribution be true, these judgments cannot be called punishments. On the contrary I should consider them as miraculous rewards conferred on the depraved. Take the inhabitants of Sodom for an example. They were exceedingly wicked. Of course they were truly wretched. They were suddenly destroyed. They were thus saved from the many miserable hours which they must have experienced had they continued on earth. They escaped those severe compunctions of conscience which a review of their wasted and profligate life must have produced. They were relieved from the pains and agonies of a lingering and unhappy death. From these and other temporal sufferings they were taken by a momentary destruction. Now if this was the end of their sins and miseries; if they are never to endure another moment's pain and wretchedness; if they are to be pure and happy the instant they enter upon the next conscious existence, what did they lose by the overwhelming calamity? Nothing but punishment. What did they gain? A release from torment and an admission to unspeakable felicity. If this be the fact as you believe, must we not consider their destruction from the face of the earth a special favor of heaven? Surely it can be considered in no other light. What then do the scriptures mean by calling such events divine punishments? Not only so. On your own ground you cannot prove an acquitable retribution in this world. Why are so many cities which are equally wicked not specially favored with a sudden translation from degradation and indescribable suffering to celestial happiness? I have thus given you a specimen of what revelation pronounces divine rewards and punishments. Consider them in what light you please, and I believe you must admit that they furnish an unanswerable argument in proof of a future righteous retribution. 2. I will now notice some of those instances of preservation and destruction which individuals have denominated special or miraculous interpositions of our Father, but which I consider to be nothing more than the common results of the ordinary operations of the natural laws of our Creator. In order to convince me that any such occurrence is supernatural, you must first prove that the event could not have occurred in the ordinary course of Providence, such for instance as the raising to life of a dead man; and then you must also prove that some valuable purpose is to be answered by the interposition, such for example as establishing the truth of divine revelation. I do not think it will be possible to prove these two positions in any of those constantly occurring cases which people call special mercies and judgments. Let me refer you to a few examples of this description.

In the first place, look to some of those instances in which it is supposed our Father miraculously interfered to confer favors upon his children. As I have the autobiography of the late Dr. Adam Clarke now before me, and as he has been ranked the most learned man among the Methodists, I will select two examples from this publication. Listen to his own words. "Having occasion to bring home a sack of grain from a neighboring village; it was laid over the bare back of his horse, and to keep it steady he rode on the top; one end being much heavier than the other, he found it difficult to keep it on: at last it preponderated so much, that it fell, and he under it; his back happened to come in contact with a pointed stone; he was taken up apparently dead; a person attempted to draw some blood from his arm, but in vain, none would flow, and his face and neck turned quite black. He lay insensible for more than two hours, during the greater part of which time, he was not known even to breathe, so that all said he is dead. He was brought near the fire and rubbed with warm cloths; at length a plenteous flow of blood from the orifice in his arm, was the means of promoting that

respiration which had been so long obstructed. All had given him over for dead, and even now that he began to breathe, but with an oppressive sense of the acutest pain, few entertained hopes that he could long survive this accident. In about twenty-four hours it was thought that he might in an easy chair be carried home, which was about a mile distant. He however utterly refused to get into the chair, but while the men carried it, held it with his right hand, and walked by its side, and thus reached his father's house; and in a short time, to the great surprise of all who had witnessed the accident, was completely restored. Had he not been designed for matters of great and high importance, it is not likely in the Ordinary course of nature he would have survived this accident." Now in this relation there is nothing more remarkable than what has occurred to hundreds of others; and I believe any scoundrel of the same bodily powers would have passed through the accident in the same favorable manner.

Let me present you another example from the same author. This is his own statement. "Mr. Wesley's time allotted for his visit to these Islands being expired, he purposed sailing for Southampton by the first fair wind, as he had appointed to be at Bristol on a particular day; but the wind continuing adverse, and an English brig touching at Guernsey on her way from France to Penzance they agreed for their passage, Mr. Clarke having obtained Mr. Wesley's permission to accompany them to England. They sailed out of Guernsey road on Thursday, the sixth of September," with a fine fair breeze; but in a short time, the wind which had continued slackening, died away, and afterwards rose up in that quarter which would have favored the passage to Southampton or Weymouth, had they been so bound. The contrary wind blew in to a tight breeze, and they were obliged to make frequent tacks, in order to clear the Island. Mr. Wesley was sitting reading in the cabin, and hearing the noise and bustle which were occasioned by putting about the vessel, to stand on her different tacks, he put his head above deck and inquired what was the matter? Being told the wind was become contrary, and the ship was obliged to tack, he said,—Then let us go to prayer. His own company, who were upon deck, walked down, and at his request Dr. Coke, Mr. Bradford, and Mr. Clarke went to prayer. After the latter had ended, Mr. Wesley broke out into fervent supplication, which seemed to be more the offspring of strong faith than mere desire, his words were remarkable, as well as the spirit, evident feeling, and manner in which they were uttered. The power of his petition was felt by all; he rose from his knees, made no kind of remark, but took up his book and continued his reading. Mr. Clarke went upon deck, and what was his surprise when he found the vessel standing her right course, with a steady breeze, which slackened not, till, carrying them at the rate of nine or ten knots an hour, they anchored safely near St. Michael's Mount, in Penzance bay. On the sudden and favorable change of wind Mr. Wesley made no remark; so fully did he expect to be heard, that he took for granted he was heard. Such answers to prayer he was in the habit of receiving; and therefore to him, the occurrence was not strange. Mr. Wesley was no ordinary man; every hour, every minute of his time was devoted to the great work which God had given him to do; and it is not to be wondered at that he was favored, and indeed accredited, with many signal interpositions of divine providence. Mr. Clarke himself has confessed, that high as his opinion was of Mr. Wesley's piety and faith, he had no hope that the wind which had long set in the opposite quarter, and which had just now changed in a very natural way, would immediately veer about, except by providential interference, to blow in a contrary direction. There were too many marked extraordinary circumstances in the case, to permit any attentive observer to suppose that the change had been effected by any natural or casual occurrence." Now if Mr. Clarke can prove that the wind would not have changed if Mr. Wesley's prayer had not been offered, then the first step will have been taken to establish a special providence; but this can never be done, and consequently we have no evidence in the case whatever. And to suppose that God Almighty had made John Wesley an "accredited" messenger of his providence requires a degree of credulity which I do not possess. These specimens are sufficient to show that no satisfactory proof exists in confirmation of modern miracles.

In the second place, look at the other side of the question. Instances have occurred in which individuals suppose that our Father interferes miraculously for the punishment and destruction of his children. Since I have selected the former examples from a Methodist book, I will still confine my remarks to the same denomination. When the unitarian church in this place was struck by lightning, some of the members of this sect pronounced it a special judgment. This was their calm and deliberate opinion. They believed that our



Father had departed from his usual course to manifest his displeasure against our peculiar sentiments. Not long since the Methodist chapel in a neighboring town was struck in a similar manner and greatly damaged. Had it not been for the timely interference of human means the building would have been wholly destroyed. Now will they be consistent? Will they call this a special judgment, to manifest' the divine disapprobation of their distinguishing belief. Not only so. It is but a few years since a vessel which was conveying a large number of their missionaries with their families from one island to another, was wrecked and all the passengers drowned. A more distressing accident has scarcely ever been recorded. Did God interfere for their destruction? Is there not as much evidence of this as there is that he interfered to save the life of Clarke and hasten Wesley on his voyage? Precisely the same. Will it be so regarded? By no means. The truth of the case is simply this. When an unfortunate event happens to those who reject our creed we pronounce it a special interference of our Father' for their punishment. But when an occurrence precisely similar overwhelms any of our own denomination, we are ready to exclaim, whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. Why may not the miser affirm that his property has been gained through the special assistance of divine Providence, since he has so far outreached his neighbors in the pursuit of wealth? Why may not the pirate attribute his success to the supernatural interference of heaven? I see no reason why they may not advance these claims with as much propriety as those religionists- who pronounce the natural results of their zeal and activity and impudence special mercies. No. It is not possible to prove that God now interferes in a miraculous manner either to reward the righteous or punish the wicked. This is not his mode of governing his rational creatures. A day of perfect retribution will yet arrive; and then those who have flourished by their iniquity will receive the recompense of their labors, and those who have been crushed by the oppression of the depraved will rise in their true dignity, and enjoy the rewards prepared for all who live sober, righteous and godly lives. I have said sufficient to show that we have no evidence of miracles at the present day, either for the reward of the holy or the punishment of the sinful.

3. I will thirdly refer you to some of those instances of prosperity and adversity which are evidently the natural consequences of human conduct either wholly or in part; and the necessary results of the ordinary operations of the divine laws. Under this head I should include all uncommon success in mercantile, civil or religious affairs; all pestilence, war and persecution; all earthquakes, famines and conflagrations. A few illustrations may be mentioned.

In the first place, look at the success of some sect of religionists. I will refer in this instance to those in our own land who are called christians. It is about thirty years since a few individuals renounced all sectarian names, discarded all human creeds, and began to preach the simple truths of Unitarian christianity. Their increase has been beyond all former example. They have now more than twelve hundred churches in this country, and for piety and morality they will bear an honorable comparison with any other denomination. Now has our Father given them any special assistance? Some are ready to answer this question in the affirmative. But for one I have no hesitation in giving a decided negative. All this success is the natural result of human instrumentality. The preachers adapted themselves to the condition and wants of the hearers. They talked to them in an earnest and plain and direct manner. They persevered with all becoming zeal; and they soon received the fruit of their labors. I might make similar remarks concerning the methodists. Not only so. If the same means are used to propagate false doctrines very considerable progress will be made. Look at the mormonites. They are most laborious and indefatigable in their exertions. They are making converts to their wild and absurd opinions even in our own vicinity. So in England the power of speaking unknown languages is increasing with fearful rapidity. And how did the Arabian impostor carry forward his ambitious designs? You may just as well consider the prevalence of his religion the result of special divine interposition as to regard the unusual advancement of any one christian sect to be a miraculous favor conferred on its votaries. In all such cases there is nothing more nor less than the natural consequences of great zeal, untiring perseverance and well selected means.

In the second place, look at the prevalence of the cholera. It has shown no partiality to opinions, but

taken the hindoo, the mahoraetan, the jew, the christian and the infidel. It has however observed certain rules in its operation. Those who have violated the laws of their physical nature are the first victims and almost the only victims. Is this pestilence a special judgment for the punishment of mankind? So many have believed. I think the contrary. Had all men observed the laws of their animal constitution the cholera would never have prevailed. Most of the deaths which have occurred in this disease, I regard as the natural consequence of their disobedience. When contagion is increased by great mortality, and many are unfitted for resistance through the influence of fear, no doubt the innocent perish with the guilty. It is also evident that many have inherited weakly and sickly bodies from those who in some way or other violated the laws of their physical nature. So that after you have counted those on whom the vices of their progenitors were visited; and those who had injured their constitution either ignorantly or in a good cause; and those who had not received sufficient nourishing sustenance; and those who had abused their nature by excessive eating and drinking and licentiousness; and those whose unmanly fears prostrated them at once, you will find but a few victims of the cholera remaining. Had there been no disobedience I firmly believe there would have been little or none of this temporal punishment. But if your doctrine of no future retribution be true, I see not but we must regard the cholera as a special blessing to the miserable victims who have been hurried to the grave. Take the great multitude of prostitutes who have been swept away by its ravages. A more degraded, polluted, miserable, wretched class of human creatures cannot be imagined. They were constantly in a perfect earthly hell. Now if this is the end of all their sufferings; if they can look back with approbation and delight on their profligate lives; if they enjoy uninterrupted happiness; if their felicity is never to be disturbed by one pang of remorse on account of their unparalleled depravity; then I must regard the pestilence which hastened them from unutterable torments to heavenly glory a very special blessing to their souls. I see not how any benevolent person can take any other view of the subject, on your ground of belief. Although I do not consider any prevailing epidemic to be a miraculous interposition of our Father, yet I believe all events above our control are wisely ordered by his superintending providence. I could go on to make similar remarks respecting earthquakes and tornadoes, tempests of thunder and lightning and all the uncommon convulsions of nature. All these I regard as the natural result of the operation of divine laws, and not as a designed punishment for wickedness.

4. In the fourth place, look at those sufferings which are neither the natural consequences of disobedience to divine commands, nor miraculous interpositions for the punishment of wickedness. Read the history of the world; look abroad into society; enter into the retirement of domestic life; and you will be convinced that the innocent, the virtuous, the righteous have experienced the most severe, unceasing, excruciating sufferings. You will be convinced that these torments were inflicted by their fellow men, and not because they violated the laws of their maker, but for the very reason in many instances that they were pure and holy. How many christian wives are daily made miserable by their brutal and intemperate husbands? How many philanthropists have sacrificed their ease, their influence, their liberty, their life in the cause of suffering humanity? How many worthy reformers have been fined, tortured, imprisoned, and burned for their conscientious adherence

to the principles of religious liberty? How many disinterested patriots have shared in toils and hardships and cruelties and death for the benefit of an ungrateful multitude. In every war how many of the innocent are made wretched by the crimes of the wicked? Time would fail me to mention the instances in which the just suffer the severest torments from the injustice of their brethren. Now how will you dispose of all these facts? Why have so many experienced such dreadful cruelties? Because they have transgressed the laws of their nature? By no means. They suffered on account of their very obedience. What benefit are they to receive for this indescribable anguish? Perhaps you will say that they may learn by their inflictions to put a firm trust in their heavenly Father, to be weaned from the vanities of this world, and to enjoy the smiles of an approving conscience. All this is very well. But if all men are to be rewarded according to their deeds, how can you call this an equal retribution? I see no way in which you can avoid this difficulty on your scheme but to affirm that these individuals were great sufferers only because they were great sinners. This is the language of Job's comforters; and if it was incorrect in ancient days I know not that the lapse of ages has converted it into truth. Admit the fact of a future righteous retribution and the difficulty vanishes; and without admitting this truth

you cannot possibly reconcile the unparalleled sufferings of the righteous with the justice of your heavenly Father.

But are the persecutors always punished in exact accordance with their wickedness? Surely not. For many really believe they are doing God service in their abominable cruelties, and consequently they receive the approbation instead of the reproaches of their own conscience. Others are too hardened in sin to suffer any compunctions on account of their crimes. Now in order to make rewards and punishments equal the merits and deserts of all mankind, must there not be another existence, where the secrets of all hearts shall be exposed; where all circumstances shall be considered; where the blinded bigot shall confess the truth; where the right and the wrong of their present course shall be manifested to every soul, and where every one shall be rewarded and punished according to the deeds done in the body. As I shall have occasion to discuss this subject more fully hereafter I will not dwell longer on this point. I have given you such illustrations of my views of divine rewards and punishments as my limits will permit. Many very important questions I have left altogether untouched. Many more I have but briefly and superficially examined. And none have been treated with that fulness which they really demand. I have said enough however to give you some insight into my opinions on the various topics connected with this branch of my discussion. And I hope you will examine my remarks and statements and conclusions with all proper freedom and boldness, and embrace whatever of truth may have been elicited and established.

**1835**

**Joseph Smith (1805 – 1844), Latter-day Saint Founder**

**The Three Degrees of Glory**

**D&C Section 76**

A vision given to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon, at Hiram, Ohio, February 16, 1832. HC 1: 245–252. Prefacing his record of this vision the Prophet wrote: “Upon my return from Amherst conference, I resumed the translation of the Scriptures. From sundry revelations which had been received, it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of man had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled. It appeared self-evident from what truths were left, that if God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body, the term ‘Heaven,’ as intended for the Saints’ eternal home, must include more kingdoms than one. Accordingly, while translating St. John’s Gospel, myself and Elder Rigdon saw the following vision.” It was after the Prophet had translated John 5: 29 that this vision was given.

1. Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, and rejoice ye inhabitants thereof, for the Lord is God, and beside him there is no Savior.
2. Great is his wisdom, marvelous are his ways, and the extent of his doings none can find out.
3. His purposes fail not, neither are there any who can stay his hand.
4. From eternity to eternity he is the same, and his years never fail.
5. For thus saith the Lord—I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.
6. Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory.
7. And to them will I reveal all mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old, and for ages to come, will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom.
8. Yea, even the wonders of eternity shall they know, and things to come will I show them, even the things of many generations.
9. And their wisdom shall be great, and their understanding reach to heaven; and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall come to naught.
10. For by my Spirit will I enlighten them, and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will—yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man.

11. We, Joseph Smith, Jun., and Sidney Rigdon, being in the Spirit on the sixteenth day of February, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-two—
12. By the power of the Spirit our eyes were opened and our understandings were enlightened, so as to see and understand the things of God—
13. Even those things which were from the beginning before the world was, which were ordained of the Father, through his Only Begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, even from the beginning;
14. Of whom we bear record; and the record which we bear is the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the Son, whom we saw and with whom we conversed in the heavenly vision.
15. For while we were doing the work of translation, which the Lord had appointed unto us, we came to the twenty-ninth verse of the fifth chapter of John, which was given unto us as follows—
16. Speaking of the resurrection of the dead, concerning those who shall hear the voice of the Son of Man:
17. And shall come forth; they who have done good, in the resurrection of the just; and they who have done evil, in the resurrection of the unjust.
18. Now this caused us to marvel, for it was given unto us of the Spirit.
19. And while we meditated upon these things, the Lord touched the eyes of our understandings and they were opened, and the glory of the Lord shone round about.
20. And we beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, and received of his fulness;
21. And saw the holy angels, and them who are sanctified before his throne, worshiping God, and the Lamb, who worship him forever and ever.
22. And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!
23. For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—
24. That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.
  
25. And this we saw also, and bear record, that an angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God, who rebelled against the Only Begotten Son whom the Father loved and who was in the bosom of the Father, was thrust down from the presence of God and the Son,
26. And was called Perdition, for the heavens wept over him—he was Lucifer, a son of the morning. And we beheld, and lo, he is fallen! is fallen, even a son of the morning!
27. And while we were yet in the Spirit, the Lord commanded us that we should write the vision; for we beheld Satan, that old serpent, even the devil, who rebelled against God, and sought to take the kingdom of our God and his Christ—
28. Wherefore, he maketh war with the saints of God, and encompasseth them round about.
29. And we saw a vision of the sufferings of those with whom he made war and overcame, for thus came the voice of the Lord unto us:
30. Thus saith the Lord concerning all those who know my power, and have been made partakers thereof, and suffered themselves through the power of the devil to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy my power—
31. They are they who are the sons of perdition, of whom I say that it had been better for them never to have been born;
32. For they are vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity;
33. Concerning whom I have said there is no forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come—
34. Having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it, and having denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father, having crucified him unto themselves and put him to an open shame.
35. These are they who shall go away into the lake of fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels—
36. And the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power;
37. Yea, verily, the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, after the sufferings of his wrath.

38. For all the rest shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead, through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb, who was slain, who was in the bosom of the Father before the worlds were made.
39. And this is the gospel, the glad tidings, which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us—
40. That he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness;
41. That through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power and made by him;
42. Who glorifies the Father, and saves all the works of his hands, except those sons of perdition who deny the Son after the Father has revealed him.
  
43. Wherefore, he saves all except them—they shall go away into everlasting punishment, which is endless punishment, which is eternal punishment, to reign with the devil and his angels in eternity, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, which is their torment—
44. And the end thereof, neither the place thereof, nor their torment, no man knows;
45. Neither was it revealed, neither is, neither will be revealed unto man, except to them who are made partakers thereof;
46. Nevertheless, I, the Lord, show it by vision unto many, but straightway shut it up again;
47. Wherefore, the end, the width, the height, the depth, and the misery thereof, they understand not, neither any man except those who are ordained unto this condemnation.
48. And we heard the voice, saying: Write the vision, for lo, this is the end of the vision of the sufferings of the ungodly.
  
49. And again we bear record—for we saw and heard, and this is the testimony of the gospel of Christ concerning them who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just—
50. They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given—
51. That by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power;
52. And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.
53. They are they who are the church of the Firstborn.
54. They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things—
55. They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory;
56. And are priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son.
57. Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of cGod—
58. Wherefore, all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's.
59. And they shall overcome all things.
60. Wherefore, let no man glory in man, but rather let him glory in God, who shall subdue all enemies under his feet.
61. These shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever.
62. These are they whom he shall bring with him, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven to reign on the earth over his people.
63. These are they who shall have part in the first resurrection.
64. These are they who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just.
65. These are they who are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly place, the holiest of all.
66. These are they who have come to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of Enoch, and of the Firstborn.
67. These are they whose names are written in heaven, where God and Christ are the judge of all.

68. These are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood.
69. These are they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all, whose glory the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical.
70. And again, we saw the terrestrial world, and behold and lo, these are they who are of the terrestrial, whose glory differs from that of the church of the Firstborn who have received the fulness of the Father, even as that of the moon differs from the sun in the firmament.
71. Behold, these are they who died without law;
72. And also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh;
73. Who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it.
74. These are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men.
75. These are they who receive of his glory, but not of his fulness.
76. These are they who receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fulness of the Father.
77. Wherefore, they are bodies terrestrial, and not bodies celestial, and differ in glory as the moon differs from the sun.
78. These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God.
79. And now this is the end of the vision which we saw of the terrestrial, that the Lord commanded us to write while we were yet in the Spirit.
80. And again, we saw the glory of the telestial, which glory is that of the lesser, even as the glory of the stars differs from that of the glory of the moon in the firmament.
81. These are they who received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus.
82. These are they who deny not the Holy Spirit.
83. These are they who are thrust down to hell.
84. These are they who shall not be redeemed from the devil until the blast resurrection, until the Lord, even Christ the Lamb, shall have finished his work.
85. These are they who receive not of his fulness in the eternal world, but of the Holy Spirit through the ministration of the terrestrial;
86. And the terrestrial through the ministration of the celestial.
87. And also the telestial receive it of the administering of angels who are appointed to minister for them, or who are appointed to be ministering spirits for them; for they shall be heirs of salvation.
88. And thus we saw, in the heavenly vision, the glory of the telestial, which surpasses all understanding;
89. And no man knows it except him to whom God has revealed it.
90. And thus we saw the glory of the terrestrial which excels in all things the glory of the telestial, even in glory, and in power, and in might, and in dominion.
91. And thus we saw the glory of the celestial, which excels in all things—where God, even the Father, reigns upon his throne forever and ever;
92. Before whose throne all things bow in humble reverence, and give him glory forever and ever.
93. They who dwell in his presence are the church of the Firstborn; and they see as they are seen, and know as they are known, having received of his fulness and of his grace;
94. And he makes them equal in power, and in might, and in dominion.
95. And the glory of the celestial is one, even as the glory of the sun is one.
96. And the glory of the terrestrial is one, even as the glory of the moon is one.

97. And the glory of the teſtial is one, even as the glory of the ſtars is one; for as one ſtar differs from another ſtar in glory, even ſo differs one from another in glory in the teſtial world;
98. For theſe are they who are of Paul, and of Apollos, and of Cephas.
99. Theſe are they who ſay they are ſome of one and ſome of another—ſome of Chriſt and ſome of John, and ſome of Moſes, and ſome of Elias, and ſome of Eſaias, and ſome of Iſaiah, and ſome of Enoch;
100. But received not the goſpel, neither the teſtimony of Jeſus, neither the prophets, neither the everlaſting covenant.
101. Laſt of all, theſe all are they who will not be gathered with the ſaints, to be caught up unto the church of the Firſtborn, and received into the cloud.
102. Theſe are they who are liars, and ſorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whoſoever loves and makes a lie.
103. Theſe are they who ſuffer the wrath of God on earth.
104. Theſe are they who ſuffer the vengeance of eternal fire.
105. Theſe are they who are caſt down to hell and ſuffer the wrath of Almighty God, until the fulneſs of times, when Chriſt ſhall have ſubdued all enemies under his feet, and ſhall have perfected his work;
106. When he ſhall deliver up the kingdom, and preſent it unto the Father, ſpotleſs, ſaying: I have overcome and have trodden the wine-pret alone, even the wine-pret of the fierceneſs of the wrath of Almighty God.
107. Then ſhall he be crowned with the crown of his glory, to ſit on the throne of his power to reign forever and ever.
108. But behold, and lo, we ſaw the glory and the inhabitants of the teſtial world, that they were as innumerable as the ſtars in the firmament of heaven, or as the ſand upon the ſeaſhore;
109. And heard the voice of the Lord ſaying: Theſe all ſhall bow the knee, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to him who ſits upon the throne forever and ever;
110. For they ſhall be judged according to their works, and every man ſhall receive according to his own works, his own dominion, in the manſions which are prepared;
111. And they ſhall be ſervants of the Moſt High; but where God and Chriſt dwell they cannot come, worlds without end.
112. This is the end of the viſion which we ſaw, which we were commanded to write while we were yet in the Spirit.
113. But great and marvelous are the works of the Lord, and the mysteries of his kingdom which he ſhewed unto us, which ſurpaſs all underſtanding in glory, and in might, and in dominion;
114. Which he commanded us we ſhould not write while we were yet in the Spirit, and are not lawful for man to utter;
115. Neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be ſeen and underſtood by the power of the Holy Spirit, which God beſtows on thoſe who love him, and purify themſelves before him;
116. To whom he grants this privilege of ſeeing and knowing for themſelves;
117. That through the power and manifeſtation of the Spirit, while in the fleſh, they may be able to bear his preſence in the world of glory.
118. And to God and the Lamb be glory, and honor, and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

**1836**

**REV. Daniel A. Clark (1779-1840) Congregationaliſt Paſtor, Maſſachuſetts & New York**  
**The Nature And Results Of Sanctification. JOHN Xvii. 17. Sanctify Them Through Thy truth;**  
**thy word Is truth.**

**The National Preacher Magazine**

**Sermon CCXII**

OUR Lord Jesus Christ was a perfect man. This we must believe as confidently as we believe his divinity, else we shall have confused ideas of many portions of divine truth. And as he was a perfect man, and would be in all things a pattern of what his people should be, he must have a perfect religious character, and perform the Christian duties, as far as they would be applicable to his exalted nature. Hence, we often find him engaged in prayer.

Whatever difficulty there may be in the idea of a divine Redeemer's praying, the fact we are bound to believe. In his inferior character as Mediator, he acted by commission from the Father, and would take instructions from him, and put confidence in him. When the last scene was coming on, and he knew that soon he must hang upon the tree, he offered that memorable prayer, from which the text is selected. He prayed most tenderly for his people; and among the first blessings asked, he prayed for their sanctification, through the truth.

**There cluster about this subject many interesting questions, to some of which I purpose to turn your attention.**

1. What do the Scriptures mean by sanctification? Sometimes, it means being set apart to sacred use. Thus every seventh day is sanctified."God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." Thus the tabernacle and temple, the priests, and altars, and sacrifices, and all the sacred things of the Jewish dispensation, were sanctified.

God speaks of sanctifying his name, which he does when by his judgments he rebukes the gainsayers, and stills their blasphemies. He thus convinces men that he is holy.

I could name many other uses of the term sanctification; but its principal use, and that intended in the text, is, in application to the work of rendering an unholy creature holy. Men are by nature unholy. They exercise forbidden affections, and do not put forth the affections that God requires. The prayer of Christ in the text was, that his followers, through the instrumentality of truth, might be made what God requires them to be; having the affections of the heart, and, of course, the deeds of the life, conformable to the divine law.

2. Another question may here very properly be,—When does this holiness begin? And the answer is obvious: It begins at the moment of regeneration. Till then, all the exercises are unholy; for "the carnal mind is enmity against God." Nor is there any degree of alarm, or any amount of conviction, that can generate one holy affection in the heart, previously to this period. Of course all the prayers offered, and all the exertions made, prior to this change, are unregenerate prayers and exertions. Nor can it be believed, consistently with correct scripture views, that, anterior to this moment, there is any approximation toward correct feeling. No alarm, nor the most distinct conviction, can bring an unregenerate man to feel any more correctly toward God, or any holy object, than he did in a state of carelessness and security. And although we would not pretend to say that the divine influence in the hour of awakening may not restrain the sinner, and hold him back from the blasphemous thoughts and affections which he might otherwise put-forth, yet in all this there is no holiness.

And then it may be a question whether the sinner, under alarm, does not wax worse and worse, till the moment of passing from death unto life. If he has more light—if he sees more distinctly the objects of his implacable hatred, does he not obviously rise in his hatred, till it is changed into love? This point, however, it is not my object to press. We must concede that holiness begins when the heart is changed.

3. Is it always small in its beginning? Does that text in which the kingdom of God is compared to a grain of mustard seed, and that other where it is compared to leaven, teach us that grace in the heart is thus small at the first? Or do they illustrate the primitive smallness of the Christian church, and its ultimate growth and enlargement? They may be meant to apply in both cases; but aside from these texts, we are taught unequivocally in the Scriptures that the believer is, at the first, sanctified but in a small degree, and that he "grows in grace" till he arrives at the fulness of the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. He is, at the first,



a"babe, and has need of milk, and not of strong meat." Afterwards, he"forgets the things that are behind, and reaches forth to those things that are before, and presses toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The light that has shined in upon him shines"brighter and brighter unto the perfect day." Hence, we gather, that though the work of regeneration is from its very nature instantaneous, the work of sanctification is progressive, and is, at the first, comparatively small.

4. But how will this comport with what believers have thought was their experience—that at the first they felt a glow of holy affection, which they termed their first love, which afterward they lost? And the Scriptures, they have supposed, favored the idea."Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." But was that love of espousals, thus accredited to Israel, all holy love? Or was it not, in great part at least, merely that natural joy which might arise from the comfort, and pride, and novelty of their emancipation? It surely soon vanished, and they murmured, and made them gods, under whose guidance they purposed to return to Egypt. And that whole congregation, you know, died in the wilderness. They were, evidently, as a body, destitute of holiness; hence their love of espousals must be explained as something else than delight in God.

But why may not the same be said often of that joy with which the heart of the new-born seems to overflow? Can we be allowed to believe it is all holy love to God? There can be, as yet, but little knowledge of God, or of truth. Hence that strong affection can hardly be allowed to flow wholly from objects so dimly seen. Is there not often far greater probability, that it is the mere effusion of animal affection? Or, at least, that it has far more of nature in it than of grace. There may not seem, afterward, the same hilarity; but is there not more knowledge of truth and duty, and more stability in the ways of God, more fixed principles of action, more humility, and more undeviating confidence in the Savior?

In which position would the believer most readily go to the stake, and lay down his life for his Master? when, during the first month of his regeneracy, he fills the air with his song? or, when a few years afterward, he has learned the corruption of his heart, and at times, perhaps, hardly dare hope that he is born of God? May not the joy abate, and there be, at the same time, an increase of that principle of holiness that develops a heavenly mind? Surely it is the believer of continued experience, and not the man renewed but yesterday, that is rooted and grounded in the truth, and who cannot be driven about with every wind of doctrine. Whether this question is decided right, however, I wish each one to judge for himself.

5. Another question arising out of this subject is—does the good man at all times advance in holiness? and are we so to understand that text,"The righteous shall hold on his way?" Here, perhaps, again, it is not easy to come at what we are sure is truth. I have believed that it is otherwise, and that, while there are times when the good man progresses rapidly, there are other times when he makes no progress, and others, again, when the progress of holiness, if I may so speak, is backward. Thus Israel, sometimes, bent their track directly to the promised land at other times did not move for many days, and at other times marched retrograde. So we have seen the plant spring up and grow as if life was in it, and then perhaps for weeks seem stationary, and then again withering under drought, and seemingly about toperish. Whether these analogies may teach us truth, or mislead us, still I have believed it thus with the child of God. And the only position contested, I believe is, whether the Christian is ever in the way to do himself essential injury. That broad promise,"All things shall work together for good to them that love God," has been used as implying the negative. That the promise is true, and that the full import of it will be accomplished, there cannot be a doubt. But what is its import? Does God merely promise, in this precious text, that all the events of his providence shall conspire to bring his people to a higher seat in heaven? Or does he promise all this, and more too, that their very backsliding shall conspire to the same result? Would he promise, that if they forsake him, and sin by going after their idols, this very sin shall tend to purify them! Would it be safe to trust a wandering believer with such a promise in his hand? Is it reasonable to believe that it will tend to the health and growth of the heavenly mind, to have it wounded, and polluted, and ensnared by transgression? Have we any assurance that Peter and David might not have reached a nobler Christian stature, if they had stood firm in the hour of temptation? I confess, I think there is no such assurance.

Do not facts warrant us to believe that Christian minds, of the same powers and opportunities, have made different degrees of advance in the ways of God? The one is seen to climb the steeps of Zion, with brisk and steady step, and far outgo the other, while to us there appears no reason why the other might not have led in the enterprise. The professor who comes at length to the grave in old age, and, as we hope, a believer, but who can look back upon whole years of relapse and of wandering, has he those marks of maturity, and that animating hope, and that strong and conquering faith, seen in the man who moved steadily on in the ways of God, till his Master called him? You are thinking, perhaps, while you read, of two old men, contemporaries who died, it may be, in the same year, members of the same communion, the one having hardly deviated from the path of life an hour, while the other has seemed to be alternately a Christian or a worldling, as the times were. Now which of them seemed manifestly to fall asleep in Jesus, while the other was saved perhaps, though as by fire? You have all answered me. Pass through our churches, and tell me where is the venerated man of God, who is to the world around him a walking conscience, and carries heaven on his brow, in whose life there have not been some dark seasons of marked, and guilty, and hurtful relapse? Let me say, I do not believe that the Christian does make uniform progress in holiness, but does sometimes become stationary, and sometimes retrograde in the heavenly road.

6. Are we then to believe, that while every Christian in heaven will be perfect, there will still be a difference in their Christian stature, and their amount of enjoyment proportioned to their industry in acquiring holiness in the present life? On this point there can be very little doubt. There will be a difference in heaven among redeemed spirits, as one star differeth from another star in glory. Doubtless God will have employment for them all in his kingdom. As in a building there is a variety of materials, places to fill requiring more and less strength, but all necessary; so in that mystic temple whose lopstone is to be laid in heaven with shouting, Grace ,grace, unto it, there may be required, to give it its greatest strength and beauty, souls of very different capacities.

7. It is then obvious that we are ourselves selecting the position we shall occupy in heaven, if any. On our industry will depend our growth; and on our growth our station in the kingdom of the Redeemer. And how can men be indifferent what is the position they shall hold among the redeemed in heaven! Increasing holiness bears its present fruits, gives its immediate as well as its future rewards. In what other enterprise, then, shall we be so ambitious to succeed as in this? If there is any one thing surprising above all others, it is that believers in Christ should be slow to put on his image. The Psalmist would never be satisfied till he awaked from death in the likeness of his Redeemer. There is surely no joy like that which is begotten by a holy temper: hence, how can one who has tasted this joy, find any other pleasures, which, for a single hour, can become its substitute?

**Let me close by presenting a few motives to engaging with ardor in this heavenly enterprise.**

1. I have hinted that we shall be happy in proportion as we are holy. We are mistaken in supposing that any particular circumstances are requisite to render us happy. There is but one thing requisite, likeness to Jesus Christ. And this is a happiness within the reach of us all, in proportion as we are willing to exercise his temper, and copy his example, and put on his image. Hence that rich and precious intimation, "Christ in you the hope of glory."

2. We shall be useful, other things being equal, in proportion as we are holy. No good man can be satisfied who feels himself to be living to no purpose. Find me the Christian who is never happy, and, sure as life, he is never useful. He is a cumberer of the ground, and can never reflect on the day that has gone by with pleasure. The man who is not aiming to bless his generation may dig after comforts, but he can never find them. He may read all the promises over, day by day, but there will not be found a word of consolation for him. He might derive more from some act of real Christian benevolence, than he does from a whole Bible full of consolations: and to be holy is the way to be useful. To follow Christ has an eloquence in it that no exhortation, nor argument, can hold out. "Be ye followers of me, as dear children."

3. There is dignity and character in being holy, that nothing else can produce. What man is great, like him who walks in the consciousness of exercising the same affections that Christ does? In what matter should not men feel indifferent, rather than be willing to be losers in this mighty concern? How can it seem a small thing, whether we put on, or not, the character that glows in the view of heaven? the character that he wears who receives the homage of all the redeemed, and is adored by cherubim and seraphim? How comparatively trifling a matter is it, that we are honorable in the estimation of those who judge according to the outward appearance. The apostle could say to his enemies, It is a small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment. How noble his character, while he thus regarded supremely the inward adornings of holiness? Would we then aim at character,—character that will stand the test when worlds are burned up,—let us press on after HOLINESS.

**1837**

**Rev. Stephen Remington (Methodist Episcopal Pastor, New York)**

**Gift Of God, Which Is Eternal Life, Contrasted With Wages Of Sin, Which Is Death, Closed With Objections Against Universalism**

**Anti-Universalism; or, Universalism Shown to be Unscriptural**

(New York, 1837)

In a course of Lectures delivered in the Methodist Episcopal Church in Willet Street, New York

**Lecture III**

**The Gift of God, Which is Eternal Life, Contrasted with the Wages of Sin, Which is Death, and Closed with a Number of Objections Against Universalism**

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—Rom. vi., 23.

In the last two lectures upon this text we have spoken of sin and its wages. We have seen how exceedingly offensive it is to God, and destructive to the happiness of his creature man. That all the evil we suffer in this world is its consequence; and that all the suffering of the finally impenitent in the world to come is its just punishment; which punishment is “sorer” than any it is possible for us to endure in this life, death itself not excepted; for “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

But fearful and dreadful as will be the condition of all such as die in their sins, yet there is no necessity of a soul's perishing, for God has made an ample provision for our salvation.

“The trumpet of the gospel sounds  
With an inviting voice.”

God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. His bowels of compassion yearn over us; his goodness is as an “unbounded sea, where all our thoughts are drowned;” and “vast as eternity his love.” He invites us to his embrace. Thousands have accepted the invitation, and found a hearty welcome; and still he is saying to the wandering sons and daughters of men, “come, for yet there is room.” Fallen as we are, polluted as we have made ourselves by our sins, there is yet hope; for this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus has come into the world to save the chief of sinners. We need not die for ever. The water of life is abundant. “Its streams the whole creation reach, so plenteous is the store”—and may be obtained “without money and without price.”

“Here we may wash our spotted souls

From crimes of deepest die."

Our text contains an epitome of the dreadful displeasure of Jehovah against sin. Its "wages is death." It also contains an announcement of the rich and ample provisions of the gospel, by which sin may be destroyed and its punishment prevented; and it is moreover a glorious exhibition of Divine benevolence to a world of sinners lost. "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In this lecture we shall confine our remarks to this latter division of the text, and inquire,

I. What we are to understand by eternal life.

II. By what proof we know that it is the gift of God.

III We shall inquire unto whom is it given.

I. Eternal life. This is the consummation of all the benefits derived from the life, death, resurrection, and intercessions of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is directly the opposite of the penalty of the Divine law, to which we have exposed ourselves by transgression. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ"—Rom. v., 17.

The antithesis which the Scriptures exhibit between the penalty of the law and this great and glorious gift of God through Jesus Christ is perfect, and will hold good throughout. The penalty of the law is death—the gift of God is life.

It may not be inappropriate to remark that death implies a separation (Eccl. xii., 7), and life a union. Natural life is the union of the soul and body, but natural death is their dissolution. Spiritual life is the union of the soul with God in time, and eternal life is the union of the soul with God in eternity. Spiritual death is the separation of the soul from the enjoyment of God in time, and eternal death is the separation of the soul from the enjoyment of God in eternity. To die a natural death while spiritually alive secures, as its consequence, eternal life; so also to die a natural death while "dead in trespasses and sins" secures, as its inevitable consequence, eternal death. Eternal death, therefore, is as naturally the result of an unholy heart and life as it is its punishment. And, vice versa, eternal life is as much the certain result of a holy heart and life as it is the gift of God.

To establish this position it is only necessary for us to examine a few antithetical passages of Scripture, where the contrast is drawn between the punishment of sin and the reward of holiness, and we shall at once perceive that they are diametrically opposed one to the other. The first passage which we shall examine is found in Prov. xiv., 32: "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death." The following particulars are suggested as the doctrine of this text.

1. That the righteous at death have hope, because they are righteous.

2. The wicked at death have no hope, because they are wicked.

3. That the righteous, because they have hope in death, go willingly into the other world, and may even "desire to depart and be with Christ."

4. That the wicked, because they have no hope in death, go into eternity reluctantly. They are driven away. How true is this! And how many instances of sinners dying in all the horrors of despair might be cited to confirm this solemn truth!

“At that dread moment how the frantic soul  
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement,  
Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,  
But shrieks in vain!  
A little longer! ah! A little longer  
Might she but stay to wash away her crimes,  
And fit her for her passage! Moving sight!  
Her very eyes weep blood, and every sigh  
She heaves is big with horror! But the foe,  
Like a stanch murderer, steady to his purpose,  
Pursues her close through every lane of life,  
Nor misses once the track, but presses on,  
Till, forced at last to the tremendous verge,  
At once she sinks!”

Again: Matt, vii., 13, 14: “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Here is a perfect antithetical text. The wide gate is put in opposition to the strait gate; the broad way to the narrow way; the end of the broad way to the end of the narrow way; and the many that enter the broad way and go down to destruction to the few that enter the narrow way and go up to life eternal.

You will take notice that as all the parts of this text are put in opposition one to the other, of course the destruction which is the end of the broad way must be contrasted with the life which is the end of the narrow way; which life is eternal: consequently, the destruction must be eternal death, “soul and body in hell.”—Matt. it., 28.

Once more: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”—John iii., 36. To understand this passage we will inquire,

1. What is promised to them that believe on the Son of God? The text says “everlasting life.”
2. What is threatened to them who believe not the Son? The text says, first, that they “shall not see (enjoy) life;” and, second, “but the wrath of God abideth on them.”
3. The threatening to the unbeliever is the perfect contrast to the promise made to the believer. Now God has promised that the believer shall never die. “Whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.”—John xi., 26. Who does not understand this passage as containing the promise that the believer shall live for ever? By a parity of reasoning we conclude that when God says to the unbeliever “he shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him,” he threatens him with eternal death. Therefore it follows, that as the believer will certainly obtain everlasting life, so the unbeliever will certainly be denied this great gift of God, and suffer the pains of eternal death.

We will now introduce a few texts from the book of Revelations. We are perfectly aware that Universalists will try hard to destroy the force of these passages by saying that the Apocalypse is a very figurative book, and of doubtful interpretation; that it has no reference to another world, but to the destruction of Jerusalem, the fate of Judaism, and the like. But this is a mere quibble by which to destroy the force of truth. That some parts of this book are figurative and highly prophetic, we admit; but the scope and design of it are very plain, and many of its parts are easy of interpretation. Universalists must acknowledge that the three first chapters, which contain the seven letters addressed to the churches of Asia, are not very dark and mysterious. Almost any person of common sense can understand their general meaning without much difficulty. The remaining chapters contain predictions which will not be completely fulfilled until time shall end, and the

destinies of the family of Adam be determined by "the Judge of all the earth." To say, therefore, that we cannot understand any part of Revelations is as far from the truth as to say that we understand all parts of it.

One of the quotations which I now make is an extract from the letter addressed to the church at Smyrna. It reads thus: "He that overcometh shall not be hurt with the second death."—Rev. ii., 11. Now what death is this? Is it the death of the body? No, for that is the first death. "To be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone is the second death."—Rev. xxi., 8. "For blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power."—Rev. xx., 6. Hath no power for what? John says, "Hath no power to hurt them. For they shall not be shut out of heaven, nor be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone; but obtain eternal life." Such, therefore, as do not overcome sin are not holy, and have no part in the first resurrection, shall be hurt with the second death; that is, they shall die for ever.

We come now to the consideration of a part of the commission to preach the gospel which Jesus Christ gave to his apostles. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned."—Mark xvi., 15, 16.

1. What does this salvation embrace? A deliverance from sin, and grace to help in time of need in this world; and in the world to come a deliverance from the consequences of sin and the enjoyment of eternal life. It begins here and ends in heaven. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."—John iv., 14.

2. What is the damnation of them that believe not? It is to remain guilty and condemned in this world; "for he that believeth not is condemned already," John iii., 18, and in the world to come to continue under this condemnation, and suffer all the consequences of sin; which will be an exclusion from heaven; the wrath of God; the undying worm; the vengeance of eternal or unquenchable fire; and a share with the blasphemer, who, Christ hath said, "is in danger of eternal damnation."—Mark iii., 29.

Another: "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting."—Gal. vi., 8. Let us look at this text.

1. What is it to sow to the flesh? It is to live after the flesh, follow its sinful inclinations, or do its works. "Now the works of the flesh are these: adultery," &c.—Gal. v., 19-21.

2. What is it to sow to the spirit? It is to live after the spirit, following its holy emotions, and having its fruits. "Now the fruit of the spirit is love, joy," &c.—Gal. v., 22, 23.

3. To live after the spirit or sow to it is life everlasting. To live after the flesh or sow to it is its opposite, which is everlasting death. So St. Paul teaches here and elsewhere, for he says, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live."—Rom. viii., 13.

The plain and obvious meaning of this text is, that those who live after the flesh are separated from God. It excludes them from the enjoyment of the Divine favour here and also in the world to come; while those who live after the spirit take up their cross daily, deny themselves, and thus mortify the deeds of the body, shall enjoy the favour of God in this world and in the world to come. The one is everlasting death, the other is everlasting life.

We might multiply passages of Scripture of the same import with those already quoted, if we deemed it necessary, but we think it is not; we shall therefore close this part of our lecture by looking at the antithesis in the context, and also in our text.

In the context, St. Paul says to his converted brethren, "When ye were the servants of sin ye were free from righteousness; what fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed, for the end of those things

is death? But now, being made free from sin, and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death." Every unprejudiced mind must perceive that the apostle contrasts their character and condition with what they were previous to their conversion to God.

1. Previous to their conversion they were free from righteousness, but now free from sin.

2. They were once the servants of sin, but now they are the servants of righteousness.

3. They then had their fruit unto uncleanness, but now unto holiness.

4. The end of their sinful practices, and the end of their holy walk, are here contrasted as perfect opposites; and as the one is everlasting life, so the other must be everlasting death. This conclusion is irresistible to all but such as are biased with the dogma of Universalism, and are determined not to be convinced of their errors.

We come now to consider our text. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Here," says Mr. Sawyer, "it will be perceived, are three pairs of antithetic terms: 1. Wages is contrasted with gift. 2. Sin is contrasted with God. 3. Death is contrasted with eternal life." All this we freely grant. For, 1. Sin is opposed to God, to his law, will, government, holiness, and purity. 2. The wages of sin is just the opposite of the gift of God; for the sinner justly deserves all the punishment he receives for his sins. It is his "wages." But the righteous obtain the blessings of grace here and the rewards of glory hereafter, as the "gift of God." They say it is "not of works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy hath he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

3. The death mentioned in the text as the "wages of sin" is the opposite of "the gift of God," which is "eternal life." We have remarked that death is a separation from God, and life is a union with God. Eternal life, therefore, is an eternal union with God in glory, and its opposite must be an eternal separation from God, which is endless death; and is precisely what St. Paul declares shall be the doom of the wicked at the great day. "They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power."

With one more remark we shall dismiss this proposition. That is, as eternal death is the separation from God and the glory of his power, and a punishment of everlasting destruction, it must be a deprivation of all the positive good which we are capacitated to enjoy and the infliction of all the positive evil which we are capable of enduring. And so, also, eternal life must be the exemption of all evil, both moral and natural, and the enjoyment of all possible good, according to the capacities with which God has endowed us by nature and grace. . . .

II. Eternal life is the gift of God. It is not of ourselves, for it is obtained "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

1. He is its great fountain. "This the record that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."—1 John v., 11. He purchased it for us when he was "delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification." For "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. He was made sin (a sin-offering) for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And hence "grace reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."—Rom. v., 21.

2. Jesus Christ prepares the soul for the enjoyment of eternal life. This he does by the efficacy of his own blood, which "cleanseth from all sin," and the operations of his holy spirit, which "convinceth of sin," leads to repentance, sanctifies and renews our fallen natures, and "makes us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."—Col. i., 12-14. Hence "he is the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him."

3. The soul that is prepared for, Jesus Christ crowns with, eternal life. It is his prerogative to give it to his people. Christ said to Peter, "there is no man that hath left houses, &c;., for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred fold now in this time—and in the world to come eternal life."—Mark x., 28, 30. To his flock he said, "I will give unto you eternal life."

4. His people receive eternal life as "the gift of God." Hence it is not the reward of works. We are rewarded "according to our works," but not for our works. All who are made holy are constituted worthy of eternal life, through the merits of Jesus Christ, who "saves his people from" (not in) "their sins;" and hath said, "Ye shall walk with me in white, for ye are worthy."

But you may ask, as the Scriptures teach us that we shall be rewarded according to our works, what is eternal life but this reward? We answer, that there are degrees of glory among the saints in heaven, "as one star differeth from another star in glory." Eternal life entitles us to an admittance into heaven, and is heaven itself. But the reward of our works will be an increase of our happiness in heaven. "He that giveth a cup of cold water to a disciple" (which, in the days of persecution, was not a small favour) "shall not lose his reward." For feeding the poor, Christ says, "thou shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Many of the martyrs "were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection."—Heb. xi., 35. "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."—Dan. xii., 3.

What an encouragement is this view of the subject to all such as spend their days in the service of God! Such shall obtain eternal life, and, besides, receive a reward according to all their labours and sufferings for Christ's sake; while those who are just saved will have no stars in their crown, no sheaves to bring with joy to the heavenly garner, and but little or no reward in another world. It is true that all who enter heaven will be happy, and enjoy all that their capacity will permit; but how limited must their capacity be who are just saved, in comparison with the capacity of those who have grown old in the service of God, and graduated through every variety of Christian experience, from that of babes in Christ to fathers and mothers in Israel; and through the course of their lives have been instrumental in the conversion and salvation of hundreds of immortal souls, and exerted an influence which remains after they are dead and in heaven, and which may be the means of bringing thousands more to glory!

All who die in infancy will obtain the gift of eternal life through the merits of Jesus Christ. Such not being moral agents, are saved unconditionally.

We come now, in the last place, to inquire,

III. Unto whom will eternal life be given? To this very important inquiry we reply, that it will not be given to all the human family indiscriminately.

1. It is not promised to all men, either directly or indirectly. We challenge the whole world to produce a single passage of Holy Writ which contains the promise or assurance that God will give to each member of the family of Adam eternal life. It is true that Universalists appeal to the Bible, and quote many passages from it which, with some, pass for a confirmation of the truth of their doctrine; but they misapply and pervert the word of God. We will examine some of their favourite texts, and then we shall be able to judge for ourselves.

The first passage which we will examine you may find in Isaiah xlv., 23: "Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." If this text refers to the gospel, and is fulfilled in this world, it is only a declaration of what God will have men do in order to be saved. It does not say that they shall infallibly bow the knee and confess to God; but they shall do this if they are saved. You will perceive that this construction of the text is not unreasonable if you will read the 24th verse: "Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed." Now if the



text means that all men do bow the knee and confess to God in this world, then it is' not true; for there are multitudes who never bow the knee, and never confess to God.

If the text is not fulfilled in this world, as, perhaps, Universalists may say, then we ask, to what period are we to look for its fulfilment? This question we are prepared to answer from unerring inspiration. St. Paul quotes it, and applies it to the judgment. "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ; for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So, then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God."—Rom. xiv., 10-12. You will remark that the apostle, by fixing the fulfilment of this prophecy at the judgment! Makes it prove just the reverse of what the Universalists teach. For they deny the doctrine of a future judgment altogether; and this they must do, or renounce their theory. But St. Paul turns the force of this text against them, and declares that "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Then "every knee will bow" to the judge, but it will be too late for the sinner to obtain mercy. "Every tongue will also confess to God," but it will be too late to obtain forgiveness of sins; Jesus Christ will then be the "Judge of the quick and dead," but not the "mediator between God and men," as he is now.

The next which comes under our notice you may read in Isaiah, xxv., 6-8: "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast—and he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

Now if this passage can be of any possible service to Universalists, it must refer to the Gospel; otherwise it belongs entirely to this world, and has nothing to do with the world to come. We are willing to allow that it is a prediction concerning the church of Christ, and the provisions and blessings received and enjoyed within her pale. To understand this text, we will take it up part by part.

1. What does this feast represent! It represents the rich and ample provisions of the gospel of Christ, which are made for all people, and which our Lord himself calls a feast.—Matt. xxii., 2-13; Luke xiv., 16-24.

2. The place where this feast is provided. "In this mountain." The church of God, which St. Paul calls "Mount Zion."—Heb. xii., 22.

3. The blessings there to be enjoyed. These are,

1. The forgiveness of sins. He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people. An allusion to the custom of ancient nations covering the faces of criminals condemned to die; when pardoned their faces were uncovered.

Jesus Christ has saved all the human family from the guilt of the first sin. "The free gift has come upon all men unto justification of life."—Rom. v., 18. And he also pardons every actual transgressor who "with the mouth makes confession unto salvation, and with the heart believeth unto righteousness."

2. Light is another blessing to be enjoyed in this mountain. "He will destroy the veil" of ignorance "that is cast over all nations." By the light of the Gospel moral darkness will be destroyed, and this glorious light shall shine more and more, until the knowledge of the Lord shall, "like a sea of glory," cover the whole earth, and this veil of darkness be entirely destroyed.

3. Victory over death is achieved and obtained in this mountain. "He shall swallow up death in victory." Jesus died, and entered into the dominions of death, that he might conquer this last enemy of man, and become the first fruit of them that slept. Victory over death is one of the richest blessings he imparts to his children: 1. He saves them from tormenting fears of death by washing away their sin, and thus extracting its sting.—1 Cor. xv., 56, 57. 2. He will give them victory over death itself at the resurrection. "So when this

corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."—Verse 54.

4. In this mountain a deliverance from sorrow is also obtained. "And the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces." 1. He will wipe away the tears of guilty distress by pardon; and, 2. The tears of suffering mortality by taking all such to Heaven, where "they shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more; for the Lamb shall lead them to fountains of living water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

All these blessings, therefore: pardon, divine light, victory over death, and a deliverance from all sorrow, are enjoyed in "God's holy mountain," and not extended to all the world; nor will they be thus extended until "it shall come to pass that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."—Isaiah ii., 2.

We will now look into the New Testament, and examine John iii., 17. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." The word might qualifies the sense of this passage, and implies the possibility, but not the certainty of the salvation of all men.

Again: 1 Tim. iv., 10, "Who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe." This text speaks of a general and special salvation. Two inquiries will bring it fairly before us. 1. From what does Jesus Christ save all men? 2. From what does he save them that believe?

1. Jesus Christ has saved all men from nonexistence. As all men sinned seminally, and not actually, in Adam, so all men, if Christ had not interposed to save them, would have been punished seminally as they sinned; that is, Adam and Eve would have been cut off in their sins, and, of course, their posterity would never have existed. "We are bought with a price," and owe our existence to the interposition of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Jesus Christ saves all men from the guilt and punishment of original sin. None are now condemned, none are punished, for Adam's sin. Romans v.

3. He saves all men from total deprivation of Divine influence. Through Jesus Christ the Holy Spirit has been given to the world, "to convince it of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He is the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world."

4. Christ saves all men from total despair. He has placed man once more on the eligible ground of probation, and made us "prisoners of hope." None need despair of salvation who will improve his gracious day of visitation. Here the general salvation ends. But Christ saves them that believe "especially." 1. From the love of sin; 2. The guilt of sin; 3. Power of sin; 4. Pollution of sin, and, 5. From the consequences of sin; part in this life, and perfectly in the life to come. If this text had said that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all men "especially," and there ended, then it might be of some importance to the Universalist's cause; .but this important word especially happens to belong to the last member of the text—"them that believe."

Once more: In Rom. xi., 26, it is said, "So all Israel shall be saved." Admitting, for argument's sake, that "all Israel" means all the descendants of the patriarchs, it does not prove enough for Universalists. For what will become of the poor Gentiles? Nowhere does the Bible say that all the Gentiles shall be saved; but neither does the apostle mean that all the descendants of the patriarchs shall be saved. This will appear by reading the whole chapter, which treats of the calling of the Gentiles nationally to a participation of the blessings of the Gospel, and the rejection of the Jews nationally, because they rejected Christ. In consequence of which they were judicially blinded as a nation, though there were individual exceptions; "for blindness in part hath happened unto Israel, and a remnant shall be saved." The apostle furthermore informs us that this blindness and obduracy would continue upon them as a people until the "fulness of the Gentiles would come in:" then they will receive the Gospel as a nation, and "so all Israel shall" then "be saved." Any one not prejudiced

must see at once that Paul does not mean "all Israel" that have ever lived, but those who are alive when the Gentile world is converted, and the Gospel has its universal dissemination.

Another passage: 1 Tim. ii., 4, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Our opponents say that this text is a positive affirmation that God will save all men, and if any are finally lost, then his word must fail. I would ask, does not God assert with equal positiveness that he will have all men come unto the knowledge of the truth? And do all men come unto the knowledge of the truth? You say that to come unto the knowledge of the truth all must believe in Universalism. But do all men believe in Universalism? No, certainly not; for the author of these lectures does not. Here is one exception. Many to whom he has delivered them are not Universalists. Hundreds and thousands of others do not believe the doctrine. Besides, many thousands more live and die total unbelievers in Divine revelation; and millions of the family of Adam never heard the Gospel at all, while hundreds of millions more are to this day totally ignorant of its contents. Now have, or do, all these come unto the knowledge of the truth? Certainly not. Has God lied? This blasphemous conclusion must follow if the Universalist's construction of this text be admitted. What, then, can be its true meaning? We answer, that it is God's will "that all should be saved;" and hence the apostle in the context exhorts "that prayer be made for all men." But can we resist the will of God? We can in those things which belong to our salvation. St. Stephen said to the Jews, "ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." To the same people Christ said, "how oft would I have gathered you—but ye would not. Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." God's will is to save us upon the terms of the Gospel; but we are moral agents, and can resist his will, and "choose death in the error of our ways."

We will introduce one more passage of Scripture before we close this lecture. It is a text which Universalists sometimes try hard to press into their service, though very useless to them when rightly understood. The passage is in Rev. v., 23, and reads thus: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, honour, glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." But a cursory view of the chapter from which this text is taken is sufficient to satisfy any one that it is not a description of the final state of mankind or the happiness of heaven; and hence can be of no possible service to the Universalists. For if any part of this chapter refers to the happiness of heaven, it must be that which is included in verses 9 and 10, containing the song of those who are redeemed and saved out of every kindred, and nation, and tongue. To this song the angels are represented as responding; see verse II, 12; and in this response of the angels, creation personified, both animate and inanimate, is represented as uniting, verse 13. Now surely all these creatures are not in heaven; for in that case the men upon earth, the beasts of the field, reptiles of every description, the fish of the sea, the hidden treasures of the sand, fowl of every wing, and insects of every kind would be there. "For all on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them," would embrace all the animal tribes to which I have referred, and more than these. That all which are in heaven and upon earth, &c., as the creatures of an almighty Being, who has created, provides for, and superintends them by his wise and holy providence, praise him, there can be no doubt. "For all his works praise him—the heavens declare his glory, and the firmament showeth forth his handy-work." The towering "cedar of Lebanon, the hyssop that springeth out of the wall," and the animal tribes, from the most noble down to the insignificant insect, all unite in praise to the great Creator, saying, "the hand that made us is Divine." But this is neither the happiness of heaven nor the song of the redeemed. I shall now conclude what I have to say with the words of Mr. Wesley in his notes upon this text. He says, "Every creature in the whole universe, good or bad, in the heaven, on the earth, under the earth, on the sea—with these four regions of the world agrees the fourfold word of praise. What is in heaven says blessing; what is on earth, honour; what is under the earth, glory; and what is on the sea, strength is unto him. This praise from all creatures begins before the opening of the first seal; but it continues from that time to eternity, according to the capacity of each. His enemies must acknowledge his glory; but those in heaven say, Blessed be God and the Lamb."

We believe that we have examined the most prominent texts of Scripture which are employed by our opponents to prove their doctrine, and we are obliged to conclude that not one of them, when properly

explained, contains the least semblance of a promise that all men will indiscriminately go to heaven. We shall now consider,

2. That God has instructed us that certain classes of mankind are positively denied an admittance into heaven, or the gift of eternal life.

1. The classes of mankind that shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Gal. v., 19-21: The works of the flesh are enumerated under sixteen different heads; and, it is added, "that they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Again: 1 Cor. vi., 9, 10: The following are excluded from heaven. "The unrighteous, fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, the abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners." Of all these the apostle says, "they shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Universalists say that they shall. Inspiration says they shall not. Which must we believe? Which is true? "Let God be true." Though we have proved our position beyond the power of successful contradiction, we will remark upon a few more texts, which will at least show how very explicit the Scriptures are upon this subject. I refer the reader to John viii., 21-23: "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and ye shall die in your sins; whither I go ye cannot come—ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." These words were addressed to the unbelieving Jews, and teach us,

1. That Christ was going to heaven, where he assured his disciples they should be received.

2. That unbelievers could not be received in heaven, because they could not be saved from their sins and qualified for its enjoyment.

3. That those Jews to whom Christ addressed himself were unbelievers, because they rejected him as the Messiah; and, therefore, as they could not be saved from their sins, he said to them, "ye shall die in your sins," and "whither I go ye cannot come." This perfectly accords with what Christ taught upon other occasions, and what he commands his ministers to teach to the end of the world. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. He that believeth not shall be damned." Now if our opponents can find any way for the unbeliever to gain an admittance into heaven, it must be in direct opposition to the doctrines of Christ, and therefore by another gospel. For the Gospel of Christ for ever excludes all such from the inheritance of eternal life. We now inquire,

3. Unto whom has God promised the gift of eternal life? We answer, to all who repent, believe, and obey the Gospel. Christ has made a full atonement for our sins, and extended its saving benefits to mankind upon certain conditions. None who have arrived at years of accountability are saved irresistibly or unconditionally, as the Bible abundantly shows in all the examples of conversion therein recorded. I know that the conversion of Saul of Tarsus is sometimes cited. But his conversion to God was far from being unconditional or irresistible; and if you will carefully read Acts be. and xxvii., which contain his own account of it, you will perceive that he was irresistibly awakened, as all sinners are; that he was not then "disobedient to the heavenly vision," as too many are; but that he began at once to pray for mercy, as every poor sinner must do, if he ever receives the pardon of his sins; and that he continued in prayer for three days, at which time God said to Ananias, "behold, he prayeth." And when he came to Saul by the direction of the Lord, he said, "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Now if Saul had been truly converted to God at the time when he was struck down to the earth by a supernatural light from heaven, his sins must have been taken away at that moment, and he made happy in the Lord. But this was not the fact; his sins were washed away when he was baptized by the hands of the servant of the Lord. Then, when the guilt was removed from his burdened conscience, the scales fell from his eyes, and he was made to rejoice in the God of his salvation.

That our salvation is conditional, the explicit language of the Scriptures clearly teaches. A few texts will be sufficient to establish this point. Acts iii., 19: "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." On the day of Pentecost, when many were pricked to their hearts and cried, "men and brethren, what must we do?" Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."—Acts ii., 38. John iii., 16: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Acts x., 43: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive the remission of sins." Hence when the jailer inquired, "what must I do to be saved?" Paul said, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved."—Acts xvi., 31. Passages of the above class might be cited to almost any extent; but these are sufficient to prove that salvation is conditional, and must be entirely satisfactory to all such as will accept of Scripture testimony by which to decide the question.

We will conclude what we have to say upon this chapter by remarking, that a compliance with the conditions, or terms, of the Gospel, changes the state of the sinner in law before God as his Judge, and his character before him as his Father. He is no longer an unrighteous person; but he is justified, sanctified, and saved through faith in the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and becomes "a fellow-citizen of the saints and the household of God. He has not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby he cries Abba, Father. For the Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God. And if a child, then an heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation."

If this be a correct view of this subject, what will be the end of them that obey not the Gospel of God? If eternal life will be given to none but the people of God, or Christ's sheep, "who hear his voice and follow him, taking up their cross daily, and denying themselves of all ungodliness and worldly lusts, living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world;" and "by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, immortality"—I say, if eternal life will only be given to such, what will become of sinners, "the fearful, the unbelieving, and the abominable" of the earth? "Tribulation and anguish must be their portion when they shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with all the holy prophets, in the kingdom of God, and they themselves be thrust out into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

We shall now conclude this lecture by briefly stating some of our leading objections to Universalism.

1. It destroys man's moral agency, and, by consequence, makes the holy, just, and good God the author of all the sin and misery in the world. This we have proved in the first lecture.
2. It sets aside the atonement of Jesus Christ altogether, and makes man suffer the full punishment of his crimes in this world. Hence, if men enter the kingdom of heaven, it must be without Christ or his salvation, and the song of the redeemed be rendered null and void for ever. This we have proved in the second lecture.
3. It represents the Almighty as a cruel and tyrannical being; inflicting punishment upon the innocent for the sins of the guilty; and unjust in punishing the innocent, and letting the guilty pass unpunished. This we have also proved in the second lecture.
4. It makes no just distinction between the righteous and the wicked. It ranks the children of God and the children of the wicked one in the same class, and makes them fellow-heirs of the same promises and of the same heaven. Its prayer is, "gather thou my soul with sinners, and my life with bloody men."
5. Universalism does no good. It brings no sinners to repentance. It never "reasons with them upon temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come." It never causes sinners to tremble on account of their sins and exposure to God's wrath. It never prompts men to exclaim, "what must we do to be saved?" It does not

make men "contrite in spirit," and lead them to mourn on account of sin. It produces no revivals of religion. In short, it never was the means of saving one sinner from his sins. Therefore it is not of God. If it were, he would own and bless it. But he does not, he never did, and never will own it as his truth. He never will bless it in the conversion and salvation of sinners. It is from beneath, not from above.

6. It does immense evil. It grieves the righteous and strengthens the hands of the wicked. "With lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad, and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life."— Ezek. xiii., 22, 23. It cries peace, peace, when God has not spoken peace. It builds up the sinner in his sins, and often makes him" at least "twofold more the child of hell than he was before." As long as sinners cleave to Universalism, so long will they cleave to their sins. The important doctrines of repentance, faith, and holiness preached to them will be labour lost as long as they remain established Universalists. As Dr. Fisk remarks,

"The plain language of this doctrine is, you ought not to be wicked, it is true; but if you are, God will love you just as well. Nay, it is impossible for you, however rebellious you may be, to forfeit his love. Heaven shall be yours; fear not. In the midst of all your blasphemies, and all your uncleanness, and all your excesses; yea, in your extortions, your robberies, your murders, rejoice and be exceeding glad, for heaven, with all its weight of glory, is yours.

" Now is there nothing in all this to encourage the sinner in his course 1 In other words, is there anything in this system to counteract the temptations of Satan, the blandishments of the world, and the rage of sinful passions? We might instance several towns where, in the opinion of the judicious, immoralities have increased by the introduction and preaching of these sentiments. We might inquire, where has there been a revival of the work of grace by the preaching of this doctrine? Where has there been a reformation of morals by the preaching of Universalism? We acknowledge that there are moral men and religious men who profess to believe this doctrine. But has Universalism made them so? We believe not. But rather that where none can be produced whom it has made better, many may be found whom it has made worse."

7. Universalism is unscriptural. This is a weighty objection, and deserves to be very seriously considered; because none other can stand if this does not. Let this doctrine be fairly proved by the word of God, and all should embrace it. The Bible must be our text-book, and by it we must try our faith and practice. When it says we are wrong we cannot be right, and when it pronounces us right we cannot be wrong. In these lectures the sacred book has been our only guide; to this test we have brought Universalism, and by it we decide that it is anti-scriptural. It appears plausible only as it is successful in perverting this only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. The repeating of a few texts, first, as they are in the Bible, and, secondly, as they should stand in the creed of the Universalist, will be sufficient to convince the reader that this conclusion is not without a good and substantial reason.

The Holy Scriptures. The Creed of Universalists.

" God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John iii., 16.

" He that believeth not shall be damned."—Mark xvi., 16.

" He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." —John iii., 35.

" The Sodomites are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." —Jude, 7th verse.

" And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."— Luke xvi., 23.

"Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him twofold

" God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth not in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

" He that believeth not shall be saved."

" He that believeth not the Son shall see life, and the wrath of God shall not abide on him."

" The Sodomites are set forth for an example, enjoying the favour of eternal love."

" And in the grave he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."

" Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him two more the child of hell than yourselves."—Matt. xxiii., 15.

" Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" —Verse 33.

" Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."— Matt. x., 28.

" All things work together for good to them that love God."—Rom. viii., 28.

" The wicked is driven away in his wickedness."— Prov. xiv., 32.

" The wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power."—2 Thess. i, 9.

fold more the child of the grave than yourselves."

" Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of the grave?"

" Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in the grave."

All things work together! for good to them that hate God."

" The wicked is carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom."

" The wicked shall not be punished, but rewarded with [everlasting happiness in the j presence of the Lord and the I glory of his power."

We might easily increase the number of texts by which to show the reader how Universalism perverts the Scriptures, but those already quoted will suffice. They are before you, and we solemnly believe the construction just. The left-hand column is the Bible contradicting Universalism; the right hand column is Universalism contradicting the Bible. If this be so, can any be so unwise as to risk his eternal all upon a system which stands upon such a sandy foundation, and can only be sustained by palpable perversions of the word of God? I cannot be a Universalist so long as I believe the Bible; and I would not preach it if I believed it, unless I could first be convinced of the infallibility of my own judgment. There is one thing, however, for which I commend the Universalists; that is, they are not animated by a very active spirit of missionary zeal.

They content themselves with home. They do not send out their missionaries to Africa and other unhealthy climes, where they will be exposed to sufferings and death. For this I commend them. For the poor heathen are as well off without them as they would be with them in this world; and for the world to come, it can be a matter of no importance if Universalism be true.

8. The apostles and primitive ministers of the Gospel cannot have believed in Universalism. Of this fact we are convinced not only by the doctrines they preached, from which we have placed copious extracts before the reader, but by their conduct, the manner of their reception by the people, and the effects which their preaching wrought upon those who heard it attentively. Can any one believe that the apostles would have submitted to nakedness, cold, hunger, thirst, disgrace, poverty, bonds, imprisonments and martyrdom, for preaching the gospel of Universalism? Can any one believe that the people would have inflicted these punishments or sufferings upon them for publishing the glad tidings that all should surely be admitted into the kingdom of Heaven? And can any one believe that under the preaching of these glad tidings some should "tremble," others, "pricked to the heart, cry out, ' men and brethren, what must we do?' "and others fall prostrate at their feet and say, "Sirs, what must we do to be saved?" The most devoted men of God received the apostles with open arms, and gave every demonstration that was possible of their love and attachment to them. But the wicked hated them, and did all they could to injure M2

them, and prevent their spreading the doctrines of the Gospel. And do the most devoted Christians receive and encourage Universalism? Do wicked men hate the doctrine, and do all that they can to prevent its dissemination? Let the world look on and judge. Again: Let the reader compare the effects which follow the preaching of Universalism with those which follow the preaching of such as believe in the future and endless punishment of the wicked, and determine for himself which most resembles the effects produced under the preaching of the apostles. Do any tremble, weep, cry to God for mercy, and rejoice in the pardoning love of God, under the preaching of Universalism? We believe none. Did they under the preaching of the apostles? We answer that they did. Do we see at the present day any such effects under the ministry of those who believe in the endless punishment of the finally impenitent? We do. As certainly, therefore, as an effect must follow a cause, Universalism is not the doctrine which the apostles preached and believed. 9. It encourages men to sin. And if it is true, the more sin the better, because thereby our admittance into heaven will be hastened. Universalists must admit that the wicked antediluvians were admitted into heaven long before righteous Noah and his family; the filthy Sodomites long before righteous Lot; the wicked Canaanites before many of the people of God; Judas Iscariot before his Lord; and lying Ananias and Sapphira before the Apostle Peter, at whose feet they fell dead. For if Noah, Lot, and all those others had been wicked, they would have gone to heaven with them who were cut off, and taken thither by the visitation of God; but they were righteous, and therefore had to continue many years longer in this world of sin and suffering. Their wicked neighbours, because of their wickedness, rested in heaven; while they, because they were righteous, continued to suffer here. What an encouragement to sin! Only sin to such an extent as to provoke the Almighty to cut you off by death, and then he will take you immediately to heaven; or, if this course does not suit you, you have still a shorter way of getting there; you can take your choice, the rope, the razor, the pistol, the river, or the poisonous drug. By either of these you can end all your sufferings, and be in heaven in a few moments, whenever you may choose. And if this were true, how could it be wrong to do so? Would God condemn you, if he received you into heaven? None are condemned there, whatever may have been the means by which they obtained an entrance.

If our opponents deny these conclusions, then they deny their own doctrine, and, of course, give up Universalism.

10. Universalism is opposed to experimental religion. It derides the tears of the penitent sinner and the experience of the genuine believer. It makes religion to exist altogether in the head, and not at all in the heart. Believe in Universalism— this is the Alpha and Omega of their religion. As a people, they know nothing of experimental godliness. Their expectations of heaven are not founded on a preparation for its enjoyment by being made holy here, but upon the mere belief that all men will be admitted there. Those of them who are



said to die in the triumphs of faith are those who brave it out to the last, and die in the faith of Universalism. To one of these, a pious friend of the writer said, "Sir, have you any hope of heaven if Universalism be not true?" To which he frankly replied, "I have not." This was all the religion the poor man had. But he died in the triumphs of faith. So said his friends.

Christians may commit and believe errors, I acknowledge, but they are not fundamental errors. In the essentials of religion all Christians agree. But Universalists do not generally, if at all, believe in the essentials of religion. I ask, then, can they possess it? To persuade a Universalist to repent of his sins, and become a decided and devoted Christian, you must first shake his faith in his doctrine. Until this is done, your labour is vain. Hence most, if not all, embrace Universalism as a substitute for the religion of the Bible.

11. Universalism is opposed by genuine Christians and opposed to them. If Universalism were true Christianity, it would be held in fellowship by real Christians. But it is not. It is considered by them to be a dangerous doctrine, and deleterious to the morals and happiness of mankind. If they who believe it are true Christians, why are they so ready to publish, and even magnify, the faults of professing Christians? Why do they turn their hands against the righteous, and with an air of triumph exult when Zion mourns over the backslidings of her people? Are they prompted to this by true charity, which covers a multitude of sins? Never. If they are true Christians, why do they not strengthen the hands of the righteous instead of the wicked? Why do they not employ all their energies to bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end? Why do they not labour to effect their conversion to God, and save them from their sins? The Saviour has answered these inquiries: "He that is not for me is against me. A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand."

12. Universalism often fatally deceives the ignorant. They quote Scripture. This passes with the ignorant for argument. Are their quotations appropriate, and do they harmonize with the general tenure of the Scriptures, are questions which the intelligent may ask, but the ignorant seldom think thus far. They take the simple fact for demonstration, instead of looking to the language and meaning of the passages thus quoted, and upon the strength of it live and die without religion, and lose their souls for ever. How awfully responsible, and dreadfully to be deprecated, must be the condition of their teachers!

13. Universalism often fails in the hour of danger and death. Its promises are not to be relied upon. They have often been broken. It is a treacherous system. I would not trust it for worlds. It has deceived many, and may deceive more. It promises much, but performs little. It has led many by mere flattery down to the borders of the grave, and promised to be with them, and support them in that trying hour, but it has lied to them. And when eternity has come in view, and their consciences have been awakened just in time to give them a fearful anticipation of judgment, this transformed angel has taken its everlasting flight from the poor, deceived, and despairing sinner, leaving him to exclaim in bitter anguish, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved." Oh cruel monster this! "Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, how long wilt thou continue to pervert the right ways of the Lord!"

True religion never forsakes its votaries when they come to die. Many have I seen upon their dying beds, and even in the agonies of death, rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I have seen an affectionate wife and tender mother, surrounded by her weeping husband and children, with a smile upon her countenance, saying, "Come, Lord Jesus, let not thy chariot wheels delay. I am ready. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, and kept the faith, and now there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. 'Hark, they whisper—angels say, sister spirit, come away. Lend, lend your wings; I mount, I fly. Oh death! where is thy sting? oh grave! where is thy victory?' "This is the triumph of faith; this is a religion that never fails. Universalism never makes, but loses many converts upon a dying bed, while true religion makes many converts there, and loses none. The true Christian is safe, even if Universalism be true; but the Universalist is lost for ever if his doctrine be false. Our only safe course, therefore, is to obtain a change of heart. "Ye must be born again." Come, then, to Christ; seek and obtain it upon the terms of the Gospel, and you shall be happy here; and hereafter God will give you eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

1837

**Thomas Jefferson Sawyer (1804 - 1899), Universalist Minister and Educator**  
**Letters to Stephen Remington in Review of his Lectures on Universalism**  
**Universalist Union Newspaper**

Originally in the Universalist Union Newspaper in 1837

**Letter XVII**

**Dear Sir—I now pass to the consideration of your third lecture, in which you contrast “the gift of God which is eternal life, with the wages of sin which is death.”**

After alluding to the horrible miseries which await the sinner in a future state, and which you have so abundantly proved in your preceding lectures, you are pleased to say—“But fearful and dreadful as will be the condition of all such as die in their sins, yet there is no necessity for a soul's perishing, for God has made an ample provision for our salvation.” You then add divers scraps of poetry, setting forth in glowing colors the goodness and love of God, and the anxiety he feels for the happiness of the human race.

This is certainly very well, but you must allow me to doubt whether it is any thing better than mere declamation, and employed most incongruously with the whole tenor and spirit of your system. With all your free agency, you have no belief in man's ability to turn himself, and, unaided by revelation and the accompanying spirit of God, to work out his own salvation. Now you cannot be ignorant that four thousand years of idolatry and darkness passed away before the true light shined upon the world; and that during this period almost countless millions of human beings lived and died, not only destitute of “the means of grace,” but even of the knowledge of the only living and true God. Since the Christian era, in like manner, the number of those who have had the offers of the gospel have constituted but a very small portion of the world, and even now only about one fourth part of the inhabitants of the earth know any thing of Christianity and the way of salvation. All the rest, with the whole race who lived before Christ, one little people alone excepted, must necessarily go down to hell! According to this, your theory, perhaps one in a thousand of those who have already lived, may be saved, and not more than one in five hundred has even had the slightest opportunity

“To 'scape from hell and fly to heaven.”

And yet the pastor of the Willet street church tells us with all becoming gravity, that “there is no necessity for a soul's perishing”—that “we need not die.” The water of life is abundant.

Its streams the whole creation reach, So plenteous is the store! “

Astonishing, indeed, is such language in the lips of one who knows, or who ought to know, that it contains scarcely a semblance of truth. What is it but something worse than folly, to assert that God is not willing that any should perish, while at the same time it is acknowledged that Jesus Christ is the only name under heaven given among men whereby a soul can be saved, and yet that millions of millions have died in their sins without ever hearing or having the possibility of hearing that name?

In this lecture you institute three inquiries: “1. What are we to understand by eternal life? 2. By what proof do we know that it is the gift of God? 3. We shall inquire unto whom it is given.” Eternal life you define to be “the consummation of all the benefits derived from the life, death, resurrection and intercessions of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is directly the opposite of the penalty of the divine law.” You add, “the antithesis which the Scriptures exhibit between the penalty of the law, and this great and glorious gift of God through Jesus Christ, is perfect and will hold good throughout. The penalty of the law is death—the gift of God is life.” That is, “death” is in all respects equal to “eternal life;” and a consequence, man merits by the least

sin he can commit, a punishment that is throughout the perfect opposite of "the great and glorious gift of God through Jesus Christ!" Or to make the conclusion still more obvious, man is able to do himself as much evil in one instant, as Almighty God can confer good upon him throughout eternity!! This is the doctrine of the orthodox world, and the necessary inference from its interpretation of that much abused text of Scripture, Rom. vi. 23. The absurdity of such a consequence is too obvious, one would think, to avoid being seen, but it is also too important for the support of that amiable dogma, endless misery, to be rejected. It matters little in what light it is viewed; for it either brings the Omnipotent down to the level of man, or else it exalts man to a kind of equality with God. It represents man to be as capable of doing an endless and infinite evil, as God himself is of doing an endless and infinite good. I regard this as not merely absurd, but as blasphemous. It is an insult alike to reason, and every sentiment of purity and reverence. It is contempt thrown upon the word of God and the character of its Author.

When will the Christian world have ceased to indulge in these wretched puerilities, and be willing to interpret the word of divine truth in a manner worthy of itself?

In the passage of Scripture under consideration, there is, as I observed in my sermon upon it, three pairs of antithetical terms: 1. Wages is contrasted with gift. 2. Sin, personified, is contrasted with God. 3. Death is contrasted with eternal life.. Now every one knows that because wages is contrasted with gift, it is by no means necessary to suppose that the gift is just equal in all respects and only equal to the wages. So sin is contrasted with God, but he would deserve a home in the mad house who should thence argue that sin, considered as a personal being, is altogether equal to the Almighty. The truth is, these antithetical terms are properly used by the apostle; they are not merely elegant, but give great force to the expression; the contrast, however, does not consist in the perfect equality of the objects contrasted, but in the opposition or dissimilarity of their nature.

But, as if the apostle anticipated the abuses that would be heaped upon his language, and was anxious to provide against them, he himself introduced the word eternal in connexion with life, to show that, while in its nature it was the opposite of death, it indefinitely, perhaps I should say infinitely surpassed it in point of duration.

If the doctrine of eternal death which you so ardently advocate, is true, is it not a matter of wonder that not one of the inspired writers ever once mentioned it? Of eternal life the New Testament writers spoke familiarly and constantly. They contrasted it in many instances with death, but never with eternal death. I ask you, I ask any believer in endless misery, to account for this fact. Were the apostles so familiar with the modern doctrine of antithesis, and with the interpretations it receives, as to think it unnecessary to express themselves fully on this point, and thus left it to the ingenuity of their readers to form as best they could their faith in endless torments? Or were they so parsimonious of words that they could never afford to write eternal in connexion with death? Some explanation of this remarkable fact should be furnished, that we may know how to account for its existence. If the inspired writers believed in eternal death, why have they not mentioned it? If they did not, what is your authority for believing it?

You are good enough to furnish us with six or seven instances of antithesis for the purpose of showing its nature, and also aiding you in explaining the passage we have now been considering. I shall not stop to examine them or to follow you in your winding way over and about them, because with all your exposition they add nothing to Rom vi. 23. Indeed, this is by far the most favorable passage in the Bible for proving the doctrine of eternal death. And if you cannot find and establish that doctrine here, it is in vain for you to appeal to other texts.

Still I cannot but smile at your array of antithetical passages of Scripture introduced to sustain your favorite doctrine. I am unable, however, with my best efforts to see how you extract endless misery from this proverb—"The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death;" or how you make it out from Matt. vii. 13, 14, where "destruction" is contrasted with "life." True, you very kindly aid our

Savior by changing "life" into "life eternal," and of course construe "destruction" to mean nothing more nor less than "eternal death, 'soul and body in hell.'" With such talents for interpreting Scripture, you can hardly fail of succeeding in any undertaking. He who can prove the doctrine of eternal death, needs entertain no fears of discomfiture, let him assume what absurdity he may.

You close your observations under the first head of your discourse with the remark that, "as eternal death is the separation from God and the glory of his power, and a punishment of everlasting destruction, it must be a deprivation of all positive good which we are capacitated to enjoy, and the infliction of all the positive evil which we are capable of enduring." I cannot avoid comparing this with what you told us in your second lecture, that God "recognizes man as a free moral agent, and that he will never deprive him of this necessary constituent of his moral nature for the purpose of making him either holy and happy, or sinful and miserable:" and that God "will hereafter make him just as holy and happy as he can." If depriving the sinner of all positive good which he is capable of enjoying, and inflicting upon him all the positive evil which he is capable of suffering, be doing the best by the poor creatures that God can do, you would confer a favor by informing me what would be the worst. And I should also acknowledge my obligations if you would inform me what is the difference between the best that your GOD can hereafter do to the sinner, and the worst that your DEVIL could do. I have thought on this subject considerably, and must confess that I cannot see much difference between the effects of infinite goodness and love in this case, and infinite malignity: that is, if such a being as the Devil had the sole disposal of sinners, and were inclined to do the very worst that the Devil himself could do, it would still be much the same as what "the Father of mercies and God of all grace" actually will do, while in accordance with his infinite compassion, he makes them "just as happy as he can." Perhaps if you were to prosecute this train of thought you might be led with the good and orthodox Dr. Emmons, to conclude that infinite goodness is rather more terrible than infinite malice would be; at all events, I would advise you to institute the curious inquiry whether in the course of these lectures, you have not sometimes introduced the character of the devil under the name of God. So small a mistake as this might, I think, be easily made by you, though I do not propose that it would wholly vitiate the argument.

Under your second head in this lecture, you attempt to prove that "eternal" life is the gift of God. It is not of ourselves, for it is obtained through Jesus Christ our Lord." He purchased it for us, and "prepares the soul" for its enjoyment, by the efficacy of his own blood and the operations of his holy spirit." Eternal life, you tell us, is not the reward of works. "We are rewarded according to our works, but not for our works." A very nice distinction; rather too nice to be seen or conceived. But does not this apply to our evil, as well as our good acts. Is there not indeed the same evidence to prove that the sinner shall be rewarded according to, but not/or his works, as there is that the righteous shall? Again, if our happiness and misery throughout eternity be only according to our works here, I am afraid, Br. Remington, that we shall have little to boast of. I know not how it may be with your perfect Methodists, but we Universalists are constrained to believe that we are very well rewarded in this world for all the good we do here; and that the inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved for us in heaven, will be a gift, not a reward, and a gift too, according to the love and grace of God, and not according to our poor and imperfect works in this present life.

You tell us "There are degrees of glory among the saints in heaven, as one star differeth from another star in glory! Eternal life entitles us to an admittance into heaven, and is heaven itself. But the reward of our works will be an increase of our happiness in heaven." This is a very pleasing doctrine, no doubt, and must greatly encourage your perfectionists, who thus have a fair prospect of attaining "the uppermost rooms" and "the chief seats" in our Father's house. But I fear these disinterested Christians will yet be disappointed. It is not quite clear to my mind that heaven is to be awarded to mortals either for or according to their works.— The apostle speaks, 2 Tim. i. 9, of God "who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace." And perhaps what was thus begun, "not according to our works," will be finished as it was begun, according to the divine purpose and grace. And should this suspicion happen to be well founded, instead of being distinguished as special favorites in heaven, you may find yourselves at last, much in the condition of certain men in the parable, "who supposed that they should

have received more than their fellows, but likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day." The reply to these very natural and grievous complaints was just, if it was not satisfactory. "But he answered one of them and said, friend, I do thee no wrong; didst not thou agree with me for a penny? . Take that thine is, and go thy way; I will give unto this last even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I Will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?"

Of one thing, Br. Remington, we may rest assured; God, the judge of all the earth, will do right. We shall be rewarded and punished according to our works. No good act and no evil act will be permitted to escape the all-seeing eye, and the equitable retributions of a holy and just God. But that our good works here are to make us great and exalt us to dignity in heaven and through eternity, is not so clear nor so consonant with the spirit of the gospel. As ever, yours, Thomas J. Sawyer

**1839**

**Rev. Joseph Jones of Newchurch, London**

**In Expression 'Many Mansions,' Christ Alludes To Palaces Of Earthly Potentates, Or To Jewish Temple, Which Had Chambers Round About It: Probably Intimating That In World Of Blessedness There Is Ample Room For Saints In Their Various Orders, According To Their Different Measures Of Attainment In Pious Excellence**  
**Plain and Practical Sermons**

**Sermon VII**

**The Disciples comforted with Assurances of Heaven**

**ST. JOHN, xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4.**

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

If we consider the character and circumstances of the eleven disciples, we cannot be surprised at their having been troubled in heart. Their views and expectations were opposed. Our blessed Lord had washed their feet, taught them humility, announced the betrayer, enjoined mutual love, given intimation of his departure from them, and predicted that Peter would deny Him. What conflicting emotions must all this have produced in bosoms so strongly pre-occupied as theirs were with worldly calculations! Their hopes might have been raised by the triumphant entry into Jerusalem; but these were now destroyed; and grief became the prevailing feeling. Our Lord knew their distress, and administered to them the purest consolation, by unfolding the nature of his kingdom, and pouring upon their spirits some of the brightest beams of evangelical truth.

If you entertain false notions and prejudices respecting the gospel, as though it were gloomy, forbidding, and repulsive, we would urge you to study such a passage of Scripture as the text, in order that you may see the utter injustice of your present views and feelings. The language of our Lord to his disciples is also his language to his faithful followers in all ages: and if we rightly meditate on the sublime declarations and consolatory assurances which are here advanced, we shall see something of the glory of the gospel and of the happiness of its true disciples.

**I. Let us briefly examine these verses in reference to our Lord's immediate followers.**

'Let not your heart be troubled.'—'Let not your souls be distressed; let them not be thrown into confusion by any thing that I have advanced, or may yet advance.'—The information which He had given them of his

approaching departure had produced its natural effect. They were troubled by it. Their views of worldly grandeur were vanishing away as unsubstantial dreams. Nor was this all; for they were to be deprived of their Master's presence; and what could they then expect from the Jews but contempt, ridicule, and persecution? Our Lord saw their perplexity, and addressed them in consolatory words.

'Ye believe in God, believe also in me;' or, 'Believe in God, believe also in me.'—He reminds them of faith, the fundamental and sustaining principle in religion. He leads them at once to the source of strength and comfort. He shows them the basis of the true Christian character,—confidence or trust in God, who would never forsake them, and confidence or trust in Himself, through whom, as the Mediator, and from whom, as the living Head of the Church, all spiritual blessings were to be derived. He taught them that religion is principle—a life of faith; and that, when He was removed from them as to bodily presence, they were to believe in God, in Christ, and in all the discoveries and declarations which had been made to them.

'In my Father's house are many mansions.' Our Lord passes from the principal to its ultimate object. He guides the thoughts of his disciples from earth to heaven; from the visible to the invisible world; from the transitory to the eternal state. By the expression, his 'Father's house,' heaven is meant: and in the expression, 'many mansions,' He alludes to the palaces of earthly potentates, or to the Jewish temple, which had chambers round about it: probably intimating that in the world of blessedness there is ample room for the saints in their various orders, according to their different measures of attainment in pious excellence.

'If it were not so, I would have told you.' He, in fact, assures them that He was no deceiver, and that there was no ground for the sceptical notions of the Sadducees respecting a future state. If there were not an abiding after-state, He asserts that He would not have allowed them to cherish vain expectations. Convinced, therefore, of his veracity, they might direct their minds to the sublimest contemplation of futurity, whatever were the trials and sorrows of the present state.

'I go to prepare a place for you.' It is as though He had said, 'I am going to the cross, to the grave, and afterwards to the spiritual world, where I shall not be unmindful of you, but shall be engaged in those effectual services on your behalf which will insure your eternal happiness.'—How well suited was this assurance to revive the drooping spirits of the disciples—and especially at a future period, when they understood the office of our Lord above as a perpetual Intercessor!

'And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that were I am, there ye may be also.' Our Lord had spoken of separation, and He now speaks of reunion. When he had completed his work He would come again, and receive them into that close and intimate alliance with Himself which would constitute their bliss through eternity: they would behold his glory and share his happiness. His immediate society was what they wished to enjoy; and here a renewal of it, in a more exalted state, as also in a more glorious form, is promised to them.

'And whither I go ye know; and the way ye know.' That is, 'After the instructions which I have given you, I must not suppose that you are ignorant as to the place where I am going, and as to the way which leads to that blissful abode.' Thus they were reprov'd in gentle terms for their worldly views, and an opportunity was given them of obtaining further information.

In this manner, then, our blessed Saviour condescended to regard the infirmities and to comfort the hearts of his disciples, in the season of their trouble and perplexity. Every sentence was as a healing balm, to soothe the anguish of the wounded heart.

II. We now examine these verses as they are applicable to all true Christians. And here we offer a few remarks on their troubles and on their consolations.

### **1. The Troubles of real believers.**

The life of man is a pilgrimage in a vale of tears; and however he may indulge in mirth and pleasure, he cannot change the character of human existence. He may banish serious reflection from his mind; he may amuse himself with dreams and fancies: but he will be more or less familiar with change and disappointment, with vexation, pain, and grief.—But we are to speak about the truly pious; about those by whom the doctrines of the gospel are known and its power felt; who love God, enjoy his favour, and strive to do his will. And are these persons exempted from trouble and sorrow? Certainly not. They escape, it is true, many of the sufferings which wicked men bring upon themselves; but yet they share the common lot of human beings; and, in addition to the ordinary trials of life, they have those which are peculiar to themselves, as the servants of Christ. All that comes under the description of spiritual trial properly speaking, is a matter not known and not felt by the world, who are 'dead in trespasses and sins,' but which is very familiar to those who are really alive to good and evil. If the pious calculated, at the beginning of a religious life, on the enjoyment of a bright and peaceful day, yet they soon learn, in the plain and sober path of experience, that life has dark as well as bright shades, tumult as well as tranquillity; and, in short, that the Christian course is labour, not rest; warfare, not repose; hope, rather than fruition; a journey through a wilderness, not a walk in a paradise.

There may be seasons of peculiar trial and sorrow in the life of a true believer. The day may occasionally be very tempestuous—the path thorny, the burden heavy, the conflict severe. There may be fightings without, and fears within. He may be visited with some trying dispensation: and when all around him is bright and peaceful, the rains may descend, the floods come, the winds blow; and although they cannot overturn him, for his foundation is upon a rock, yet trouble, sadness, and anguish may abound for a season. Job is not the only man who has lamented the sudden loss of property and of children. Naomi is not the only woman who has said, or has had occasion to say, 'Call me not Naomi; call me Mara; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.' The Psalmist is not the only person who has said, 'Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.' 'Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.'

We only thus glance at the troubles of real believers. They are liable to affliction to mind, body, and estate: nay, more, as the children of God they must expect affliction: 'for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?' But we observe,

## **2. The Consolations of true believers.**

In their troubles and sorrows they are not left forlorn and destitute. 'Believe in God, believe also in me.' The great religious principle, a sure trust in God, is their support and comfort. Trust in God as the gracious Father, and trust in Christ as the only Mediator—here is the life, strength, and peace of the real Christian.

Look on the man of the world in the day of temporal trial; and he knows not whither to direct to his view, but is as a vessel that is left in a dark night to the mercy of the winds and waves. He may be careless and obdurate; or he may be light and trifling; or he may be alarmed and terrified; or he may be gloomy and sullen; or he may be peevish and querulous. One man may have speculative notions and pride, and he manifests a spurious fortitude, and accounts it weak and childish to complain. Another flies to his fellow creatures for aid and comfort. Another plunges into worldly schemes and cares, or rushes into amusement and gaiety. Another sits down in moody melancholy, broods over his calamities, and is the victim of a repining and complaining heart. They would enjoy comfort; but they know not where to look for it, and remain without it.—Not such is the case of the pious. They cherish and exhibit magnanimity, patience, and unruffled composure, or even 'glory in tribulations;' in all the vicissitudes of human life. What is the secret of their bliss? Whence do they derive this strength, peace, and joy? They turn to God; they think of his perfections, counsels, and ways; they meditate on his promises; they consider the design and end of his measures; they have the full persuasion that He orders all things in unerring wisdom, does all things in infinite benignity, and makes 'all things work together for good to them that love Him.' To Him they make their prayer; in Him they put their trust; and they are supported and comforted in all their troubles. By the

power of a living faith they rise above the weakness and perverseness of human nature: their spirit is resignation, their feelings those of gratitude, and their language praise.

But, further, the men of the world may not be entirely strangers to mental trouble: we can scarcely suppose that their consciences are always lulled in a dead repose. Surely the thought of death, of the grave, of the final judgment, of everlasting woe as well as of everlasting bliss, will rush occasionally into the bosoms of the worldly and the vain, and excite feelings of disquietude. How do they banish fear and solicitude far from them, and proceed in their course with gay security? Perhaps they balance their virtues against their vices, and vaguely refer to the divine mercy. Perhaps they compare themselves to others, and speak peace to their hearts on the ground of a presumed superior excellence. Perhaps they plunge into revelry, and welcome almost any thing that serves to stifle painful conviction. All their comfort springs from stupifying the soul by folly and delusion.

The real Christian has inward trouble, and his soul may frequently be perplexed and sad within him. We do not here aim to describe spiritual darkness and distress, or to enumerate its causes. We only ask, What is the conduct of the righteous soul, and where does it seek for comfort, in the day of its anguish? It does not trifle with its woe, or account it fancy and moping melancholy, or stifle or expel it by erroneous notions or worldly folly. Its principle is faith; and in the exercise of that principle it approaches God in Christ Jesus at the throne of grace, and there seeks comfort by humble and earnest prayer. When the cloud gathers around him, when joy is fled, when he walks in darkness and sees no light, the believer makes it a season of reflection, of self-examination, of deep humiliation, and of fervent devotion. He does not look to himself, or to others, or to worldly objects for relief; but he cherishes the workings of a tender and contrite heart, and looks up with an imploring eye to the gracious Friend of penitent souls, who says to his tried and afflicted followers, 'Let not your hearts be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me.' His support is faith; he relies on the truth, mercy, and love of Jehovah; and as his faith prevails, his consolation abounds.

But let it be here distinctly observed, that the Bible is the book of consolation to the true believer: and we will now consider how all true believers may use the verses which compose our text for their consolation in the days of trouble and sorrow. We will suppose that they put these verses before them; and will furnish them with such language as they may, and as, we think, they ought to use.

'Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me.' 'These are the encouraging words in which the compassionate Saviour addresses us. Our trials are many and severe: but why should we be troubled? Let us look to God who orders all things; and to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the good Shepherd. Our troubles are laid upon us for our benefit—' for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' It is good for us that we should be tried and afflicted; for 'tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed.' We look to Thee, our God and Father; to Thee, our gracious Saviour: we believe, by divine grace, in the word of truth, and we cannot be troubled: composure and peace prevail in our confiding souls.'

'In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you.' 'Thou thyself, O blessed Jesus! art the truth, and thy word is truth. Thou hast 'brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' If this world is a wilderness, yet there is a Canaan above. If this world be a pilgrimage, yet it leads to a blessed and a happy home in the realms of light. We may gain possessions here, but we shall soon leave them. We may build houses, but we shall not long inhabit them. We may shine in pomp and elegance, but we shall soon lie down in the dust. But mansions—mansions above—mansions above in our Father's house—an abiding residence in the world of glory—a place in that city which hath foundations:—this is our comfort; and in the view of these sublime objects, we lose sight of the vanishing distinctions which prevail on earth; of the splendour of the great, and of the humble appearance of those of low estate. To dwell in the house of God above, to behold his glory, and to be near Him and like Him—this is elevation so magnificent, and enjoyment so pure, that, dim as our apprehensions of them are, we cannot mention, or even notice, the troubles and sorrows of mortality.'



' I go to prepare a place for you.' ' While we are suffering and toiling in a world of sin and care, the Lord Jesus Christ is employed on our behalf in the heavenly world. We have an Advocate with the Father, who looks upon us, who feels for us, who hears our prayers, and who does whatever is needful to promote our welfare. By the favour of men we may obtain those treasures and honours which procure admiration and flattery; or we may hear from them the language of condolence in the day of grief. But these things are only the things of a moment; nor can they heal the wounded spirit, dispel its darkness, or open before it the prospect of final blessedness. Thou, O Saviour! art our Benefactor and Comforter: we look to Thee, and to thy advocacy and intercession, and we have peace and joy amid the changes and sorrows of the present state.'

' And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again.' ' The gracious and glorious Redeemer is far removed from the sphere of human vision; yet is He spiritually present with his people; and at the appointed time he will again appear, and every eye shall see him. The heavens have received Him until the purposes of God are accomplished; and then He will come to be the Judge of all men, to the joy and triumph of his faithful followers. A few more rolling years, and we shall quit this agitated world, and behold Him who is the object of our faith. We meditate on the final glory, and banish our sorrow.'

' And receive you to myself: that where I am, there ye may be also.' ' When time is exchanged for eternity, where shall we be? Where our glorified Redeemer is. With whom shall we be? For ever with the Lord. Delightful thought! But what language can express, or what mind conceive, the blessedness of the righteous in the presence of God and of the Lamb through everlasting ages? These frail tabernacles will sink into the grave; but they will be raised again, pure and immortal; and then the happiness of the redeemed and sanctified will be perfect. How, then, can we be troubled in heart, when we know that the ills and sorrows of time will pass away as the mist of the morning, and be succeeded by the glory and felicity of heaven.

''And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.'' Thou, O gracious Saviour! art in heaven, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and Thou thyself art the Way. Though we are ignorant— of ourselves mere ignorance—yet by thy word and Spirit we have the best knowledge. In the light of thy holy word, we know both where Thou art, and what Thou art to thy Church. We look to thy Cross, thy Spirit, thy Commandments, thy Example, thy Intercession; and we see the way, and the means by which thy true disciples arrive at the regions of eternal bliss, and stand accepted in the presence of Jehovah,—to leave it no more for ever. Our souls are satisfied: and we can rejoice amidst the trials, changes, and sorrows,—the light afflictions of the present time, which are but for a moment.'

It is in this manner that the true believer may and ought to meditate on these delightful verses, and to derive the consolation which they are designed to impart to all holy and troubled souls.— What has been now advanced is sufficient, we trust, to show all reflecting persons, that the gospel of Christ abounds with what is equally glorious and consolatory; elevating and soothing to the soul. The fell enchantress Folly may fling a fascinating charm and a dazzling splendour over the varied scenes of life: but the charm will be soon dissolved,

and the splendour vanish from our view. Sorrow and trouble are the birthright of man: and if the life of the gay and prosperous be looked upon as a bright picture, yet on close inspection we shall find that it abounds with deep and dark shades. Philosophy may reason to us, and Pleasure may amuse us; but still we are sufferers. And where shall we look for comfort, joy, and peace? To the Gospel, to Christ, to Heaven. The Wisdom from above sheds light and glory on the present scene, while it also reveals a perfect light and a perfect glory beyond it: so that we can lose the sight of present deformity, and the sense of present suffering, by virtue of the life which we feel within us, and of the magnificence which we see before us. If an Eden yet exist on earth, the kingdom of God's dear Son is that Eden: and there indeed we gather flowers that will not wither, and drink the living waters of a fountain that will not fail.

In closing the discourse, We ask you, or rather beseech you to ask yourselves, whether or no you are strangers to the gospel of Christ,—strangers, we mean, to its mercy and grace, to its light and power, to its healing and consoling virtues. If you be, consider seriously what it is which you are disregarding and despising. Your present peace is slumber and death; your hopes are vain presumptions; and your happiness is but little more than an insensibility to misery. We rejoice to speak before you of glorious mansions: but it is also our duty to remind you, that there is a prison of anguish and despair,—the final dwelling of the impenitent and unbelieving. Jesus will come again, and receive his people to himself; but in that day He will banish for ever the wicked from his presence. While you neglect to attend to the gospel, you put from you all that can make you truly happy here, and prepare you for a hopeful death, and a blessed eternity. Lay this to heart, and do not forfeit the glory and the bliss of heaven for the pleasures of sin and the vanities of a transitory world.

If you be truly and spiritually acquainted with the gospel, we call upon you to act in agreement with your professions and hopes. Let the declarations contained in the text be to you the sources of the purest consolation, whatever be the troubles of human life. Knowing and experiencing the mercy and grace which are revealed in the Scriptures, and having the prospect of eternal happiness, neither complain, nor be dismayed, nor be impatient. Be it your prayer, desire, and endeavour to do and to suffer according to the will of God. Thus will the divine life flourish within you; you will abound in the fruits of righteousness; your consolation will be great and unailing: yea, that peace which passeth all understanding will be granted to you,—a foretaste of the perfect bliss which will be your portion in the mansions of your Father's house.

**1843**

**W.W. Phelps (1792 – 1872) or Joseph Smith (1805-1844), Latter-day Saint Founder  
The Answer to W.W. Phelps, Esq.: A Vision  
Times and Seasons**

(Times and Seasons, v. 4, no. 5, January 16, 1843, p. 85)  
(Corresponding verse numbers from D&C 76 are in parentheses.)

1. I will go, I will go, to the home of the Saints,  
Where the virtue's the value, and life the reward;  
But before I return to my former estate  
I must fulfil the mission I had from the Lord.

2. Wherefore, hear, O ye heavens, and give ear O ye earth;  
And rejoice ye inhabitants truly again;  
For the Lord he is God, and his life never ends,  
And besides him there ne'er was a Saviour of men. (v. 1)

3. His ways are a wonder; his wisdom is great;  
The extent of his doings, there's none can unveil;  
His purposes fail not; from age unto age  
He still is the same, and his years never fail. (v. 2-3)

4. His throne is the heavens, his life time is all  
Of eternity now, and eternity then;  
His union is power, and none stays his hand,—  
The Alpha, Omega, for ever: Amen. (v. 4)

5. For thus saith the Lord, in the spirit of truth,  
I am merciful, gracious, and good unto those

That fear me, and live for the life that's to come;  
My delight is to honor the saints with repose; (v. 5)

6. That serve me in righteousness true to the end;  
Eternal's their glory, and great their reward;  
I'll surely reveal all my myst'ries to them,—  
The great hidden myst'ries in my kingdom stor'd— (v. 6)

7. From the council in Kolob, to time on the earth.  
And for ages to come unto them I will show  
My pleasure & will, what my kingdom will do:  
Eternity's wonders they truly shall know. (v. 7)

8. Great things of the future I'll show unto them,  
Yea, things of the vast generations to rise;  
For their wisdom and glory shall be very great,  
And their pure understanding extend to the skies: (v. 8)

9. And before them the wisdom of wise men shall cease,  
And the nice understanding of prudent ones fail!  
For the light of my spirit shall light mine elect,  
And the truth is so mighty 't will ever prevail. (v. 9-10)

10. And the secrets and plans of my will I'll reveal;  
The sanctified pleasures when earth is renew'd,  
What the eye hath not seen, nor the ear hath yet heard;  
Nor the heart of the natural man ever hath view'd. (v. 10)

11. I, Joseph, the prophet, in spirit beheld,  
And the eyes of the inner man truly did see  
Eternity sketch'd in a vision from God,  
Of what was, and now is, and yet is to be. (v. 11-12)

12. Those things which the Father ordained of old,  
Before the world was, or a system had run,—  
Through Jesus the Maker and Savior of all;  
The only begotten, (Messiah) his son. (v. 13)

13. Of whom I bear record, as all prophets have,  
And the record I bear is the fulness,—yea even  
The truth of the gospel of Jesus—the Christ,  
With whom I convers'd, in the vision of heav'n. (v. 14)

14. For while in the act of translating his word,  
Which the Lord in his grace had appointed to me,  
I came to the gospel recorded by John,  
Chapter fifth and the twenty ninth verse, which you'll see. (v. 15)

Which was given as follows:

"Speaking of the resurrection of the dead,—

"Concerning those who shall hear the voice of "the son of man—" And shall come forth:—

"They who have done good in the resurrection "of the just.

"And they who have done evil in the "resurrection of the unjust." (v. 16-17)

15. I marvel'd at these resurrections, indeed!  
For it came unto me by the spirit direct:—  
And while I did meditate what it all meant,  
The Lord touch'd the eyes of my own intellect: — (v. 18-19)

16. Hosanna forever! they open'd anon,  
And the glory of God shone around where I was;  
And there was the Son, at the Father's right hand,  
In a fulness of glory, and holy applause. (v. 20)

17. I beheld round the throne, holy angels and hosts,  
And sanctified beings from worlds that have been,  
In holiness worshipping God and the Lamb,  
Forever and ever, amen and amen! (v. 21)

18. And now after all of the proofs made of him,  
By witnesses truly, by whom he was known,  
This is mine, last of all, that he lives; yea he lives!  
And sits at the right hand of God, on his throne. (v. 22)

19. And I heard a great voice, bearing record from heav'n,  
He's the Saviour, and only begotten of God—  
By him, of him, and through him, the worlds were all made,  
Even all that career in the heavens so broad, (v. 23-24)

20. Whose inhabitants, too, from the first to the last,  
Are sav'd by the very same Saviour of ours;  
And, of course, are begotten God's daughters and sons,  
By the very same truths, and the very same pow'rs. (v. 24)

21. And I saw and bear record of warfare in heav'n;  
For an angel of light, in authority great,  
Rebell'd against Jesus, and sought for his pow'r,  
But was thrust down to woe from his Godified state. (v. 25)

22. And the heavens all wept, and the tears drop'd like dew,  
That Lucifer, son of the morning had fell!  
Yea, is fallen! is fall'n, and become, Oh, alas!  
The son of Perdition; the devil of hell! (v. 26-27)

23. And while I was yet in the spirit of truth,  
The commandment was: write ye the vision all out;  
For Satan, old serpent, the devil's for war,—  
And yet will encompass the saints round about. (v. 28-29)

24. And I saw, too, the suff'ring and mis'ry of those,  
(Overcome by the devil, in warfare and fight,)  
In hell-fire, and vengeance, the doom of the damn'd;  
For the Lord said, the vision is further: so write. (v. 30)

25. For thus saith the Lord, now concerning all those  
Who know of my power and partake of the same;  
And suffer themselves, that they be overcome  
By the power of Satan; despising my name: — (v. 31)

26. Defying my power, and denying the truth;—  
They are they—of the world, or of men, most forlorn,  
The Sons of Perdition, of whom, ah! I say,  
'T were better for them had they never been born! (v. 31-32)

27. They're vessels of wrath, and dishonor to God,  
Doom'd to suffer his wrath, in the regions of woe,  
Through the terrific night of eternity's round,  
With the devil and all of his angels below: (v. 33)

28. Of whom it is said, no forgiveness is giv'n,  
In this world, alas! nor the world that's to come;  
For they have denied the spirit of God,  
After having receiv'd it: and mis'ry's their doom. (v. 34-35)

29. And denying the only begotten of God,—  
And crucify him to themselves, as they do,  
And openly put him to shame in their flesh,  
By gospel they cannot repentance renew. (v. 35)

30. They are they, who must go to the great lake of fire,  
Which burneth with brimstone, yet never consumes,  
And dwell with the devil, and angels of his,  
While eternity goes and eternity comes. (v. 36)

31. They are they, who must groan through the great second death,  
And are not redeemed in the time of the Lord;  
While all the rest are, through the triumph of Christ,  
Made partakers of grace, by the power of his word. (v. 37-39)

32. The myst'ry of Godliness truly is great;—  
The past, and the present, and what is to be;  
And this is the gospel-glad tidings to all,  
Which the voice from the heavens bore record to me: (v. 40)

33. That he came to the world in the middle of time,  
To lay down his life for his friends and his foes,  
And bear away sin as a mission of love;  
And sanctify earth for a blessed repose. (v. 41)

34. 'Tis decreed, that he'll save all the work of his hands,  
And sanctify them by his own precious blood;  
And purify earth for the Sabbath of rest,  
By the agent of fire, as it was by the flood. (v. 42)

35. The Savior will save all his Father did give,  
Even all that he gave in the regions abroad,

Save the Sons of Perdition: They're lost; ever lost,  
And can never return to the presence of God. (v. 43)

36. They are they, who must reign with the devil in hell,  
In eternity now, and eternity then,  
Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quench'd;—  
And the punishment still, is eternal. Amen. (v. 44)

37. And which is the torment apostates receive,  
But the end, or the place where the torment began,  
Save to them who are made to partake of the same,  
Was never, nor will be, revealed unto man. (v. 45-46)

38. Yet God shows by vision a glimpse of their fate,  
And straightway he closes the scene that was shown:  
So the width, or the depth, or the misery thereof,  
Save to those that partake, is forever unknown. (v. 47-48)

39. And while I was pondering, the vision was closed;  
And the voice said to me, write the vision: for lo!  
'Tis the end of the scene of the sufferings of those,  
Who remain filthy still in their anguish and woe. (v. 49)

40. And again I bear record of heavenly things,  
Where virtue's the value, above all that's pric'd—  
Of the truth of the gospel concerning the just,  
That rise in the first resurrection of Christ. (v. 50)

41. Who receiv'd and believ'd, and repented likewise,  
And then were baptis'd, as a man always was,  
Who ask'd and receiv'd a remission of sin,  
And honored the kingdom by keeping its laws. (v. 51)

42. Being buried in water, as Jesus had been,  
And keeping the whole of his holy commands,  
They received the gift of the spirit of truth,  
By the ordinance truly of laying on hands. (v. 52)

43. For these overcome, by their faith and their works,  
Being tried in their life-time, as purified gold,  
And seal'd by the spirit of promise, to life,  
By men called of God, as was Aaron of old. (v. 53)

44. They are they, of the church of the first born of God,—  
And unto whose hands he committeth all things;  
For they hold the keys of the kingdom of heav'n,  
And reign with the Savior, as priests, and as kings. (v. 54-56)

45. They're priests of the order of Melchizedek,  
Like Jesus, (from whom is this highest reward,)  
Receiving a fulness of glory and light;  
As written: They're Gods; even sons of the Lord. (v. 57-58)

46. So all things are theirs; yea, of life, or of death;  
Yea, whether things now, or to come, all are theirs,  
And they are the Savior's, and he is the Lord's,  
Having overcome all, as eternity's heirs. (v. 59-60)

47. 'Tis wisdom that man never glory in man,  
But give God the glory for all that he hash;  
For the righteous will walk in the presence of God,  
While the wicked are trod under foot in his wrath. (v. 61)

48. Yea, the righteous shall dwell in the presence of God,  
And of Jesus, forever, from earth's second birth—  
For when he comes down in the splendor of heav'n,  
All these he'll bring with him, to reign on the earth. (v. 62-63)

49. These are they that arise in their bodies of flesh,  
When the trump of the first resurrection shall sound;  
These are they that come up to Mount Zion, in life,  
Where the blessings and gifts of the spirit abound. (v. 64-66)

50. These are they that have come to the heavenly place;  
To the numberless courses of angels above:  
To the city of God; e'en the holiest of all,  
And the home of the blessed, the fountain of love: (v. 67)

51. To the church of old Enoch, and of the first born:  
And gen'ral assembly of ancient renown'd.  
Whose names are all kept in the archives of heav'n,  
As chosen and faithful, and fit to be crown 'd. (v. 68)

52. These are they that are perfect through Jesus' own blood,  
Whose bodies celestial are mention'd by Paul,  
Where the sun is the typical glory thereof,  
And God, and his Christ, are the true judge of all. (v. 69-70)

53. Again, I beheld the terrestrial world,  
In the order and glory of Jesus, go on;  
'Twas not as the church of the first born of God,  
But shone in its place, as the moon to the sun. (v. 71)

54. Behold, these are they that have died without law;  
The heathen of ages that never had hope.  
And those of the region and shadow of death,  
The spirits in prison, that light has brought up. (v. 72-73)

55. To spirits in prison the Savior once preach'd,  
And taught them the gospel, with powers afresh;  
And then were the living baptiz'd for their dead,  
That they might be judg'd as if men in the flesh. (v. 74)

56. These are they that are hon'rabable men of the earth;

Who were blinded and dup'd by the cunning of men:  
They receiv'd not the truth of the Savior at first;  
But did, when they heard it in prison, again. (v. 74-75)

57. Not valiant for truth, they obtain'd not the crown,  
But are of that glory that's typ'd by the moon:  
They are they, that come into the presence of Christ,  
But not to the fulness of God, on his throne. (v. 76-79)

58. Again I beheld the telestial, as third,  
The lesser, or starry world, next in its place.  
For the leaven must leaven three measures of meal,  
And every knee bow that is subject to grace. (v. 81)

59. These are they that receiv'd not the gospel of Christ,  
Or evidence, either, that he ever was;  
As the stars are all different in glory and light,  
So differs the glory of these by the laws. (v. 82)

60. These are they that deny not the spirit of God,  
But are thrust down to hell, with the devil, for sins,  
As hypocrites, liars, whoremongers, and thieves,  
And stay 'till the last resurrection begins. (v. 83-85)

61. 'Till the Lamb shall have finish'd the work he begun;  
Shall have trodden the wine press, in fury alone,  
And overcome all by the pow'r of his might:  
He conquers to conquer, and save all his own. (v. 85 and 107)

62. These are they that receive not a fulness of light,  
From Christ, in eternity's world, where they are,  
The terrestrial sends them the Comforter, though;  
And minist'ring angels, to happify there. (v. 86)

63. And so the telestial is minister'd to,  
By ministers from the terrestrial one,  
As terrestrial is, from the celestial throne;  
And the great, greater, greatest, seem's stars, moon, and sun. (v. 86-88)

64. And thus I beheld, in the vision of heav'n,  
The telestial glory, dominion and bliss,  
Surpassing the great understanding of men,—  
Unknown, save reveal'd, in a world vain as this. (v. 89-90)

65. And lo, I beheld the terrestrial, too,  
Which excels the telestial in glory and light,  
In splendor, and knowledge, and wisdom, and joy,  
In blessings, and graces, dominion and might. (v. 91)

66. I beheld the celestial, in glory sublime;  
Which is the most excellent kingdom that is,—  
Where God, e'en the Father, in harmony reigns;



Almighty, supreme, and eternal, in bliss. (v. 92-93)

67. Where the church of the first born in union reside,  
And they are as they're seen, and they know as they're known;  
Being equal in power, dominion and might,  
With a fulness of glory and grace, round his throne. (v. 94-95)

68. The glory celestial is one like the sun;  
The glory terrest'r'al is one like the moon;  
The glory telesstial is one like the stars,  
And all harmonize like the parts of a tune. (v. 96-98)

69. As the stars are all different in lustre and size,  
So the telesstial region, is mingled in bliss;  
From least unto greatest, and greatest to least,  
The reward is exactly as promis'd in this. (v. 98)

70. These are they that came out for Apollos and Paul;  
For Cephas and Jesus, in all kinds of hope;  
For Enoch and Moses, and Peter, and John;  
For Luther and Calvin, and even the Pope. (v. 99-100)

71. For they never received the gospel of Christ,  
Nor the prophetic spirit that came from the Lord;  
Nor the covenant neither, which Jacob once had;  
They went their own way, and they have their reward. (v. 100-1)

72. By the order of God, last of all, these are they,  
That will not be gather'd with saints here below,  
To be caught up to Jesus, and meet in the clouds:—  
In darkness they worshipp'd; to darkness they go. (v. 102)

73. These are they that are sinful, the wicked at large,  
That glutted their passion by meanness or worth;  
All liars, adulterers, sorc'ers, and proud;  
And suffer, as promis'd, God's wrath on the earth. (v. 103-4)

74. These are they that must suffer the vengeance of hell,  
'Till Christ shall have trodden all enemies down,  
And perfected his work, in the fulness of times:  
And is crown'd on his throne with his glorious crown. (v. 105-8)

75. The vast multitude of the telesstial world—  
As the stars of the skies, or the sands of the sea;—  
The voice of Jehovah echo'd far and wide,  
Ev'ry tongue shall confess, and they all bow the knee. (v. 109-10)

76. Ev'ry man shall be judg'd by the works of his life,  
And receive a reward in the mansions prepar'd;  
For his judgments are just, and his works never end,  
As his prophets and servants have always declar'd. (v. 111)

77. But the great things of God, which he show'd unto me,  
Unlawful to utter, I dare not declare;  
They surpass all the wisdom and greatness of men,  
And only are seen, as has Paul, where they are. (v. 114-18)

78. I will go, I will go, while the secret of life,  
Is blooming in heaven, and blasting in hell;  
Is leaving on earth, and a budding in space:—  
I will go, I will go, with you, brother, farewell.

**1844**

**Hosea Ballou 2<sup>nd</sup> (1796- 1861) son of Universalist Founder**

**Article 11 - In My Father's House are Many Mansions**

**Universalist Quarterly**

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**Article 11 - In My Father's House are Many Mansions**

"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (JOHN xiv. 2, 3)

IN that last and lengthy discourse, which Jesus delivered to his disciples, before he gave himself into the hands of his enemies, we discover intense labor, designed to impress on their minds such facts as he well knew were necessarily embraced in the wonderful scheme of establishing his kingdom among men, and of building up his church on a foundation which should never be shaken. And as he designed that these unlearned and powerless disciples should be employed in this immense enterprise, he did not fail to acquaint them with the difficulties, trials, and sufferings which necessarily lay in the path in which he had appointed that they should go; so that in room of being discouraged by the persecutions they would have to suffer, they should regard them as a testimony in favor of the truth of his word. On the other hand, he was equally faithful to give them assurance of the divine support, by which they should be sustained in the path of duty. Among these assurances we find that which is recorded, John xiv. 1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

I believe that the general opinion among the learned doctors of the church, and among Christian professors, 'respecting the "' many mansions "which Jesus said were in his Father's house, is, that in the immortal world of bliss and glory, there are different stations allotted to happy immortals; and that these different stations, or mansions, vary one from another, so as 'to agree with the various attainments in divine wisdom, and Christian virtue, which distinguish the characters of the saints here on earth. On the words, "many mansions," Dr. A. Clarke says,— "Though I have said before, that whither I am going, ye cannot come now, yet do not think that we shall be forever separated. I am going to that state of glory where there is not only a state of supreme eminence for myself, but also places for all my disciples; various degrees of glory, suited to the various capacities and attainments of my followers." Especially does this general opinion agree with the calculations and expectations of many who look forward to the highest seats in the many mansions of the immortal state. If this general opinion concerning "the many mansions," were true, it does not follow, necessarily, that those who are here promising themselves the most favorable distinctions in that future, immortal state, have adapted their course of life to the sure attainment of their expectations. The words of Jesus give us a good lesson on such a subject: "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him: and he that bade thee and him

come and say to thee, give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher; then shall thou have worship of them that sit at meat with thee." When we hear those whose whole life indicates a desire for the highest distinctions in human society, and who are incensed against any who stand in their way, eloquently pleading their claims to elevated seats in the immortal state, it is hard to make ourselves believe that they have been sufficiently schooled in the lessons of the meek and lowly Jesus.

This vain and anti-christian spirit, which seeks for distinctions hereafter, because it is not gratified to the extent of its desires here, receives a very just rebuke in what Jesus said to his disciples, when he saw the same spirit working vehemently in them. When the ten had heard the request of the two, who desired of Jesus that they might be appointed to sit on his right and left in his kingdom, and the reply which they received, we are told that they were much displeased with them. Seeing his disciples in this envious and unhappy condition, he called them to him, and said unto them, "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all." To be a minister, in the sense of this text, is to be a servant, as the words of Jesus show, where he says, enforcing his precept by his example, "Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom. for many." How do this spirit and these teachings of the divine Master agree with this prevailing and vanity-feeding doctrine of our times?

Again; allowing that Jesus spoke of the immortal state, when he told his disciples that there are many mansions in his Father's house, on what authority do we rest the opinion, that these many mansions are all one above another? A house which should contain many rooms, and all one above another, would display a singular taste, present no architectural symmetry, nor any adaptation to convenience. There are no intimations in the Scripture, where we find the account of these many mansions, that they form such a grotesque edifice. No; this monstrous building, this huge temple of pride, is the work of human imagination, set to work by vanity, to build her an habitation.

But it is time to call in question the reference of these "many mansions," to the immortal state. To take this reference for granted, without due examination, is not doing the subject or ourselves justice. Where is this house of God, which Jesus calls his Father's house, in which are many mansions? Shall we find it in the immortal state, or shall we find it here on earth? Look carefully at what Jesus said: "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am ye may be also." It was necessary for Jesus to go away, and to pass through the scene of sufferings and death, which was required for the fulfilment of the prophecies concerning him, and by which he entered into his kingdom, or glory; as he spoke to the two who were going to Emmaus, after he rose from the dead, saying, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken; ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Had not Jesus left his disciples, and passed through this scene, the gospel kingdom could not have been set up in our world, nor the church established on earth. Is not this kingdom of God, this church of God, that house, in which are many mansions? Is not this the house of which the apostle speaks to the Hebrews?—"But Christ as a Son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Again, in the same epistle: "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high-priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." Of the same house of God the apostle speaks to Timothy: "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Again, in his epistle to the Ephesians, he says, "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners; but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are

build together for an habitation of God through the spirit." St. Peter thus speaks of this house of God: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" It seems that there can be no question but this is the house of which Jesus spoke to his disciples, in which are many mansions; and into which he received them when he came, according to his promise. This was at the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit, the blessed Comforter, was so abundantly given. Then did the disciples of Jesus enter with him into the place he had prepared for them. Then did he come and receive them unto himself; and where he was, there were they. All this agrees with the prayer which Jesus offered to his Father. He said, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." That it was not necessary for the disciples of Jesus to go into the immortal state to be with him and to behold his glory, appears from another passage in the same prayer: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

That Jesus meant the same thing by his coming again to his disciples, and the coming' of the Holy Spirit, is evident. In the same communication in which he spoke of preparing a place for his disciples, and of coming to receive them to himself, that they might be with him, he said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments; and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever — even the spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not; but ye know him, for he dwelleth in you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you." Again, in the same communication, he says, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." When Jesus commissioned his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he promised to be with them, even unto the end of the world.

In the church of Christ here in this world, in the kingdom of Christ here on earth, in this house of God, are many mansions, allotments, or official appointments. It is evident that Jesus delivered the discourse, in which he spoke to his disciples of the many mansions which are in his Father's house, but a short time after he saw the workings of envy and strife among them, on the occasion of the request of James and John to sit, one on the right hand, and the other on the left hand of Jesus, in his kingdom. And though he did not assume the right to make the appointments desired, he indicated, by his reply, that such appointments would be made by his Father. It seems not improbable, therefore, that when he spoke of the many mansions in his Father's house, he designed to quiet the minds of his disciples, by giving them to understand that there were suitable allotments for them all; and that they had no occasion to be troubled in relation to their future stations, or employments, as his servants, and as servants of his church. That these appointments would be sufficiently honorable, Jesus gave them full assurance in his reply to Peter's question respecting what they were to receive for their having forsaken all and followed him. In his reply, he said, "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

The account which Luke gives of this saying of Jesus, is found in such a connection with what he informs us of the strife which the disciples manifested on the question, which of them should be greatest, as to show, very clearly, that it was designed to quiet their minds in relation to the subject of their strife: "And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." That the kingdom of Jesus and his disciples, here spoken of, is the same as that of which we read in Daniel, which should succeed the four monarchies of the earth, I believe none will doubt. These thrones were not one over another, according to the merits or attainments of those who should sit on them; but were according to the divine

appointment of him who alone could furnish such gifts to his church. These gifts are spoken of by St. Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians: "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. And he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors, and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Also of these gifts and appointments in the church, the same apostle speaks to the Corinthians, thus: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." This subject, the same apostle has set forth in his epistle to the Romans, in a manner to give suitable and needed admonition: "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts, differing according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness."

To whom would Christians, of the present day, assign a more important station in the church than to the apostle of the Gentiles? Was his station given him as a recompense of previous merit? This none will pretend. God gave to his church this gift of an apostle according to his own will and wisdom. And though there were none in the church more eminent than he, there were none who excelled him in humility, or in faithfully serving the church. And here it is of importance that we should be sensible of the fact, that no one of these appointments, or allotments in this house of God, this church of the living God, this pillar and ground of truth, was bestowed on any one as a reward of merit; but that they were, as the apostle says, "according to the grace that is given to us: but unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. And there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the spirit the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same spirit; to another, faith by the same spirit; to another, the gift of healing by the same spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, diverse kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and self-same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

To the foregoing considerations, it is of importance to add, that in all the representations of the kingdom and reign of the Messiah, which are found in the writings of the prophets, the whole scene is laid in this world; nor is there found, in the whole of the Scriptures, any description of his reigning with his saints in the future, immortal state. Observe the song of the redeemed: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth." This agrees with Daniel's declaration: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

Having thus endeavored to set forth the true meaning of the house of God, and the many mansions of that house, I will close this article by expressing my fervent desire, that we, who are employed as servants in this house, may constantly realize that it is a place which Jesus has, through his sufferings and death, prepared for us, that he is with us, showing to us his glory. And that we may remember, at all times, those teachings and admonitions of the divine Master designed to subdue that vanity and pride which strive for nothing, save who shall be greatest.

H. B.

**1844**

**Joseph Smith (1805 – 1844), Latter-day Saint Founder  
Nauvoo Address on Resurrection  
History of The Church**

**Joseph Smith, History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 7 vols., introduction and notes** by B. H. Roberts, 6:, p.365

My text is on the resurrection of the dead, which you will find in the 14th chapter of John—"In my Father's house are many mansions." It should be—"In my Father's kingdom are many kingdoms," in order that ye may be heirs of God and joint-heirs with me. I do not believe the Methodist doctrine of sending honest men and noble-minded men to hell, along with the murderer and the adulterer. They may hurl all their hell and fiery billows upon me, for they will roll off me as fast as they come on. But I have an order of things to save the poor fellows at any rate, and get them saved; for I will send men to preach to them in prison and save them if I can.

There are mansions for those who obey a celestial law, and there are other mansions for those who come short of the law, every man in his own order. There is baptism, &c., for those to exercise who are alive, and baptism for the dead who die without the knowledge of the Gospel.

I am going on in my progress for eternal life. It is not only necessary that you should be baptized for your dead, but you will have to go through all the ordinances for them, the same as you have gone through to save yourselves. There will be 144,000 saviors on Mount Zion, and with them an innumerable host that no man can number. Oh! I beseech you to go forward, go forward and make your calling and your election sure; and if any man preach any other Gospel than that which I have preached, he shall be cursed; and some of you who now hear me shall see it, and know that I testify the truth concerning them.

**1848 Publication date**

**John Angell James (1785-1859): British Congregational Minister  
High State Of Religion In World, Exalted State Of Honor & Happiness In World To  
Come; Different Degrees Of Glory In Celestial Kingdom  
The Church in Earnest**

As another inducement to earnestness, may be mentioned the certain connection between a high state of religion in this world, and an exalted state of honor and happiness in the world to come; or, in other words, the different degrees of glory in the celestial kingdom. We are too much accustomed to conceive of heaven and hell as places where the happy inhabitants of the one, and the miserable criminals of the other, will be, respectively, all upon a level; the one all equally happy, and the other all equally wretched. This is neither the doctrine of Scripture, nor the deduction of reason.

If we consult the Word of God, we find it declared, in reference to the wicked, that "The servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." Luke xii. 47. So again it is said by the apostle, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Gal. vi. 7. "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." 2 Cor. ix. 6. Now the By all the worth of the immortal soul, then — by all the blessings of eternal salvation — by all the glories of the upper world — by all the horrors of the bottomless pit — by all the ages of eternity, and by all the personal interest you have in these infinite realities,

I conjure you to be in earnest in personal religion. Solemn truth conveyed in this language, is this — that man's life is the seed-time for eternity — and that as here he is always sowing, so he will hereafter be always reaping; and that the harvest, both as to the kind and the quantity, will be according to the seed. They that sow good seed will have, some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred fold, according to the quantity sown; while they who sow the seed of bad things will also have a harvest regulated by their seed, both in its quality and amount. God's rule of reward and punishment is a law of proportion. True it is, that in the case of the righteous and the wicked, there is on the part of God a different ground of procedure in reference to each, inasmuch as the punishment of the wicked is on the ground of their own desert, while the reward of the righteous is on that of Christ's merits — but this affects not the rule of distribution, since he who gives to a believer any measure of heavenly glory for the sake of Christ, may, on the same ground, give to another a far greater measure; he might do this in a way of pure sovereignty, but he has determined to do so according to the measure of holiness to which believers attain on earth.

This principle of different degrees of glory does not at all interfere with, or in the least oppose, the doctrine of justification by faith; nor does it affect the perfect happiness of the blessed in heaven. It will excite neither envy, jealousy, nor ill-will of any kind, since these passions will be all rooted out from the spirits of just men made perfect; and no other disposition, but that of perfect love to God and our fellows, will have any place in us. A being possessed of this perfect love, though the least and lowest in the scale of blessedness, would look up to all above him without the smallest taint of malevolent feeling. All will be perfectly contented, and, therefore, perfectly happy; and he who is perfectly contented knows nothing of envy; these states of mind are incompatible with each other. There may be vessels of an indefinite number of capacities, yet all may be full. Thus we can conceive of different degrees of glory, and yet no disturbance of the felicity of those who are subjects of them.

Now the law by which these varieties will be regulated will be, as we have already supposed, the attainments in personal religion, and the degrees of usefulness of Christians upon earth; and this law will help us better to conceive of the whole subject. We may imagine that every effort of vital godliness — every successful resistance of temptation — every reach after holiness — every mortification of sin — every aspiration after conformity to God — may have some effect upon the moral constitution of our nature, analogous to the exercise of our understanding or of our body, in strengthening our intellectual and corporeal frame. There may be an expansion, so to speak, of the spiritual nature, an increasing receptivity of glory and honor, ever going on, by our growth in grace on earth; the child of God may here, by his good habits in the school of Christ, and by his holy exercises, be preparing for a larger stature of the perfect man in heaven. There can be little doubt that the society of Paradise will be well compacted and orderly. There may be varieties of rank, station and employment; for aught we can tell, there may be rule, subjection and government; and therefore the different degrees of grace may be the discipline, the education, the meetness, for the different situations to be filled up, the posts to be occupied, in the celestial kingdom. There are not wanting intimations of this in the Word of God.

Besides, let it be remembered that we shall carry with us our memory to heaven, and will it be no bliss to remember what we did for God on earth, and how we attempted to serve Christ? Why, the apostle Paul felt this even on earth; and if the retrospect then afforded him such delight, how much more when he saw the results of all he did spread out before him in the celestial world! With what rapture would he there say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course!" How precious would be the recollection of all his sufferings, and all his labors! How it would delight him to look back, and recall to recollection his sacrifices and his services, not in a spirit of pharisaic pride, but of deep humility, and adoring gratitude and love. There he would realize the truth of his own words, "For what is our hope or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Am not even ye in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy." 1 Thess. ii. 19. Every soul he had been the instrument of saving would be a separate jewel to enrich and adorn his diadem of glory.

Just thus will it be with all others. Memory will add to their felicities also. The whole multitude of the redeemed will remember all they did for Christ, and think of it with delight; and they who have most to think of will have most bliss in the remembrance of it. The souls which they have been the instruments of saving will all be present to swell their rapture and augment their bliss. Nor will the enjoyment stop here. The blissful reminiscence will be enhanced by a divine eulogy, for Christ will add his testimony of approbation to all they did. Even a cup of cold water shall not lose its reward, if given to a disciple in his name. He will pass over nothing. He keeps a book of remembrance of those who even flunk upon his name; and he will mark with his special and personal commendation all we have done for him; and then they who have served him best will, of course, receive most of his gracious notice and commendation.

Professors, I appeal to you, then, on this deeply interesting and important view of our subject. True it is, that to be just within the threshold of your Father's house — to occupy the lowest room, and to perform the humblest service, will be amazing and unutterable grace — but this ought not to be an excuse for indolence, an apology for lukewarmness. If it be lawful for you to long for heaven, because there you shall enjoy the presence of your Lord, it is surely lawful for you to desire to press as near to your Lord as possible; the outer circle, the distant glimpse, the remote dwelling, ought not to be enough to satisfy your desire, or fill your heart. If it be lawful for you to covet heaven at all, because you shall there serve God, surely it is lawful for you also to aspire to the honor of doing more for him than you could do in one of the lowest posts. Call not this a spiritual selfishness, or an unauthorized ambition; it is no such thing; it is a legitimate yearning of the soul after the glory to be revealed. This, this, is your business on earth, you are training for heaven; this is your work in the church militant, to be preparing for some post and place in the church triumphant. Is not this enough to make you in earnest? Can you believe this, and not be in earnest? Awake — arouse — put aside your earthly- mindedness — mortify your corruptions! “Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet. i. 13.

**1850**

**Henry Bidleman Bascom (1796—1850), Methodist Episcopal Bishop**

**Different Degrees Of Glory Affirmed With Regard To Inhabitants Of Heaven, Not Inconsistent With Preceding Views**

**Sermons from the Pulpit (1850)**

The Different Degrees Of Glory Affirmed With Regard To The Inhabitants Of Heaven, Not Inconsistent With The Preceding Views

Perfect beatitude will be the portion of all, but it will be with that variety which lends charm and interest to the ever-varied creations of the universal God. Heaven will present an endless gradation in dignity and happiness, characterizing all the ranges of intellectual life and Divine enjoyment, from the least of all saints, up to the highest princedoms and dominions of the sky. That variety distinguishing the splendor of the stellar hosts, is the inspired similitude of the different degrees of glory in Heaven. The proper individuality and difference of character, obtaining among the good and devout of earth, will be perpetuated in Heaven. It would imply an utter reversal of all the laws of character, and a subversion of the mental and moral habitudes governing conduct and action, to suppose that Paul and John, Luther and Wesley, will present no diversity of reward and excellence in Heaven. As there are upon earth different kinds and degrees of moral worth and goodness, so in Heaven there will be similar difference in the kind and measure of reward and distinction meted to them.

Humble and illustrious worth, will be their immortal recompense and fullness of joy; but, in the case of each, it will be the expansion of the principles and elements giving birth to the distinctive classes upon earth. In Heaven, the millions of the unfallen and the redeemed, will take rank and class respectively about the throne of God, in conformity with the grade and extent of excellence, by which they are distinguished. Not unlike



concentric circles around a common center, we may suppose ranks and grades to fall in and receive place and position at the hand of God, in strict adherence to the law of actual affinity with him. Moral resemblance to God and the extent of cooperation with him in the accomplishment of the Divine purposes, will be the rule of rank, and the law of relative position.

There will be many, innumerable multitudinous mansions, adjusted to the diversity of character and claim, as well as the multitude of the saved; but fullness of content and sufficiency, happiness intense and transcendent, will reign in all. We may imagine circles near, and orbits distant— greater and less nearness of access to the throne and altar — while even the very verge of the sphere is occupied by rejoicing millions. And yet all repose in the consummation of their hopes and wishes, and find the grand totality and laws of happiness the same to all and the same forever!

**1854 (Second Edition)**

**George S. Faber (1773 – 1854), Anglican Theologian**

**Imagery Employed By Christ Has Been Borrowed From Numerous Small Chambers Or Mansions, Which Were Attached To The Outer Wall Of Both Temple And Oracle Round About; Mansions Must Be Sought Elsewhere; They Belong To Far More Ample House Of God**

**The Many Mansions in the House of the Father, Scripturally Discussed and Practically Considered**

**Chapter I.**

**Introduction Of The Subject.**

Few persons, I suppose, even though they may not be scientific astronomers, have refrained, under one aspect or another, from speculating on the Heavenly Bodies.

I. This, accordingly, has been the case, both in ancient and in modern times.

1. Ancient Paganism associated them with its Demonolatry or Hero-Worship: and pronounced, that the Deified Souls of the illustrious Ancestors of Mankind, in the successive antediluvian and postdiluvian Families of Adam and Noah, were translated to them; from which lofty Mansions they were held to look down upon this Sublunary World, influencing the actions and presiding over the fortunes of their posterity.

2. Hence, at a later period (for Mythology in one age becomes Romance in the next, and is finally degraded into Nursery Tales in the third), arose the fancies of Judicial Astrology: in which the Stars, according to their various positions and combinations at the birth of an individual, were thought subsequently to influence the whole of his life; and, by what was called the Calculation of his Nativity, it was even pretended to foretell the various matters which were destined to befall him.

II. These vanities are now swept away; but, still, room is left for speculations of a graver task.

Thus, when I see the wonderful precision of the Great Creator, even in the smallest objects, and when I cannot but discern the admirable adaptation of every minute particular to its own proper end; I feel it impossible to believe, that the probable Innumerability of Spheres, scattered through boundless Space, can all, by Supreme Wisdom, have been created, for absolutely no other purpose, than, with something like the [two Greek words] of Eschylus, bootlessly to twinkle forth their unfruitful inutility; I feel it impossible to believe (unless, indeed, there be some of those spheres as yet only in the progress of what may be called Geologic Formation), that their collective character, unlike the particular character of our own Planet, is that of containing only antres vast and deserts idle; in short, I cannot bring myself to believe, that, with objectless

inaptitude, they are, one and all, totally empty of Intelligences qualified to comprehend and to promote the gracious designs and wise purposes of their Benign Creator.

At the same time, when I reflect upon the Absolute Purity of God, I find it equally impossible to believe: that Evil universally prevails throughout the Whole of his Works, as we know it particularly to prevail in this single Planet of ours. Mysterious and incomprehensible as may be the Origin of Evil, I feel instinctively persuaded, that its Occurrence, as we see it here, is the Exception, not the Rule. And, on such a principle, my belief is: that, amidst Myriads of Spheres, our World is the sole Exception.

This belief of mine is not purely gratuitous or arbitrary: it rests negatively on the authority of Scripture. We read not there of any Evil, save Diabolical and Human. Consequently, we have no right, or at least no ground, to assume the existence of Evil in any other Class of created Moral Agents. Through the aid of a prodigious extension of the Telescopic Power, it has now, apparently, been ascertained, that the Moon is uninhabited, and furthermore that it is in what seems to be a chaotic state: and, yet additionally, from that wonderful law of certain severally proportionate fixed intervals between the various Orbits of our Planetary System which has now been discovered to exist, it is highly probable, that the numerous small Asteroids, which revolve in nearly a common Orbit between Mars and Jupiter, are the rounded Fragments of a large Sphere, which, by the law of intervals, once subsisted between those two Planets, and which some mighty internal convulsion shattered into the small Asteroidal Fragments recently discovered by modern Science. But, in the silence of Scripture, neither of these cases can be legitimately adduced, as indicating the successive Existence and Punishment of Moral Evil in other Orbs than our own. We know not, that the Phenomena, afforded by the Moon and the Asteroids, may be any other than simply the Progress of Geologic Formation in Modes either similar or dissimilar to that which has characterised our Earth: and, certainly, a World or Worlds in the mere Progress of Material or Mechanical Arrangements, if such be the case with those Heavenly Bodies, can afford, in the silence of Scripture, simply and per se, no valid proof either of the past or of the present Existence of Moral Evil within their several limits.

How, then, are we to view the stupendous multitudes of those Spheres, whether planetary or stellar, which Astronomy reveals to us?

What are they?

For what purpose were they created?

When questions such as these occupy my mind, I recollect the authoritative saying of our Lord: In My Father's House Are Many Mansions. And, forthwith, I am involuntarily led to ask: Can these Many Mansions be the Many Spheres? Have we any well grounded analogy, from which we may argue onward? Can the House of the Father, which contains these Many Mansions, be any other, than the Immense Mundane House of God, the Real Temple of the Omnipresent?

Plainly, the Mansions, or, as the strictly correspondent Original runs, are no mere Temporary or Occasional Dwellings; but Fixed and Definite Abodes: nor yet are they Abodes simply; but Abodes, as the context shows, of Holy and Blessed Intelligences.

III. It has been thought that the imagery, employed by Christ, has been borrowed from the numerous small Chambers or Mansions, which were attached to the outer wall of both the Temple and the Oracle round about.

This is not improbable: but the context shows, that the Mansions, of which our Lord spoke, must, literally, be sought for elsewhere; that they are upon a far larger scale; and that they belong to a far more ample House of God. I go, said he, to prepare a Place for you. So spake he to his Disciples, when about to depart from them. But, assuredly, the promised Place could not be one of the small Chambers attached to the Jewish Temple.

Doubtless, it is one of the many Mansions in the true House of the Father. If, then, one of the many Mansions, now unprepared, is, in God's own appointed time, hereafter to be prepared, for his Faithful People: analogy seems to require, that the others of these many Mansions, all of them, at least, that are now prepared, should have similar tenants. But what can these similar tenants be, similar in holiness and similar in happiness, save the various Armies and Hierarchies of the Blessed Angels: those Angels, respecting whom our Lord says, that, hereafter, we shall be like them and equal to them?

I may add: that, when Christ spoke of Many Mansions in the House of his Father, he used language which would convey ideas familiar to the Jews. They did, indeed, preposterously distort such ideas, that so an agreement might be produced with the numerical precision of their Cabala: but, still, the ideas were there. In Paradise, say the Rabbins, there are Seven Mansions, which are each twelve thousand miles long, ten thousand miles broad, and ten thousand miles high<sup>1</sup>. This is mere grotesque: but, still, grotesque may overlay a germ of truth.

IV. For such opinions as I have stated, is there any warrant in Scripture, beyond an inference from our Saviour's declaration, that in his Father's House are many Mansions?

I think there is. But, still, I would here take my stand. With the Church of England, I maintain: that nothing is, bindingly, to be received and believed as an Article of Faith, unless it can be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.

No doubt, there may be a difference of opinion, as to whether my Views can, or can not, be thus substantiated: but the sound Protestant Principle itself remains unaltered. If the Proof from Scripture breaks down, let the whole be rejected as the Baseless Fabric of a Vision: or, should this be deemed too summary and severe, let it be estimated as nothing more than a Decent Probability unproved by Scripture.

## **Chapter II**

### **The Probable Origination Of Our Lord's Phraseology Touching Certain Many Mansions In The House Of His Father**

I Have briefly remarked: that our Lord's Phraseology, when he says In my Father's House are many Mansions, has been not improbably thought to refer, in the way of Poetical Machinery (if I may so speak), to the numerous small Chambers or Mansions which were attached to the outer wall of the Temple and its Oracle.

Should the reality of such an allusion to the particular construction of the Temple at Jerusalem be admitted, the allusion itself will tend, somewhat curiously, to establish the ideal sense of the Declaration which I have taken as the basis of the present Work.

I. To say nothing of the several Galleries which appear to have surrounded the Courts, many different Booms, story above story, were built exteriorly against the wall of the Temple itself, so as in a measure to encompass it.

Respecting these Chambers, which were the concomitants of the House of God; or, rather indeed, which were distinct, though constituent, parts and parcels of it, as one great Collective Whole: respecting these Chambers it might be truly said, that, in that House or Temple of the Father, were Many Mansions, appropriated to different purposes, and occupied by various Orders of his Sacerdotally Ministering Attendants.

To such Mansions, then, in the particular House of the Father at Jerusalem, let us suppose our Lord to have alluded in his memorable Declaration: that, in the general House of the Father which is identical (as the Jews

understood it) with the Mundane Temple of the Universe, there are many Mansions, one of which he would prepare, in due season, for his Faithful People of the Human Race.

II. Now, so far as we can gather from Josephus and Philo, it seems to have been the established belief of the Levitical Church: that, in point of Designed Ideality, the Temple, taken in its largest acceptation, symbolised the Entire Universe.

1. Josephus, for instance, makes out the case by an adduction of many very curious particulars.

Thus, he distinctly tells us: not only that the Four Elements were represented by the Four Colours which entered into the embroidery of the Veil, but likewise that the "Whole Aspect of the Heavens, by which phrase (as the context shows) he means the Collective Appearance of the Stars, was graphically represented or depicted upon it; save only (which is the context referred to) that no figures of any living creatures, after the manner in which the Constellations are classed on the Mythological Sphere of the Greeks, were there employed.

Thus, again, the Seven then known Planets were understood to be represented by the Seven Lights of the Golden Candlestick.

Thus, furthermore, the Twelve Loaves on the Table of Shew-Bread shadowed out the Twelve Monthly Signs through which the Sun zodiacally passes.

Thus, likewise, the Thirteen Perfumes of the Censer, gathered from both Sea and Land, that is, from the Whole World Habitable and Uninhabitable, denoted: that the Entire Universe was constructed and devoted to the glory of God.

Thus, again, sub-inclusively, the Official Dress of the High-Priest respected, in its arrangement, the System of the World.

And thus, finally, the Three Divisions of the Tabernacle, or Ambulatory Temple, shadowed out the Three Divisions of the Universe: Earth, Sea, and Heaven<sup>1</sup>.

2. In like manner, Philo the Jew, at great length, gives the same account of the symbolical import of the Temple and its various Constituent Parts<sup>2</sup>.

I need not repeat from him, what I have already said from Josephus. Yet I may fitly remark: that, precisely in the same manner as the Inspired Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Philo builds the opinion of himself and his countrymen, on the charge, delivered by God to his servant Moses, that the Tabernacle or Moveable Temple should be constructed according to the Celestial Pattern shown to him in the Mount<sup>3</sup>. Nor yet must I here omit to subjoin Philo's own distinct and condensed statement of the Symbolic Principle, which entered into the very heart of that opinion.

It was Necessary, says he, that they, who prepared a Temple made with hands, for the Father and Ruler of the Universe, should employ substances<sup>8</sup>, similar and correspondent to those according to which he created the Whole World.

III. Purely, then, as a Matter of Fact, such were the ideas prevalent among the Jews: and I cannot but think, that St. Paul manifestly refers to them, and thence, by approbatively referring, confirms them, in his Epistle to the Hebrews.

There is, in particular, one place of this Epistle, which seems even verbally decisive.

The Apostle tells us: that the First or Levitical Covenant had, not only ordinances of Divine Service, but likewise a Worldly or Mundane Sanctuary.

I use the explanatory word Mundane, because the ambiguous term Worldly, employed by our English Translators, has here no relation to what we call Worldly-Mitidedness. On the contrary, it imports what we unambiguously express by the terms, Mundane and Cosmical.

St. Paul enters not, indeed, into the minuteness of particular detail, which characterises the parallel accounts given by Josephus and Philo: but, still, we distinctly learn from his exposition, that the Holy of Holies in the Temple represented that Heaven, which is specially marked by the more immediately revealed presence of the Father, and by the entrance into it of our great High-Priest the Son.

From this declared symbolical character of one part of the Temple, it plainly follows, by virtue of an inevitable homogeneity, that the other parts of the Collective Temple, the Courts and Porticos, to wit, which, jointly with the Naos, constituted the entire Hieron, represented, severally, in agreement with the recorded Doctrine of the ancient Jews, the various subordinate Parts of the Entire Universe<sup>1</sup>.

IV. I incline to think, that the same Idealism pervades the Machinery of the Apocalypse: for the language of St. Paul acts very much as a sort of key to the descriptions of St. John.

It has been often justly remarked, but by no commentator more copiously than Sir Isaac Newton, that the entire Apocalyptic Picture of Heaven is borrowed from the Temple. In fact, the very name of Temple is, more than once, expressly given to the Heaven which St. John beheld in vision. I may add, that the original word in Hebrew denotes either a Temple or a Palace: and the ground of such a peculiarity is, that the Temple is the Palace of the Great King, the miniature symbol of that true and larger Palace of God, the Universe. Hence the Temple is called the House of God: and, in the mimic ideality of Paganism, the Temple of an Idol-God was denominated his House.

But, with St. Paul's statement in our hands, we must not limit the Temple or Hieron, taken in its full extent, to what the Apostle calls the Mundane Sanctuary. Viewed in reference to its Courts, that is to say, viewed as the entire Hieron, it plainly enough takes in the whole World. The Naos, or Temple proper, is, as I have remarked above, the special Palace of the Great King: but, throughout the Apocalypse, the Hieron comprehends, apparently, the Whole Universe, or, at least, the Universe of our own Planet. Thus, Every creature, which is in Heaven and on the Earth and under the Earth, and such as are in the Sea, and All that are in them, are described, as jointly taking part, with the Angels and the Cherubic Animals and the Elders, in the Song to God and the Lamb, and therefore as present with them in the same vast Collective Hieron. Thus also, while the Naos or Proper Temple of God in Heaven is reserved for his measured or faithful worshippers, the Outer Court, which was comprehended in the circuit of the Hieron, is given to a race of idolatrous Gentiles that so they should even tread the Holy City under foot.

Such phraseology compels us to extend the mystical Apocalyptic Temple far beyond the Naos or Mundane Sanctuary or Peculiar Heaven of God. Taking that Temple in its broadest sense of the TLieron, we seem compelled, agreeably to the Cabala of the ancient Jews, to make it co-extensive with the Universe. All Creatures, whatever be their Locality, join, as actually present, in the Universal Song of Praise. But this could not be, unless All Creatures were viewed, as comprehended within the Hieron, though not admitted into the very Adytum of God, the Naos or Mundane Sanctuary. In other words, this could not be, unless the Entire Temple at Jerusalem was the Image and shadow of that large and true Temple which is co-extensive with the Universe. As Philo speaks, we must deem the Whole World God's highest and truest Temple<sup>1</sup>.

V. If, then, we be warranted in supposing, that the peculiar phraseology of our Lord, like the palpably intelligible Machinery of the Apocalypse, referred allusively to the Ideal Construction of the Temple at Jerusalem, I need scarcely remark, when the confirmed opinion of the ancient Jews is taken into

consideration, how decisively it establishes the correctness of the view, which I am led to take of the Many Mansions in the House of the Father.

**1859**

**John Angell James (1785-1859): British Congregational Minister**

**Different Degrees of Glory**

**Grace Gems Website**

**My dear friends, I now propose to discuss the question of different degrees of glory.**

The FELICITY OF HEAVEN, set forth in general terms, will consist of the absence of all evil, both natural and moral, such as sin, and all its bitter fruits—death, disease, labor, care, sorrow, and pain; and the presence of all good suited to man as a rational, moral, social, and immortal creature, such as the perfect holiness of his nature, the presence of God in Christ, the society and converse of blessed spirits, and that service and honor which God may appoint to the holy inhabitants of the place. A question arises, Will these inhabitants be equal in all respects in honor and felicity? I do not think.

All real Christians will be in heaven, and possess in substance its chief felicity—as well they who are converted on a death-bed; as they who yield themselves to God in their youth; as well the believer who lives and dies in unmolested ease, as the martyr—all will be equal as to their deliverance from every kind of evil; all will be with Christ, see God face to face, and be perfectly happy—but still there will be circumstances connected with their heavenly state, that will raise some higher in the scale of splendor and blessedness than others.

While, therefore, there will be many things in which the felicity of the redeemed will be COMMON—it will be common in its object, the blessed God and the adorable Redeemer; in its subject, all the powers of the glorified body and soul; in its duration, which will be eternal; in its security, since all will be sustained by the Divine faithfulness; and in the full satisfaction of soul, which each, according to its capacity, will possess.

Yet there will be some peculiarities and DISTINCTIONS attaching to the more eminent servants of God. We may not be, and indeed are not, able to say with precision and in all things, in what these peculiarities consist—but we know that they will exist. We can conceive of a larger capacity for happiness in some than in others, just as there is a greater capacity for enjoyment in a man than in a child, or in one man than in another; yet all will be perfectly happy, according to their powers of receptivity. Vessels may be of various measures, yet all full. Heaven may consist of a graduated scale of rank, station, and service; yes, doubtless will; and one glorified spirit may be fitted for a higher post, a more important service, than another. Hence we can conceive, how perfection in all, can accord with variety, and even different degrees.

I will now consider the principle on which this difference will proceed, and by which it will be regulated. It will not be a capricious arrangement, a mere arbitrary appointment—nothing that God does, either in nature, providence, or grace, is of this character. Everything he does, he performs according to the counsel of his will; there is a reason for everything, a principle according to which everything is done. Now this applies to the case before us. In allotting to some a higher degree than others in glory, God proceeds on some principle, and what is it? Not worldly rank; some subjects and paupers will probably be higher in heaven than their monarchs. Not literary or scientific renown; some uneducated rustics may be elevated above scholars and philosophers. Not even success in converting souls to God, if it be unattended with a proportionate degree of pure motive and consistent piety; some obscure but eminently holy ministers, will have a brighter crown, than others whose popularity God may in a way of sovereignty employ for extensive usefulness.

Character, conduct, motives—as known to the omniscient God, will be the rule. We cannot find a better, a

more intelligible representation of the subject, than the one usually employed, "Degrees of glory in heaven, will be proportioned to degrees of grace on earth."

We now see an obvious difference among God's people. There are some who are called in the morning of their existence, and who spend a long life in the service of God—while others called by grace at the last hour of life. There are some whose circumstances of ease and comfort call for little sacrifice or self-denial—while others follow Christ to beatings, imprisonment, and death. There are some, who though really regenerated, make little progress in sanctification, and evince so many imperfections, and so much worldly-mindedness, as to render their profession doubtful and suspicious—while others, who have overcome the world by faith in a most conspicuous manner, and by their eminently holy and consistent conduct, bring much glory to God. There are some who are grudging, indolent, or money-loving—while others are liberal, self-denying, and laborious. Now I contend that according to these differences on earth—there will be corresponding differences in heaven.

The PROOF of differing degrees of glory, will be found in the following arguments.

1. It is set forth in the following scriptures. Even the Old Testament asserts the fact. "Those who are wise shall shine as the brightness of the skies, and those who turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever," Dan. 12:3.
2. Our Lord, in his sermon on the Mount, encourages his persecuted followers to endure, by this consideration, "Great is your reward in heaven," Matt. 5:12. See also Matt. 10:41-42, "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall never lose his reward."
3. The parable of the pounds, Luke 19:12, teaches the same fact—the good trader with ten pounds, gained rule over ten cities; and the diligent possessor of five pounds, gained five cities.
4. In speaking of the righteous at the last day, the apostle says, as "one star differs from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead," 1 Cor. 15:41. The applicability of this passage, I know, has been disputed; and it has been considered as intended only to set forth the contrast between the earthly body, and the resurrection one; but this can I think hardly be sustained; there may be differences of magnitude between the stars—but no contrasts. Nor can the apostle mean to limit the difference to the degrees of bodily glory—but to set forth the varied distinctions of splendor of every kind, with which the righteous will appear at the last day.

To the same effect, are all those passages which speak of the rewards of the final judgment, when "every man shall receive the things done in the body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad," 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 22:12. How decisive is the language of the apostle, Gal. 6:7-9, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked—for whatever a man sows, that also shall he reap. For he who sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." "This I say, He which sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully," 2 Cor. 9:6. How clear and how impressive are such statements, that our life is a seed-time for eternity; that all our conduct is the seed sown, and that the harvest will be according to the seed we sow—in kind, quality, and quantity.

I now subjoin other considerations to prove the fact of different degrees of glory:

1. There will be certainly different degrees of misery and disgrace in hell, as is evident from Luke 12:47, Rom. 2:6-16. And why not, then, different degrees of felicity and honor in heaven? Observe the manner

in which the apostle speaks of the different rewards of the ministers of the gospel in 1 Cor. 3, "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. If any man's work shall abide which he has built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss—but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." If this be true of ministers, it is no less so of all professors.

2. But this appears equally clear, if we consider the nature of those things of which our heavenly felicity will consist. Part of our happiness will arise from the recollection of what we have done for Christ. Memory will supply much of both the torment of hell, and the felicity of heaven—and they who have most to remember will be most happy. Our future happiness or misery will thus, in a great measure, arise out of our conduct here. Every holy action will be the seed of felicity. Did not Paul, when drawing near his end, look back with delight and gratitude, yet with humility, upon his apostolic life, when he exultingly exclaimed, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," 2 Tim. 4:7. And if such joy was lawful and proper then, what will be the delight of looking back from heaven upon a life of service upon earth; of retracing all the way in which Divine grace has led, sustained, and sanctified us; of reviewing our temptations, conflicts, and triumphs! And this joy will be in proportion to the cause which produces it.
3. Another part of our felicity will arise from the approbation of God and Christ. This is evident from his representation of the solemnities of judgment, Matt. 25. How blissful to see HIM smile upon us! To hear HIM say, "You have done it unto ME. Well done, my good and faithful servant. Well done. I saw every action of piety, every struggle with temptation, every tear of penitence, every gift of property, every expression of sympathy with a suffering brother, every labor, and every sacrifice. I know your works, and now I reward them by this public testimony." How rich a reward! And of course it must be in proportion to the conduct which will secure it.
4. Another source of our celestial bliss will be the proofs and the fruits of our usefulness in the cause of God, and of immortal souls. The misery of the wicked in hell will arise, in no small degree, from seeing around them, in that world of despair, those whom they had led there by their evil principles, active effort, and seductive example. By a similar law, the felicity of the saints in heaven will receive everlasting accessions from hearing the songs, and witnessing the raptures of those whom they were the honored instruments in saving from death and conducting to glory. What must be the heaven of such men as Whitefield and Wesley, and of other less distinguished servants of Christ, in beholding before the throne so many whom it was their unutterable privilege to lead there!
5. Not dissimilar in kind, though of course less in degree, will be the joy of all who lay out their property, spend their time, or sacrifice their ease, endeavoring to increase the number of the saints, and thus people the realms of glory with redeemed spirits. Surely, surely, there must be an honor and a bliss in reserve for the eminently zealous, devoted, and self-denying—which will not be experienced in the same degree by those who do little for Christ.

Do not all these considerations, then, sustain the fact that there are different degrees of glory in heaven? Can we conceive of heaven without it? Does it not prove itself to every man's judgment? In every community on earth, from a family to a state—there are different services, and different posts, which must be sustained by various people, according to their various degrees and kinds of fitness—and why should it be otherwise in heaven? They, surely, form an inaccurate, low, and unworthy idea of that blessed world, who consider it only as a place where all are in every respect alike—all are equal, and all pursue an unvarying sameness of occupation.

It is of vast importance to connect, at any rate the idea of state, with that of place; and to remember that repentance, faith, and holiness, are not so much a condition of heaven—as a preparation for it. Regeneration is the commencement of glorification. Sanctification is the fitness for glorification.



I come now to answer the OBJECTIONS which some who have not well considered the subject sometimes bring against it.

#### Objection 1

Is it not opposed to the parable of the laborers hired to go into the vineyard, all of whom received the same wages, whether hired at the third or the eleventh hour? Matt. 20.

I answer,

this parable had nothing to do with the subject; its design being, not to represent the distribution of rewards and punishments in a future state—but the calling of the Gentiles to become fellow-heirs with the Jews, in the same church state and gospel privileges.

#### Objection 2

Does it not set aside salvation by grace, and justification by faith without works?

I answer,

Certainly not. The matter may be stated thus. Nothing performed by a creature, however pure, can merit eternal life. God may freely lay himself under an obligation to reward the obedience of a holy creature with everlasting life, and his so doing may be fit and worthy of him. Man having sinned, the promised good is forfeited, and death becomes the only reward of which he is worthy. God, having designs of mercy, notwithstanding, towards rebellious creatures, sent forth his Son to obey and suffer in their place, resolving to bestow eternal life on all who believe in him, as the reward of his undertaking. God not only accepts of all who believe in his Son for his sake—but their services also. There can be no rewardable action done by us at all, until we have believed in Christ, and are justified without works; and even then the different degrees of reward that follow, are all granted for the sake of Christ. It is not the result of any worthiness in us—but of Christ's merits. It is therefore a reward wholly of grace, and not of debt, from first to last. "I am persuaded this view of the subject, while it excludes all boasting, affords the greatest possible encouragement to be constant, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." (Fuller)

#### Objection 3

If there are different degrees of glory, will not this be a source of envy and jealousy?

I answer,

It would, if we carried our present imperfections to heaven; but in a world of perfect love to God, and perfect love to our fellows, these passions cannot exist. Heaven will be so full of love, as to leave no room for anything else to live there. Nor can I conceive of a higher, nor indeed, in such a state, of a lower exercise of this God-like feeling, than to rejoice in the Divine award, which elevates to a degree of glory above us, those whom we shall then perceive and acknowledge to be more fit for it.

#### Objection 4

If all are perfect, it may be said, how can there be different degrees?

I answer,

All are perfect according to their capacity—but all have not the same capacity. Two diamonds may be of the same purity and brilliancy, yet they may be of different sizes and value.

"I have often," says a devout writer, "represented it to my own thoughts under this comparison. Here is a race appointed; here are a thousand different prizes purchased by some prince, to be bestowed on the racers, and the prince himself gives them food and wine according to what proportion he pleases, to strengthen and animate them for the race. Each has a particular stage appointed for him, some of shorter, some of longer distance. When every racer comes to his own goal, he receives a prize in exact proportion to his speed,

diligence, and the length of the race; and the grace and justice of the prince shine gloriously in such distribution. Not the foremost of the racers can pretend to merit the prize; for the prizes were all paid for by the prince himself; and it was he who appointed the race; and gave them strength and spirit to run—and yet there is a most equitable proportion observed in the reward, according to the labor of the race. Now this similitude represents the matter so agreeably to the apostle's way of speaking, when he compares the Christian's life to a race, 1 Cor. 9:24, Gal. 5:7, Phil. 3:14-16, 2 Tim. 4:7, Heb. 12:1, that I think it may be almost called a scriptural description of the present subject." This representation, though not perfectly parallel to the case before us, as none can be, serves well enough to illustrate the subject.

A question has sometimes been asked, "Whether it is proper to hold up this subject as a motive to Christian diligence?" Why should it be a question? How can it be doubted? Is it not so held up by our Lord and his apostles? We need not pretend nor attempt to be wiser than they. Had not Moses "respect to the recompense of the reward?" In the full conviction that I act scripturally, I propose it to you, my dear friends, as an inducement to zeal, diligence, and self-denial, in the service of the Lord. I do not abuse the doctrine, as some have done, in enumerating the peculiar virtues to which high rewards are assigned in the heavenly world, among which they reckon the monkish practices of celibacy and austerity. Nor do I enjoin a selfish, mercenary notion of merit; for I know salvation to be all of grace from first to last—nor would I check those sentiments of profound humility which lead you to feel, as well as say, that the lowest seat in heaven is infinitely more than you deserve. But I would remind you, because the Scripture does, that the greater proficiency we make in divine experimental knowledge, and in real holiness, according to the means and helps we enjoy; the greater fidelity and diligence we show in discharging the duties of our particular station as members of society, and of the church; the more laborious we are in the improvement of the talents, whether ten, five, or one, entrusted to our care; the more we abound in fruits of righteousness, and the more zealous we are in those good works for which we have opportunity and capacity; the more self-denying we are for Christ's and conscience' sake; the more steadfast we are in resisting temptations; the more we glorify God by the exercise of faith and patience in the sharpest trials; the more active, liberal, and ready we are to make sacrifices for the cause of God and the salvation of souls; the more we cultivate love to our brethren and charity to all; the more we excel in spirituality and heavenly-mindedness; and the more we clothe and adorn all our other graces with humility and meekness of mind—the greater will be our future reward, the higher we shall rise in glory, the more fitted shall we be to serve God in some exalted station in the heavenly world.

And I wish to impress the sentiment very deeply upon your minds, that this will not only be the result of gracious and equitable appointment—but that it is the tendency of superior piety itself, to prepare us for such distinctions. I believe that there is a far more close and intimate connection between a state of grace and a state of glory, than many imagine. We all need a fitness for, as well as title to, heaven—and although everyone is fit who is truly regenerated, and no others—yet the more we are sanctified, the more we are fit for some of the higher services in our Father's house; where, as well as in the church on earth, there will be use and employment for vessels of gold, as well as of silver. There are many professors whose attainments in piety are so slender; whose graces are so languid; whose religion is blended with so much worldly-mindedness; who are at so little pains to grow in grace, that if they are true Christians at heart, and should gain admission to glory—they seem to be qualified for only some low place in the kingdom of heaven.

How mighty should be the INFLUENCE upon our mind and conduct of such a subject as this! How should it check our sloth, and rouse and quicken us to all diligence and perseverance! What an impression should it give us of the importance of our present situation and our present conduct! We are fearfully made, and still more fearfully placed. Everything we do, is a seed of futurity, and must bear eternal fruit. All our actions, words, and thoughts—are ripening into heaven—or hell. Can we be insensible to the solemnity of our situation? Shall we be anxious only to grow rich for time—and neglect to grow rich for eternity? Shall we be intent only upon amassing wealth upon earth—and forget to "lay up treasure in heaven?" Shall we be eager to enlarge and improve the inheritance which is seen and temporal—and be careless about enlarging that which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which does not fade away?

Men are ambitious enough, and we perhaps are like them, to rise in the world, and to attain to secular pre-eminence—let us copy this propensity; but by faith transfer the solicitude to eternal objects, and strive to be great in the kingdom of heaven. If there be prizes of various degrees of value, why should you not contend for one of the nobler ones? Why should you not covet earnestly the best gifts? While you acknowledge, with the truest lowliness of mind, that you are unworthy to sit down on the threshold of heaven—still press forward to a seat far nearer to the Savior's throne and feet. Seek to glow and shine like the seraphim in glory, and at the same time emulate them in deep prostration of soul, under a sense of your utter unworthiness before God.

How loudly and impressively does this subject speak to you who are young professors, and who are just setting out in the Divine life. Blessed is your privilege, in being called so early into a state of grace, and thus being invited, by the sovereign mercy of God, to add to the weight and the jewels of that crown which, if you are faithful unto death, is forever to sparkle on your brow. Estimate duly your opportunity. Your future life, as regards any earthly object which you can contemplate—is but a shadow; yet as connected with the eternal world—is of unutterable importance. I will not ask, if you will spend your days in folly and sin—you have renounced these things; but I ask, will you spend your life for worldly wealth and comfort—to the neglect of growth in grace? How rich may you grow in grace here—and glory hereafter! What treasures may you lay up in heaven! Let no ordinary degree of holiness satisfy you—no small measures of piety content you. In signal devotedness and usefulness in the church militant, prepare for such service in the church triumphant, as shall display the immensity of Divine grace, and the riches of Divine power. Seek eminent holiness first, for its own sake, and the sake of God who requires it—and then you will find in the end, that eminence in grace conducts to eminence of glory!

I am decidedly of opinion that a conviction of the truth of this subject, and a habitual meditation upon it—would do much to elevate the tone of piety among Christians, and keep up, yes, greatly quicken the spirit of zeal and liberality. It is not only a depressing—but a dangerous notion to hold, that weak faith, being still true faith; and little grace, which is still real grace—that those who have but small measures of either will reach heaven as certainly, and rise as high in heaven, as those who make greater attainments. This may seem to savor of a disposition to exalt the mercy of God—but its tendency is to abuse it; and under the appearance of deep humility, to promote indolence, luke-warmness, and worldly-mindedness.

It is a ruinous and fatal experiment to try, with how little religion we can reach heaven. If it be the language of humility as it oftentimes is, with some that use it, to say, "They shall be content with the lowest seat in glory," it is, at other times, the utterance of indolence and indifference. The question, however, is not what we deserve—but what we are invited to possess. We deserve nothing but hell! But we may have not only heaven—but an abundant entrance into it. God is inviting us to seek "more grace" here, that he may lavish upon us more glory hereafter—and all he gives, will, in one sense, flow back to himself again. Those who receive most from him, will render most to him. Higher degrees of glory, while, as regards ourselves, they will enlarge our capacity for happiness, will, as regards him, prepare us in a more eminent manner to enjoy, serve, and honor him. For his sake then, as well as your own, grow in grace, that you may rise in glory!

**1860**

**President Brigham Young (1801—1877)**

**The Three Glories**

**Journal of Discourses**

**Remarks By President Brigham Young, Made In The Bowery, Great Salt Lake City, August 26, 1860.**

I will read a portion of the vision Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon had concerning various kingdoms that God has prepared for his subjects:-

And the glory of the celestial is one, even as the glory of the sun is one. And the glory of the terrestrial is one, even as the glory of the moon is one. And the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one; for as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one from another in glory in the telestial world; for these are they who are of Paul, and of Apollos, and of Cephas. These are they who say they are some of one, and some of another-some of Christ, and some of John, and some of Moses, and some of Elias, and some of Esaias, and some of Isaiah, and some of Enoch; but received not the Gospel, neither the testimony of Jesus, neither the Prophets, neither the everlasting covenant. Last of all, these are all they who will not be gathered with the Saints, to be caught up unto the Church of the Firstborn, and received into the cloud. These are they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie. These are they who suffer the wrath of God on the earth. These are they who suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. These are they who are cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of Almighty God, until the fulness of times when Christ shall have subdued all enemies under his feet, and shall have perfected his work, when he shall deliver up the kingdom, and present it unto the Father spotless, saying, I have overcome and have trodden the winepress alone, even the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. Then shall he be crowned with the crown of his glory, to sit on the throne of his power, to reign for ever and ever. But behold, and lo! we saw the glory and inhabitants of the telestial world, that they were as innumerable as the stars in the firmament of heaven, or as the sand upon the sea-shore; and heard the voice of the Lord, saying, These all shall bow the knee, and every tongue shall confess to Him who sits upon the throne for ever and ever; for they shall be judged according to their works; and every man shall receive, according to his own works, his own dominion, in the mansions which are prepared; and they shall be servants of the Most High: but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end. This is the end of the vision which we saw, which we were commanded to write while we were yet in the spirit. (Doc. and Cov., sec. xcii., par. 7)

I do not know that I have any particular desire to dwell upon this any more than any other subject of the Gospel, although this subject, in the abstract, occupies more of my affection, adoration, and heartfelt gratitude to our Father and God than any other that has ever been revealed to my knowledge, from the days of Adam to the present.

Looking at the human family-the millions of intelligent beings who have come upon this earth from the days of Adam until now, and those that must still come in the course of events-the question naturally arises, What are they created for? what is the object of their being? None of them have power to produce themselves. Jesus Christ is the heir of this vast family. He said that he had power to lay down his life and take it up again; but he had no more power to produce his life, in the beginning of his existence, than we have. Every human being is endowed, more or less, with eternal intelligence, with the germ of life everlasting, of glory immortal; and then, when I view the human family as they are, with the traditions of the fathers, what the Bible has taught, what the priest has taught, and what kings and rulers have introduced and fastened upon their people, through traditions and customs, and contemplate the variety now existing and that has existed upon the earth, the marks of these finites, and what is their end, I can truly say that, in my estimation, no other revelation so glorious was ever given. You may read the character of the Deity as portrayed in all that has ever been revealed, until you come to this vision, in relation to his justice, his judgment, his power, his life, his glory, his excellence, his goodness, his mercy, and the fulness of every gift, of every trait, of every principle inherent in the character of the Supreme Being, and it is not equal in magnitude, in my reflections, to that which God revealed to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon in the vision from which I have read.

We are far advanced in the things of the kingdom of God. To say nothing about any other principle or doctrine that has ever been revealed, the transcending glory, excellency, wisdom, goodness, virtue, and power that God has revealed in this vision far outweigh all the Christian tenets, doctrines, and systems they have drawn from the Bible. No cistern, to use a figure, hewn by man, can hold water; and every human

doctrine and principle, professing to point the way of salvation, fades away. The doctrine God has revealed here is more precious to me, and is worth more than all the doctrines of Christendom.

We may read that the Lord will turn the wicked into hell, and all the nations that forget God; but, so far as the Bible and priests are concerned, the world are left in the dark upon what this vision reveals. Fatality is sealed on the world by the priests as an everlasting inheritance and legacy, from which they never can be delivered. Their doom is to dwell in a lake of fire and brimstone. God has created this intelligence to preserve it. If the world, with its present feelings, believed this vision, they would say-"Our condition will be so far better than we had anticipated, that we will continue our course; for we love the world and the things of the world, and we will roll sin as a sweet morsel under our tongues, and delight in all the iniquity we have indulged in from youth, and continue to imbibe the erroneous principles taught by the fathers and others, and will pass on from day to day; for our condition is to be so far better than our priests have taught us." It would have been better for them had they never been born, were it not so.

Were the wicked, in their sins, under the necessity of walking into the presence of the Father and the Son, hand-in-hand with those who believe that all will be saved-that Jesus will leave none, their condition would be more excruciating and unendurable than to dwell in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. The fatalist's doctrine consigns to hell the infant not a span long, while the adulterer, whoremonger, thief, liar, false swearer, murderer, and every other abominable character, if they but repent on the gallows or their death-beds, are, by the same doctrine, forced into the presence of the Father and the Son, which, could they enter there, would be a hell to them.

The kingdoms that God has prepared are innumerable. Each and every intelligent being will be judged according to the deeds done in the body, according to his works, faith, desires, and honesty or dishonesty before God; every trait of his character will receive its just merit or demerit, and he will be judged according to the law of heaven as revealed; and God has prepared places suited to every class. The Saviour said to his disciples-"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepared a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." How many kingdoms there are has not been told to us: they are innumerable. The disciples of Jesus were to dwell with him. Where will the rest go? Into kingdoms prepared for them, where they will live and endure. Jesus will bring forth, by his own redemption, every son and daughter of Adam, except the sons of perdition, who will be cast into hell. Others will suffer the wrath of God-will suffer all the Lord can demand at their hands, or justice can require of them; and when they have suffered the wrath of God till the utmost farthing is paid, they will be brought out of prison. Is this dangerous doctrine to preach? Some consider it dangerous; but is it true that every person who does not sin away the day of grace, and become an angel to the Devil, will be brought forth to inherit a kingdom of glory.

The sectarian world, as we call them, is a professed church of God, without the Priesthood. Sectarrians have not the Priesthood; but all of them who live according to the best light and intelligence they can obtain through faithfulness to what they believe, as taught unto them, will receive a kingdom and glory that will far transcend all their expectations, imaginations, or visions in their most excited moments whether in their falling-down power, jumping power, or squawling power. All they have ever desired or anticipated they will receive, and far more; but they cannot dwell with the Father and Son, unless they go through those ordeals that are ordained for the Church of the Firstborn. The ordinances of the house of God are expressly for the Church of the Firstborn.

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned; and these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name," &c. This is the law of the celestial kingdom, and those who hearken to this law, and embrace its truths in their faith, and live them in their lives, will be brought to enjoy the presence of the Son, and will dwell with him and the Father. And all the residue, who do not sin against the Holy Ghost, will be punished according to their deeds, and will receive according to their works, whether it be little or much, good or bad.

Jesus will redeem the last and least of the sons of Adam, except the sons of perdition, who will be held in reserve for another time. They will become angels of the Devil.

What say you, ye Latter-day Saints? Is not this the most glorious thought that ever was revealed to mortal man? Let the Elders of this Church go forth and preach that every person who does not become as they are will have to suffer the wrath of God, and go down to hell to dwell in a lake that burns with brimstone and fire, "where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched," and I would not give the ashes of a rye-straw for all they will do. It is good for nothing: there is no life in it—there is no soul in it.

This intelligence must endure. We must preserve our identity before the Lord, who has sent his Son and angels, and is sending the Holy Ghost, and his ministers, and revelations, to comfort, cheer, guide, and direct the affairs of his kingdom on the earth. Shall we dwindle out in our faith, and in those blessings God bestows on us at this time? No. Let us live to increase them. Let us so live, that when we receive our bodies in the resurrection, we will be received in the presence of the Father and the Son. This kingdom is designed expressly to prepare the people to dwell with God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, and all the world beside will receive according to their works upon the earth. This is a joy that is unspeakable: it is a glory beyond the capacity of our minds at the present time to appreciate. It is a great joy to me.

Sometimes I feel as though I would like to dwell upon these principles, they are so delightful; but I do not feel like preaching or talking much this morning. The glory and intelligence that God has prepared for the faithful, and for every other being that is worthy to receive, expand, extend, and comprehend, no man knoweth. Should not this fill every heart with peace and joy—that there is no end to the progress of knowledge? Let us continue to prepare ourselves to dwell with Him in eternal burnings.

May the Lord bless the people! Amen.

**1860**

**Octavius Winslow (1808—1878) Calvinist Baptist Author**  
**Chapter “The Clouds of the Christian, the Chariot of God”**  
**Help Heavenward**

**(1860)**

(speaking of heaven; note reference to 1 Corinthians 15)

That there will be gradations of knowledge and degrees of glory, I think is probable. There are so in the Church of God on earth; I see nothing to exclude the same from the Church of God in heaven. But this will not in the slightest degree affect the happiness or glory of the saints. Is there less beauty in a tulip-bed, or in a conservatory of flowers, because there is so rich an assemblage of varied colors? Or, is there less splendor in the heavenly bodies because there is so great a variety of magnitude, effulgence, and orbit? And will there be less enjoyment, or less beauty, or less song amidst the countless numbers who throng the temple above, because 'One star differeth from another star in glory' (1 Cor. 15:41)? Oh, no, the glory and the happiness of each will be full and perfect! Every spirit will possess a happiness and reflect a glory equal to its capacity. As two luminous bodies in the celestial system may shine in perfection, though in widely different orbits and with different degrees of splendor, and as two streams, the rivulet and the river, may course their way through landscape, the one gliding in simple, pensive beauty, the other rolling in majestic waves, and yet each filling its channel, both equally charming the eye and declaring the glory of God; so the 'spirits of just men made perfect' (Heb. 12:23) shall each be a differing, yet full, vessel of happiness. The image of God will shine with full-orbed splendor in both, though with different intensity, and by each one shall Christ perfect to himself endless praise.

Oh, beloved, if we but reach that world of purity and of bliss, we shall be so satisfied with the orbit we roll in, the glory we emit, and the happiness we feel, as never to question the goodness or the righteousness of God in the sphere assigned us! Christ will then be all in all to us, and we shall be satisfied with all that Christ has done. I think that our bliss will be so complete, our joy so full, and our glory so resplendent, we shall scarcely be conscious that there is another saint fuller, happier, or more glorious than ourselves. Blessed world of glory, we long to be within thy walls! Open, ye everlasting doors, and admit us, that we may eat of the tree of life and recline upon the sunlight banks of the crystal river that makes glad the city of our God.

**1860**

**J.C. Ryle (1816—1900) (Evangelical Anglican Bishop of Liverpool)**

**Eternity!**

**Gospel Gems Website**

**The third thought that I bring to your attention is this: Our future state in the unseen world of eternity depends entirely on what we are in the present.**

The life that we live on the earth is short and soon gone. "We finish our years with a moan."—"What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes." (Psalm 90:9; James 4:14) The life that is before us when we leave this world is an endless eternity, a sea without a bottom, and an ocean without a shore. "With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day." (2 Peter 3:8) In that world there will be no more time. But short as our life is here, and endless as it will be in eternity, the life we now live will have a tremendous impact on eternity. Our lot after death depends, humanly speaking, on what we are while we are alive. It is written, God "will give to each person according to what he has done. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, He will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger." (Romans 2:6-8)

We must never forget, that every one of us, while we live, are in a state of probation. We are constantly sowing seeds that will spring up and bear fruit, every day and every hour in our lives. There are eternal consequences resulting from all our thoughts and words and actions, of which we pay too little attention to. "Men will have to give account on the Day of Judgment for every careless word they have spoken." (Matthew 12:36) Our thoughts are all numbered; our actions are weighed. No wonder that Paul says, "The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life." (Galatians 6:8) In a word, what we sow in life we will reap after death, and reap throughout all eternity.

There is no greater delusion than the common idea that it is possible to live wickedly, and yet rise again gloriously—to be without Christ in this world, and yet to be a saint in the next. When that great preacher George Whitefield revived the doctrine of conversion, in the last century, it is reported that one of his listeners came to him after a sermon and said, "It is all quite true, sir. I hope I will be converted and born again one day, but not till after I am dead." I fear there are many like him. I fear the false doctrine of the Roman Catholic purgatory has many secret friends even within the confines of the true Church today! However carelessly men may go on while they live, they secretly cling to the hope that they will be found among the saints when they die. They seem to embrace the idea that there is some cleansing, purifying effect produced by death, and that, whatever they may be in this life, they will be found "suitable for the inheritance of the saints" in the life to come. But it is all a delusion.

"The Scripture never represents the state of future misery, as a state of cleansing and purification, or anything analogous to a state of trial, where men may conform and qualify themselves for some better state of existence: but always as a state of retribution, punishment, and righteous vengeance, in which God's justice

(a perfection of which some men seem to render no account) vindicates the power of His majesty, His government, and His love, by punishing those who have despised them." (Horbery, volume II, p. 183)

"Life is the time to serve the Lord,  
The time to insure the great reward."

The Bible clearly teaches that what we are when we die, whether converted or unconverted, whether believers or unbelievers, whether godly or ungodly, so we will be when we rise again at the sound of the last trumpet. There is no repentance in the grave: there is no conversion after the last breath is drawn. Now is the time to believe in Christ, and to lay hold of eternal life. Now is the time to turn from darkness to light, and to make our calling and election sure. The night comes when no man can work. As the tree falls, there it will lie. If we leave this world refusing to repent and believe, we will rise in the same condition on resurrection morning, and find it would have been "better for us if we had never been born."

"This life is the time of our preparation for our future state. Our souls will continue forever what we make them in this world. Such a taste and disposition of mind as a man carries with him out of this life, he will retain in the next. It is absolutely true that heaven perfects those holy and virtuous dispositions, which are begun here; but the other world alters no man as to his main state. He that is filthy will be filthy still; and he that is unrighteous will be unrighteous still." (Tillotson's Sermon on Philippians 3:20. (See Horbery, volume II, p. 133))

I strongly advise readers of this paper to remember this, and to make a good use of their time. Regard it as the stuff of which life is made, and never waste it or throw it away. Your hours and days and weeks and months and years all have something to say to your eternal condition beyond the grave. What you sow in this life on earth you are sure to reap in a life to come. As that holy preacher Richard Baxter says, it is "now or never." Whatever we do in religion must be done now.

Remember this in your use of all the means of grace, from the least to the greatest. Never be careless about them. They are given to be your helps toward an eternal world, and not one of them ought to be thoughtlessly treated or lightly and irreverently handled. Your daily prayers and Bible-reading, your weekly behavior on the Lord's day, your manner of going through public worship—everyone of these things are important. Use them all as one who remembers eternity.

Keep it foremost in your mind, whenever you are tempted to do evil. When sinners entice you, and say, "It is only a little sin." When Satan whispers in your heart, "Never mind: what is the great harm in it? Everybody does it,"—then look beyond time to a world unseen, and place in the face of the temptation the thought of eternity. There is a great saying by the martyred Reformer, Bishop Hooper, when someone urged him to recant before he was burned, saying, "Life is sweet and death is bitter." "True," said the good Bishop, "quite true! But eternal life is more sweet, and eternal death is more bitter."

**1860**

**J.C. Ryle (1816 – 1900) (Evangelical Anglican Bishop of Liverpool)**

**Chrysostom, Augustine, Several Other Ancient Writers Think "Many Mansions" Mean Degrees Of Glory; Argument In Favour Of Idea Does Not Appear To Me Satisfactory; That There Are Degrees Of Glory In Heaven Undoubtedly True, But I Do Not Think It Is Truth Of This Text**

**Expository Thoughts On John 23, Expository Thoughts on the Gospel**

**(1860)**



2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Heaven is a place of "mansions,"--of lasting, permanent, and eternal dwellings. Here in the body we are in lodgings, tents, and tabernacles, and must submit to many changes. In heaven we shall be settled at last, and go out no more. "Here we have no continuing city." (Heb. xiii. 14.) Our house not made with hands shall never be taken down.

Heaven is a place of "many mansions." There will be room for all believers and room for all sorts, for little saints as well as great ones, for the weakest believer as well as for the strongest. The feeblest child of God need not fear there will be no place for him. None will be shut out but impenitent sinners and obstinate unbelievers.

#### NOTES

2.--[In my Father's house.] This phrase can bear only one meaning. It is my Father's house in heaven: an expression accommodated to our weakness. God needs no literal house, with walls and roof, as we do. But where He dwells is called His house. (See Deut. xxvi. 15; Psalm xxxiii. 14; 2 Chron. xxxviii. 27; 2 Cor. v. 1.) There is something very touching and comforting in the thought that the heaven we go to is "our Father's house." It is home.

[There are many mansions.] The word rendered "mansions" means literally "abiding-places." It is only used here, and in the twenty-third verse of this chapter, "abode." We need not doubt that there is an intentional contrast between the unchanging, unvarying house in heaven, and the changing, uncertain, dwellings of this world, Here we are ever moving: there we shall no more go out. (See also Heb. xiii. 14.)

Chrysostom, Augustine, and several other ancient writers think the "many mansions" mean the degrees of glory. But the argument in favour of the idea does not appear to me satisfactory. Bishop Bull, Wordsworth, and some few modern writers take the same view. That there are degrees of glory in heaven is undoubtedly true, but I do not think it is the truth of this text.

**1860**

**Editor Norman MacLeod, D.D. (1812 – 1272), One of Her Majesty's Chaplains for Scotland  
Meditations on Heaven No. VIII. "In my Father's house there are many mansions."— John  
xiv. 2.**

#### **Good Words**

#### **Meditations on Heaven**

**No. VIII. "In my Father's house there are many mansions."— John xiv. 2.**

All our earthly journey past.

Every tear and pain gone by,  
Here together met at last,

In the mansions of the sky,  
Each tho welcome "Come" awaits,

Conquerors over death and sin;  
Lift your heads, ye golden gates,

Let the ransom'd travellers in!

"mansions"—"many mansions"—"a house" —"my Father's house." How many reflections are crowded into this one brief utterance of our gracious Redeemer! With what a homelike aspect do they invest our every thought of Heaven! They were among His last words; He himself was on His way to that peaceful "homestead" of which He speaks. Let us gather around Him, with the house of His Father in sight, and extract some of the comfort with which His declaration is replete.

The verse speaks of Multiplicity—"many mansions."

Had He been addressing His own disciples alone, the assurance would have been sufficient, "There will be a home for each of you." But He is discoursing for all time. His omniscient eye discerned at that moment the unborn myriads whom this chapter and this verse were to console and cheer. He would, therefore, certify that there is abundant provision made for all—patriarchs, prophets, saints, martyrs;—from the time that righteous Abel bent alone, a solitary redeemed saint, before the throne, the first sheaf of a mighty harvest, until the garners be filled, and the song of the ransomed become "as the sound of much people, the noise of many waters, and the roar of mighty thunders." He is to bring "many sons unto glory." There is grace for all—crowns for all—mansions for all! Heaven has been filling for six thousand years, and still there is room. How different its "recompense of reward" from worldly crowns and worldly honours! In the earthly race "many run, but one (only) receiveth the prize." In heaven the competition is open to "whosoever will." There is no jarring of interests in this loftier arena. The glorification of one is not attained there at the expense of another's downfall or exclusion. The mansions are many. The candidates are a mighty multitude which no man can number. Believer! "so run that you may obtain."

The verse speaks of Permanency — they are "mansions."

The word in the original is not a tent or temporary tabernacle, but a durable residence, never to be altered or demolished. The most graphic of Eastern travellers thus gives a description of tent-life, which, by contrast, affords the best illustration of the mansion-life of heaven: "When the cold, sullen morning dawned, and my people began to load the camels, I always felt loth to give back to the waste this little spot of ground, that had glowed for a while with the cheerfulness of a human dwelling. My tent was spared to the last, but when all else was ready for the start, then came its fall. The pegs were drawn, the canvas shivered, and in less than a minute there was nothing that remained of my genial home, but only a pole and a bundle."

"The tents of the East," says another, "seldom remain long in the same place. The traveller erects his temporary abode for the night, takes it down in the morning, and journeys onward. The shepherds of the country are also always moving from one place to another. The brook fails on which they relied for water, or the grass required for the support of their flocks is consumed, and they wander on to a new station."

How strikingly illustrative is this of the Bible figure, "the house of our earthly tabernacle" being "dissolved" (or taken down). The framework of mortality, like the Arab tent, is upreared for a time, but, after subserving its temporary purpose, it is, pin by pin, demolished, and the place that once knew it knows it no more.

Not so the ever-during mansions of our Father's house. They are "incorruptible" and "eternal in the heavens." No fading of brooks there! No joys withered and smitten there, like the grass of the wilderness." The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water." Ah! it is the saddest, the most humiliating feature of the joys of earth, that, however pure, noble, elevating they may be at the moment, there is no calculating on their permanency. The mind will, in spite of itself, be haunted with the dark possibility of the ruthless invader of all happiness coming and dashing the full cup in a thousand

fragments on the ground. In heaven no shadow of vicissitude or change can ever enter to dim an ever-brightening future. Once within that heavenly fold, we are in the fold for ever. On the lintels of the eternal mansion are inscribed the words, "Ye shall go no more out." Our happiness and joy will be as immutable and stable as everlasting love and power and faithfulness can make them.

The verse speaks of Diversity.

There are "many mansions"—not only many in number, but manifold in their degrees of glory. All will be happy. A halo of unutterable bliss and glory will encircle each separate dwelling, beyond what eye hath seen, or ear heard, or heart conceived. But as one star differeth from another star in glory, so, also, we have reason to believe, there will be gradations in the scale of future blessedness.

The allusion in our verse is evidently to the different courts of the Jewish temple. These were diverse in name and character. The outer and inner court, the court of the Gentiles, the courts of the priests, the Holy of Holies. All these were consecrated as portions of the same "House of the Lord." The lowliest Israelite was within sight of the altar, and within hearing of the high priest's benediction. But there were some courts more hallowed and glorious than others—their sacredness increasing the nearer the worshipper approached the place where dwelt the mystic Shekinah. It will be the same with the many mansions of the heavenly temple. All the vast multitude in the new Jerusalem will be within range of the benediction of the great High Priest, and as such they must be blessed. But there will be inner courts and enclosures of greater honour and glory. The more intense and exalted his love and devotedness on earth, the nearer will the believer be permitted to approach the Holiest of all, the nearer admission will he have to the Father's presence, and receive the more distinguishing badges of the Father's love. There will be one mansion for him whose pound hath gained five pounds, and another mansion for him whose pound hath gained ten pounds. Each, too, will be apportioned according to some earthly antecedents. There will be the special mansion of the martyr, who was borne from his earthly tent in his chariot of fire. There will be the special mansion of the missionary, who surrendered home, ease, worldly honour, in his noble embassy, and stood alone and unbefriended on Pagan shores, witnessing for a despised Saviour. There will be the mansion for the minister of Christ, who boldly proclaimed the message of life and death. There will be the mansion for the Sabbath-school teacher, who toiled to bring youthful trophies to the foot of the cross. There will be the mansion for the pining sufferer, who glorified God by patience and uncomplaining resignation. For the child, that fell on earth a withered blossom, whose tent was taken down while it was yet day, but reconstructed into a building of God eternal in the heavens. There will be a mansion for the old veteran of the cross, the champion in a hundred battles of the faith, and for the youthful soldier, who was only buckling on his armour when summoned from the earthly struggle.

The least in the kingdom, I repeat, will have a blessedness to the full—a glory and a joy which leaves no void or vacuum. As in the terrestrial, so in the celestial firmament. Though every planet circling round the Sun of Deity will shine with a borrowed splendour, yet the larger the planet, and the nearer its orbit is to its grand centre, the greater will be its radiance and glory. Though every flower will in itself be perfect, reflecting the lovely hues and tints of heaven, yet they will be of diverse form and colour. Some will diffuse a sweeter fragrance, or cluster in larger and richer groups than others. But all, large and small, the saint a hundred years old and the child translated in infancy, will (notwithstanding this diversity) have the same quality of bliss. The planet at the outskirts of the heavenly sphere and that nearest the centre will be bathed in one and the same rays of ineffable glory.

But while the verse speaks of Diversity, it speaks also of Unity.

There will be diversity in unity, and unity in diversity. The Church triumphant is one house. The Church on earth, alas! is a house divided against itself—church divided against church—Christian against Christian. Nominally the children of one Father, but dwelling in separate tabernacles. One saying, "I am of Paul," and another, "I of Apollos." Nominally pilgrims on one road, traversing the same wilderness, but each keeping

his own peculiar and separate pathway, journeying on often with no look of kindly recognition exchanged, as if they were aliens and foreigners, instead of brethren and sisters in a common Lord.

But in yonder bright and happy home, discord, division, separation will be known no more. Once within that sacred portal, the exclamation will pass from tongue to tongue, "What! so long together on the pilgrimage, and maintaining a cold and chilling reserve and alienation! Alas! is it only now we are to begin to know what we should have known ages ago, ' how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!'"

Ye who are mourning over these sad estrangements in the Church of God, rejoice at this glorious prospect. All shall be one then! One house—one home—one Father—one Elder-brother—one motive for praise—one theme for eternal song—a united Church under its one glorious and glorified Head!

Then add to this—the verse speaks of Safety.

Where can a child be so safe as in his Father's house? Trials, buffetings, discouragements, unkindness he may experience elsewhere, here at least he is safe and happy.

What music is there even on earth in that word "home?" The garner of happiness—the haunt of tender affections—the cherisher of bright hope —the hallowed spot where the spent spirit's weary wing folds itself to rest—the glad retreat in the dark and cloudy day. What must be the home of heaven? With what surpassing tenderness does that one word invest these many mansions, "My Father's house!" and how does it link us to the Saviour, when He thus addresses each heavenward and homeward bound pilgrim—" My Father and your Father, my God and your God!"

To enter heaven, the dwelling-place of the great Jehovah—to be ushered into the presence-chamber of the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity! There might be much to awe and overwhelm the spirit in such a contemplation. But this beautiful home-word divests it of all its awfulness, and invests it with all that is winning and captivating. Each believer in the prospect of these bright mansions, may, without irreverence, adopt the words of his great Redeemer, and say, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto ' my Father."

Would that we oftener realised heaven as such, and, amid earth's troubles and vicissitudes and sorrows, were led to regard every new trial, every new epoch of existence, every returning week and month and anniversary, as fresh chimes of celestial music floating from the towers of glory, and sounding in our ears, "Nearer home, nearer home!" Our Lord has taught us, while we "desire" in our daily prayer "a better country," to make it a final aspiration, "Our Father, which art in heaven, thy kingdom come." Heaven, in the noblest sense, is "the Church in the House."

The verse still further speaks of Honour.

It speaks of admission into God's presence, and to stand in that presence in the relation of children to a father. Even to be laid, like Lazarus, at the portals of heaven, and fed with the crumbs falling from the table, would have been more than what, as sinners, we deserve. What will it be to go "within the house," honoured with a place at the King's own banquet!

There are two Greek words used in the New Testament to describe the believer's relation to God Both are significant. The former literally means a slave, and such His redeemed child really is. He is the willing slave of righteousness, "bought with a price" by a gracious Master. He feels it to be alike his highest honour and obligation to be called "the servant of God." The other word, though translated by the same term (servant), has a higher meaning. It has rather reference to the believer's heavenly calling. It speaks of His lofty

designation and employment in His Father's house, when He becomes a "ministering one." His earthly service is over, "Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends."

"In my Father's House I" "Yes," said a dying believer, as he quoted these words, "Our Lord tells me, You have been an out-door servant long enough, I will now make you an in-door servant, and take you out of the wind and rain to give you a glorified body and better wages and a better mansion." t

What a wondrous transition from the clay tenement to the everlasting mansions! Well may the poet exclaim, apostrophising the emancipated spirit:—

O change! O wondrous change!  
Burst are the prison bars—  
This moment there—so low,  
In mortal prayer—and now,  
Beyond the stars!

"O change! stupendous change!  
There lies the senseless clod—  
The soul from bondage breaks,  
The new immortal awakes,  
Awakes with God!

Finally, the verse tells us that all these wondrous home-mansions Jesus has gone to make ready for us.

"I go to prepare a place for you." Nay, more, He confers them as a right. He speaks as the "Heir of all things." Observe, it is not "your Father's house," but "my Father's house." "As the Son of the everlasting God," He seems to say, "I am not ashamed to call you brethren, and for my sake He will not be ashamed to own and welcome you as sons and daughters. ' My name, as ' the Beloved of the Father,' and my work, as the surety Redeemer, will form a passport and title to every room in these paternal halls!"

The value of a gift is enhanced by the character and worth of the donor. The gift of an earthly sovereign would be highly prized. Here is a gift bestowed by the "Prince of the kings of the earth," purchased by blood and toil and agony. These blood-bought mansions form the crown and consummation of all His other gifts. " This is The gift that God has given us, eternal life, and that life is in His Son." "Everything else that He 'did and taught and suffered,' had a reference to the opening of the kingdom of heaven to all believers. His coming from heaven was to shew heaven to us. His going again there was to prepare a place for us. His sitting at the right hand of God is to promote our interest in heaven. His coming in judgment is to take us back with Him to it."

If He be gone to prepare this place for us, be it ours to endeavour to be prepared for the place, seeking every returning morning to have our tent pitched "a day's march nearer home," nearer the house of our Father. "Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." "Ho will not stay," says Goodwin, "a minute longer than needs must. He tarries only till He hath, throughout all ages, by His intercession, prepared every room for each saint, that He may entertain them altogether, and have them all about Him."

And shall we pause to ask where is that glorious home? Where these sparkling waters, these palms ever green, these robes ever bright? Does the spirit at the hour of death wing its arrowy flight to some distant province of creation? Or may heaven be some mysterious impalpable spirit-world around us? Though we hear no gush of the crystal waters, and gaze on no city of the crystal sea, may it not be that angel-wings are hovering over us, and that it is only these dull senses of ours that hide from us the celestial vision'.

But what though we can descry no dim outline of the everlasting hills? What though we look in vain for the lights gleaming in the distant windows of these "many mansions?" It is enough to know that One has gone to prepare them for us. And when completed, His voice will be heard, saying, "Come, for all things are ready!" "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of Their Father."

**1863**

**Ernst Noeldechen, German Biblical Scholar**

**Die Kirchliche Lehre Von Den Graden Der Seligkeit Nach Ihrem Biblischen Grunde Und Ihrer Geschichtlichen Entwicklung (The Church's Doctrine Of The Degrees Of Happiness After Their Biblical Basis And Its Historical Development)**

**Die Grade Der Seligkeit: Ein Beitrag Zur Eschatologie (The Degree Of Happiness: A Contribution To Eschatology)**

Die kirchliche Lehre von den Graden der Seligkeit nach ihrem biblischen Grunde und ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung.

Die Zeit, in der wir leben, scheint im Allgemeinen Untersuchungen der Art, wie sie auf den folgenden Blättern beabsichtigt werden, nicht sonderlich günstig zu sein. Der überlieferte Pantheismus, wieviel er auch für einen überwundenen Standpunkt ausgegeben werden mag, ist noch immer in unsrem Völke, nicht zum mindesten unter den Gebildeten und Gelehrten in mächtiger Geltung; die materialistische Denkart, in ihrer strengeren Form neueren Datums, hat viele Gemüther mit ihrem eisigen Hauche berührt und manche Männer von weit reichendem Einfluß in ihren Dienst genommen. Wenn die letztere mit ihrer Behauptung eines mehr oder minder ausschließlichen Rechtes der Empirie in allen wissenschaftlichen Gebieten den schwindlich hohen Flug des pantheistischen Idealismus bespöttelt und aller Speculation die Wege zu verlegen bemüht ist, gegen eine Theologie, die sich herausnimmt, auf Grund der Offenbarung in ein übergeschichtliches und der unmittelbaren Wahrnehmung entrücktes Gebiet einzudringen, stehen Materialismus und Idealismus zusammen. Der erster e freilich mit mehr Glück, weil folgerichtiger. Wer sich alles Denkens über dasjenige, was über die unmittelbare Erfahrung hinausliegt, entschlagen will, den mag man vorläufig machen lassen. Iener Idealismus aber hat höhere Ziele: die Anfänge und das Ende der Dinge beschäftigen ihn in seiner Weise. Die Anfänge menschlicher Eultur, die ursprünglichen Gemeinschaftsformen, d. i. die Entstehung der Sprache, des Volksund Staatsverbandes auf Erden, alles dies nicht minder, als ein vorausgesetztes Ziel aller menschlichen Entwicklung geben ihm zu denken; was vor und hinter aller Geschichte liegt möchte er ergründen, in dem richtigen Gefühl, daß ohne Anfang und Ende auch die Mitte nicht von dem Dunkel befreit wird. Das Ende, wie es vorahnend geschaut wird, der Anfang, wie er oft nur dem Ende zu Liebe gedacht wird, hat denn auch zu kühnen Constructionen der Mitte Anlaß gegeben: von dem Dunkel zum Licht, von der Schwachheit zur Stärke, von dem Chaos zur Ordnung, vom Sinnlichen zum Geistigen, vom Streit zum Frieden, kurz von der Unvollkommenheit zum Vollkommenen soll sich die Geschichte der Menschheit bewegen. Daß es Thäler giebt und Höhen an dem Horizonte, an dem man diese Geschichte gleichsam fortschreiten sieht, wird nicht gerade geläugnet, aber oft wenig beachtet: was Thal und was Höhe, natürlich oft widersprechend bestimmt. Auch von der Wechselwirkung des Persönlichen und Allgemeinen in dem geschichtlichen Processe weiß man genug zu reden: wie der geschichtlich Hervorragende weder ohne seine Zeit das, was er ist, geworden, noch seine Zeit ohne ihn so und so habe werden können. Aber was das individuelle Leben betrifft, so ist dessen seifenblasenartiger Charakter nichts desto weniger Grunddogma dieses idealistischen Denkens. Alles Persönliche muß zum Schatten herabsinken, damit das Ganze seine Glanzesfülle behaupte. Wie von einem absoluten Ziele des Ganzen, etwa einer freien Liebesgemeinschaft auf Erden, so und in diesem Sinne kann von einem Ziele des Einzelnen nicht die Rede sein. Der Einzelne, sei er auf die Höhe oder in die Thäler der Bewegung gestellt, ist seinem Schicksal verfallen.

Alledem gegenüber ist es als eine erfreuliche Erscheinung auch jetzt noch zu begrüßen, wenn z. B. ein Philosoph, wie Ritter, zu den ersten der Geschichtsschreiber der Philosophie zu rechnen, selber Christ mit

Ueberzeugung, des Christenthums Wesen darin findet, die Religion eines ewigen Lebens zu sein. ^) Mag man immerhin eine erschöpfende oder auch nur hinreichende Bestimmung des eigenthümlich Christlichen darin nicht finden, man braucht der materialistischen Gegner, eines Moleschott, eines Vogt, noch nicht vergleichend zu gedenken., um auch in einer solchen Auffassung des Christlichen ein schönes Zeugniß der christlichen Gesinnung nicht nur, sondern auch der christlichen Erkenntniß zu finden.

Ist nämlich die Idee des ewigen Lebens auch nicht die eigenthümlich christliche Grundidee, darüber kann kein Zweifel sein, sie ist ein durchaus integrierender Bestandtheil christlicher Lehre. Wenn selbst Theologen, wie Echleiermacher, dem w i r wenigstens das Prädicat eines „gläubigen“ nicht absprechen, sich zeitweise in pantheistischer Verirrung dieser Erkenntniß entschlagen haben, so kann dies an dem Unheil nichts ändern.

Ist sie aber ein solcher integrierender Bestandtheil, so ist ihre theologische Behandlung ein ewig junges Bedürfniß. Was auch von den feindlichen Strömungen dieser Zeit bemerkt werden mußte, das Interesse an eschatologischen Fragen überhaupt ist in der Kirche in weiten Kreisen lebendig. Es weisen darauf in unsern Tagen theils die chiliastischen Bewegungen im Lager der separirten Lutheraner, es weisen darauf die nicht spärlich erscheinenden Monographien., 2) es weisen darauf Aeußerungen, wie die auf dem letzten deutschen Kirchentage gehörte, die Eschatologie — und damit auch die Lehre von dem ewigen Leben — bedürfe gerade jetzt der Ausbildung.')

Solcher Aufforderung nun wollen die nachfolgenden Blätter entsprechen. Nicht, daß darin die ganze Lehre von den letzten Dingen, oder auch nur die besondere Lehre von dem ewigen Leben umspannt würde, es ist ein kleiner Kreis, in dem sich die Untersuchung bewegen soll. Ist die Eschatologie das Dach des christlichen Lehrgebäudes, nur ein Stein, ein Ziegel gleichsam wird hier geboten werden. Es soll gehandelt werden von den Graden der Seligkeit der einzelnen vollendeten Seelen. Und zwar wird das Wort Seligkeit gemäß biblischem und kirchlichem Sprachgebrauch hier zunächst so verstanden, daß es die objectiven Güter der zukünftigen Welt nicht minder, als den dadurch bedingten subjectiven Rückschlag in das Einzelbewußtsein, also die Seligkeit im engeren Sinne ausdrückt, so daß unter den Seligkeitsgraden also auch die im engeren Sinne sogenannten Herrlichkeitsgrade zunächst mitverstanden werden.

Freilich könnte man, die Aufgabe so gestellt, ihr auch setzt noch größeren Umfang beilegen, als sie in unserm Sinn hat. Außer Zweifel ist nämlich, daß die Schrift und mit ihr im Allgemeinen auch die Kirche eine Succession von Epochen sich steigernder Seligkeit lehrt, welche der göttlichen Reichsöconomie gemäß von der Gesammtheit der Vollendeten zu durchleben sind. ^) Die Kirche hat gar Manches von einem sogenannten Mittelzustande gelehrt. Auch in dieser Hinsicht könnte man also von Graden reden; von Graden in diesem Sinn wird aber hier nicht die Rede sein. Wir reden vielmehr im Gegensatz zu jenen die Gesammtheit angehenden Epochen vor dem Endgericht von simultanen Seligkeitsgraden der Einzelnen nach demselben.

Freilich, haben wir auf diese Weise unser Gebiet gegen angrenzende abgesteckt, so hören wir wohl auch der kirchlichen Stimmen gar manche, die da warnen, sich mit Lehren zu thun zu machen, die man höchstens als Schnörkel und Zierrath will gelten lasten. Die Welt mit ihren Mächten der Zerstörung habe ja die Fundamente erschüttert, auch wohl den Eckstein verworfen. Wo diese Mahnung ernstlich gemeint ist, da kann sie wohl nur dazu auffordern wollen, daß über die vermeintlichen Schnörkel die Wahrung des Fundaments nicht vergessen werde, und einer so gemeinten Mahnung müssen wir volles Recht lassen. Wo sie aber weniger ernstlich gemeint ist, da ist die Annahme der Vergeblichkeit alles dogmatischen Bauens heimlicher Hintergedanke, und da müßten wir doch die Gegenmahnung bereit halten, dem christlichen Nachdenken in jeder Richtung sein Recht zu lassen. In der That bezeugt zudem laut genug die Geschichte, daß, wo man alle Arbeit an dem Kleinen der Lehre behaglich oder verächtlich bei Seite schob, man es mit der Arbeit am Großen, zu immer tieferer Erfassung grundlegender Wahrheiten, auch nicht allzu eilig und ernstlich nahm.

Was die Methode anlangt, die wir einhalten werden, so mag man sie die historisch kritische nennen. Ausgehend von dem biblischen Grunde, als der normativen Auctorität auch für diese Lehre, wollen wir in

geordneter Uebersicht dann die Stimmen der Kirche vernehmen, und wie nach unfreer Ansicht die Entscheidung zu treffen sei, darlegen. Wir machen uns dabei die Wahrheit der Straußischen Bemerkung zu Nutze, daß die Fülle historischer Zeugnisse einem Waldstrom ähnele, den ein Mann nicht aufhält, wie die Meinung jedes einzelnen dem Wasser, das durch das Nrunnenrohr fließend, von einem Knaben gehemmt wird.2) Daß wir uns dabei nicht in eine bloße Geschichte menschlicher Meinungen zu verlieren haben, wird uns gegenwärtig bleiben.

Gehen wir nun zunächst an die Ausmittlung des Schriftgrundes unserer Lehre, so werden wir, da das Gericht die Entscheidung über alles zukünftige Ergehen der Einzelnen bringen wird, zunächst nach den Normen und Gesichtspunkten der Zurechnung zu fragen haben, welche nach den ausdrücklichen Worten der Schrift bei dem Gerichte angewendet werden sollen.

Der Antworten der Schrift auf die Frage: wonach wird ein Jeglicher beurtheilt werden, scheint in der That eine gewisse Fülle zu sein, wenn auf der einen Seite eine sehr ansehnliche Reihe von Bibelworten die Werke, ^) auf der andern der untrügliche Mund des Herrn auch die Worte,2) und endlich der Mund des Heidenapostels den „inwendigen Rath der Herzen“) als dasjenige bezeichnet, was für das endschaftliche Loos der für ein ewiges Dasein erschaffnen Seelen den Ausschlag geben werde. ') Was sich für uns daraus ergibt, ist: wenn eine Verschiedenheit der zu richtenden menschlichen Individuen in einer dieser drei Beziehungen, und zwar auf der einen Seite eine solche, die bis zu dem letzten Gericht hin nicht wird getilgt worden sein, auf der andern eine solche, die durch den einfachsten sittlichen Unterschied von gerecht und ungerecht, gut oder böse, noch nicht erschöpft ist, nachzuweisen wäre, so wäre auf biblischem Standpunkte damit die Wahrheit jener Lehre von den Graden der Seligkeit erwiesen.

Aber selbst, was auf Grund der angeführten Schriftworte als richtige Folgerung erscheinen mußte, kann doch, andre Erklärungen der Schrift entgegengehalten, nur eine eingeschränkte Geltung behalten. Wollte man auf Grund des Obigen behaupten, eine objectiv gleiche Summe von gerechten Werken, Worten, Gedanken, von mehreren Individuen aufgewiesen, werde ihnen den gleichen Grad von seligem Leben sichern, so würde die starre Objectivität dieser Auffassung an Luc. 12, 48 eine unüberschreitbare Grenze finden. Nicht an Alle werden die gleichen Forderungen gestellt werden: vor dem Schöpfer und Richter, der schaffend Individuen, nicht verkörperte Begriffe gesetzt hat, wird, wenn er richtet, die geschaffene Subjectivität auch in ihren feinsten Eigenthümlichkeiten angesehen werden. Ienen obengenannten beiden schriftmäßigen Bedingungen wird sich also als dritte anreihen, daß verschiedene Grade der Seligkeit insofern zugelassen werden müssen, als nach sonstigen Schriftzeugnissen etwa die Tragweite von Luc. 12, 48 doch nicht so groß ist, daß die erwähnten bis zum Gericht fortdauernden und durch jene einfachste Unterscheidung von Gerech und Ungerech nicht erschöpften diesseitigen Verschiedenheiten durch das Gewicht des Luc. 12 ausgesprochenen Canons bei der Vertheilung der Loose unwirksam gemacht werden.

Daß aber allerdings die Tragweite jener, Stelle groß sei, mag hier zunächst wiederum mit einigen Schriftworten erhärtet werden. Wie nämlich die Neichsöconomie verschiedene große Stadien hat, das der heidnischen, der jüdischen, der christlichen Lebensentwicklung — große Entwicklungen, die mit übergreifender Kraft und Allgemeinheit die Einzelentwicklung des Individuums bedingen, — so werden auch die Einzelnen in diese Entwicklungen Gestellten im Gericht darauf angesehen werden, ob sie, Heiden, ihnen selber ein Gesetz gewesen ») ob sie, mit dem Gesetz vom Sinai betraut'), oder ob sie durch Golgatha's Opferblut zu einer überschwänglichen Seligkeit berufen waren').

Was wir aus der Erwägung des letzt erwähnten von Luc. aufbewahrten Wortes Iesu einer ic. und der zahlreichen Stellen alten und neuen Testaments über die Rücksicht auf die verschiedenen mit Herzen, Mund und Händen geübten Lcbnserweisungen andererseits mit Recht folgern können, ist, daß das Eintreffen der drei genannten Bedingungen und damit die Enstanz der Grade einmal vorausgesetzt, bestimmte Kreise der Seligen nicht ausschließlich solche Seelen in sich begreifen werden, die quantitativ beim Gericht eine gleiche Summe von dergleichen Lebenserweisungen aufgewiesen haben; vielmehr daß sehr wohl Individuen von sehr verschiedener Begabung, Individuen, unter sehr verschiedenen — auch an innerer Bedeutung



verschiedenen — Anregungen und Einflüssen durch das irdische Leben gegangen,, Individuen endlich, auch in Anbetracht des Umfangs der von ihnen ausgegangenen Lebensanregungen durch eine große Kluft geschieden, in demselben Chorus der Vollendeten gedacht werden können und müssen. Nicht auf das von Anfang an Gegebene, auch nicht auf das im Leben Geleistete, sondern auf das Verhältniß der Gabe zur Leistung wird es ankommen.

Bis jetzt bewegt sich die Theorie noch auf Grund unerwiesener, wenn auch probabler Voraussetzungen. Einen weiteren Schritt in der Prüfung des Schriftgrundes dieser Lehre thun wir, wenn wir auf zwei wichtige und bekannte Parabeln Iesu unser Augenmerk richten. (Matth. 25, 14—30; Luc. 19, 12—27.) Nicht in adäquaten Ausdrücken — welches menschliche Verständniß wäre scharf und welcher Flug der Gedanken hoch genug, um eine solche Schilderung zu fassen? — aber auch nicht in unbestimmter, das Besondere vereinerleiernder Allgemeinheit, — in scharf individualisirendem lebensvollem Bilde wird uns in beiden Parabeln gleichsam ein Bruchstück oder Durchschnitt des Weltgerichts vorgeführt. Die Gleichnisse bieten bekanntlich nennenswerthe Verschiedenheiten. Bei Lucas werden die Gaben gleichmäßig ausgetheilt: Jeder einzelne Knecht erhält ein Pfund. Was dagegen mit diesem Pfunde erworben wird, ist verschieden, und dieser Verschiedenheit gemäß wird diesen Knechten der verschiedene Lohn gegeben. Wesentlich abweichend sind mehrere Züge des Gleichnisses bei Matthäus. Fünf, zwei und ein Centner, verschiedene Gaben werden den verschiedenen Knechten von vom herein anvertraut, „einem jeglichen nach seinem Vermögen.“ Der Verschiedenheit der anvertrauten Gaben gemäß, der ersteren genau entsprechend, erwerben die fleißigen Knechte fünf und zwei Centner zu dem ursprünglich Anvertrauten. Dagegen wird über die Angemessenheit des Lohnes zu dem Erworbenen nichts bestimmtes ausgesagt; nur daß des Lohnes viel sei, dem wenigen ursprünglich Gegebenen gegenüber, mitgetheilt \*).

Von unmittelbarer Bedeutung für unsere Lehre scheint freilich nur das Lucanische Gleichniß sein zu können. In der Matthäischen Parabel ist alle Verschiedenheit gleichsam vor den Anfang des ganzen Vorgangs zurückgeschoben. Die Knechte erhalten hernach Verschiedenes, eben in Bezug auf eine schon vorher, gleichsam zeitlos vorhandene individuelle Verschiedenheit; indem sie Verschiedenes mit dem Gegebenen und zu demselben hinzu erwerben, verhalten sie sich doch subjectiv genommen alle gleich: jeder thut nach seinem Vermögen. Auch in Bezug auf ihr letztes Geschick ist wenigstens die Meinung nicht gerade ausgeschlossen, daß sie gleiches Ergehen haben, wenn auch das über vieles Gesetztwerden gar verschiedene Abstufungen zuläßt. Dagegen zeigt das von Lucas überlieferte Gleichniß in der That eine bestimmte Verschiedenheit in dem endschaftlichen Ergehen der fleißigen Knechte. Auch scheint das verschiedene Resultat der Arbeit der im Anfang mit Gleichem Bedachten nicht sowohl in dem ungleichen Vermögen als in dem ungleichen Eifer bei der Arbeit begründet, und beidem, dem Maaße des Eifers, wie der dadurch bedingten Fülle der Erfolge entspricht die größere oder geringere Belohnung. Wie diese letztere freilich zu fassen sei, ob wesentlich verbunden mit jenem im Eingang erwähnten Rückschlag ins Bewußtsein, also als gesteigerte oder geminderte Seligkeit oder irgendwie ohne diesen, als größere oder geringere Erhabenheit und Herrlichkeit des Amtes oder der Stellung, das kann auch aus der Lucanischen Parabel nicht entschieden werden. Auf eine mehr oder minder umfassende Wirksamkeit in der Welt der Vollendung scheint allerdings das: „über zehn Städte Gesetztwerden“ zunächst hinzudeuten.

Das Matthäische Gleichniß hat in der That, wie bereits angedeutet unmittelbar mit der Lehre von den Graden nichts zu thun, wohl aber mittelbar. Es ist darin klar und bündig die Ursprünglichkeit individueller Unterschiede, verschiedener, sei es geistiger, sei es leiblicher Ausrüstung im diesseits ausgesprochen. Und wenn das Gleichniß selber über eine Correspondenz dieser diesseitigen mit einer etwaigen jenseitigen Verschiedenheit nichts Bestimmtes aussagt, so ist es doch die Schriftanalogie, welche, wie sie die dem Tode genommene Macht und den innigen Zusammenhang diesseitigen und jenseitigen Lebens und Seins verkündigt, solcher Correspondenz auch diesseitiger und jenseitiger Gaben das Wort redet.

So sind es diese beiden Gleichnisse vor Allem, welche jenen allgemeinen auf Hypothesen gegründeten Folgerungen gegenüber, welche wir oben vollzogen, weiter führen. Man könnte ihnen einen prophetischen

Character im eigentlichen Sinne beizulegen geneigt sein. Wollte man aber auch davon Abstand nehmen, auch die eigentliche Prophetie mangelt nicht auf diesem Gebiete.

Wenn man sich schon im Hinblick auf diese Parabeln schwerlich wird dem Zugeständniß entziehen können, daß in den beiden in den Parabeln angedeuteten Beziehungen eine Verschiedenheit der Vollendeten von der Schrift verheißen werde, so gewinnt diese Ueberzeugung Gewißheit, wenn man die Schriftstellen hinzunimmt, in welchen insonderheit den Aposteln des Herrn ein gewisser Vorzug auch in der zukünftigen Ordnung der Dinge beigelegt wird. Denn sicher wird man das „Sitzen auf den zwölf Stühlen und Richten die zwölf Geschlechter Israels“, ^) wie sehr man auch geneigt sein möge, den Gedankengehalt dieses Ausspruchs seiner bildlichen Hülle zu entkleiden, nicht anders, als auf eine bevorzugte Stellung der Zwölf deuten könnend) Ia selbst in dem eng geschlossenen Kreise der Zwölf, denen bei Lucas und Matthäus eine wesentliche Prärogative zugestanden wird, scheinen die mächtigen Principien der Steigerung und Individuation des Lebens sich noch geltend machen zu sollen. Denn nachdem bereits den Zwölfen die Berufung zu einer außerordentlichen Thätigkeit „in der Wiedergeburt“ versiegelt ist, sehen wir nicht nur die Mutter des Iacobus und Johannes mit der Bitte, ihren Söhnen die Plätze zur Rechten und zur Linken zu gewähren, an den Erlöser herantreten, wir hören auch den letzteren wenigstens mittelbar bestätigen, daß es in seines Vaters Reich dergleichen Ehrenplätze allerdings geben werdet. Denn aus der Erklärung Iesu, daß es ihm nicht zustehe, das Sitzen zu seiner Rechten und Linken zu gewähren, zu folgern, daß es solche Plätze überhaupt nicht geben werde, würde folgerichtig doch nur dem zustehen, der auch Act. 1, ? zu schließen wagt, daß mit der „Zeit und Stunde, welche der Vater seiner Macht vorbehalten hat“ eigentlich der Nimmermehrstag gemeint sei; es würde nur demjenigen zustehen, der es mit der Schrift überhaupt nicht genau zu nehmen entschlossen ist.

Wenn nun sonach die Lehre von den Graden als auf biblischem Standpunkte unanfechtbar erscheint, so verdient auch das noch hervorgehoben zu werden, daß auch in den Voraussetzungen der besonderen Stellung im Reiche der Herrlichkeit die an die Zwölf gerichteten Verheißungsworte mit der vorerwähnten Parabel des Lucas vollkommen zusammenstimmen. Erschien nämlich in dem LucaNischen Gleichniß der Eifer des Knechtes, der zehn Pfund erworben, als das Motiv der endschaftlichen Bevorzugung desselben, so erscheinen auch die Zwölf, wie sie bei Lucas und Matthäus eingeführt werden, als solche vornehmlich eifrige Diener. Von Scheunen, die Iesu das Ohr liehen, wenn er durch Dörfer und Städte daherzog, das Evangelium vom Reich verkündigend, wissen beide Evangelisten zu melden. Aber „nachgefolgt“<sup>2)</sup> mit dieser eigenhümlichen Anhänglichkeit „beharrt bei ihm in seinen Anfechtungen“) — von der späteren Flucht der Jünger ist hier begreiflicher Weise abzusehen, — das waren eben diese Zwölf, denen er darum das Reich bescheidet. Sie waren es, die mit dem kostbaren Pfunde, das ihnen geliehen war, der Gemeinschaft mit dem Herrn gewuchert hatten. — Aehnliches gilt von der Matthäus 20, 23 gestellten Bedingung einer besonderen zukünftigen Herrlichkeit: auch das „den Kelch trinken und mit der Taufe des Herrn getauft werden“ erscheint als ein Wuchern mit dem gegebenen Pfunde.

Freilich auch das Andre bedarf noch der Erwähnung: auch das Matthäische Gleichniß erhält seine prophetische Bekräftigung. Ienes: er gab einem jeglichen nach seinem Vermögen, ^) entspricht bedeutsam jenem: es stehet mir nicht zu, sondern der Vater hat es den Seinen bereitet °). Wenn der Vater das Ende ordnet, so ist es auch der Vater, der im Anfang das Vermögen gegeben, nämlich die natürlichen Gaben, welchen entsprechend der Sohn die geistlichen Güter austheilt. Auch der größte Eifer, den Kelch des Sohnes zu trinken, wird jene heilige Continuität der väterlichen Ordnungen nicht durchbrechen können, vermögen deren, nicht ohne, sondern mit des Mittlers Willen, Anfang und Ende sich zusammenschließen.

Hiermit beendigen wir unsre Bemerkungen über den für die Lehre von den Graden zu führenden grundlegenden Schriftbeweis: nicht in der Meinung, die Sache durchaus erschöpft, wohl aber in der Ueberzeugung die schlagendsten Beweisstellen berührt zu haben. ^) Wem es vorwiegend um die Breite des zu legenden Fundamentes zu thun ist, der wird freilich an der Vollständigkeit des Nachweises vieles vermissen. Dem gegenüber müssen wir die Beschränkung unsrer Beweisführung für eine absichtlich gewählte erklären, und wollen unsren ersten biblisch-dogmatischen Abschnitt damit beschließen, daß wir in

die Auslegungsgeschichte einen Blick werfend die vornehmsten Irrwege charakterisieren, in die sich in Bezug auf scheinbar einschlägige I<sup>o</sup>ci die ältere, wie die neuere Eregese verloren hat; zur Seite wird dieser letzteren Betrachtung eine kurze Würdigung der vornehmsten Einwände gehen, welche man aus der Schrift gegen die Lehre von den Graden schöpfen zu müssen geglaubt hat.

Iene Verirrungen charakterisieren sich einmal als allegorisirende Auslegungen, dann als unberechtigte Einlegungen, endlich als falsches Kleben am Buchstaben. In dem Bestreben, die Basis der Heilswahrheiten zu erweitern und in dieser sowie in mancher andern Beziehung den Boden gesunder historischer Auslegung verlassend, hat mit allegorisirender Eregese namentlich die alte Kirche eine Stufenverschiedenheit der Seligen schon aus den Vorgängen des alten Bundes zu erhärten gesucht. Voran steht in diesem Bemühen O rigenes, sei es daß er die Zwölfzahl der Stämme zum Formalprincip der Austheilung der Loose auch bei der seligen Auferstehung macht, und „die guten Könige über ihre Begierden“ der Ehren des königlichen Stammes Inda theilhaftig werden lüsst<sup>2)</sup>; sei es, daß er den geistlichen Iordan zu einer Grenzscheide stempelt, jenseits deren, wie einst Iacobs Erstgeborener, so auch daS erste und älteste Volk Gottes zu seiner Ruhe gelangen soll, während diesseits die Christusjünger ihr Theil habens; sei es, daß er wie sein späterer Bewunderer Hieronymus schon in der Arche Noä die Grade der Seligkeit präformirt sieht<sup>^)</sup>; sei es endlich, daß er in dem alttestamentlichen Unterschiede zwischen Volk und Leviten einen Typus der himmlischen Kirche findet <sup>^)</sup>. Mag diese Neigung zum Allegorisiren auch noch bis in unsere Zeit hinein sich geltend machen — wir werden gelegentlich auch in unserm dogmatischen Abschnitte noch auf Aehnliches zurückkommen müssen — ernsthafte Ansprüche auf Gemeingültigkeit wagt sie jetzt kaum noch zu machen. Viel tiefer wurzelt noch jetzt das verwandte, jene Allegoriensucht eigentlich als besondere Art unter sich begreifende Bestreben in das einfache Schriftwort dasjenige, was als dogmatischer Gedanke in dem Ausleger gefestigt ist, einzulegen, und auch unsre Lehre hat es sich gefallen lassen müssen, durch manche., solchem Streben entsprungene Auslegungen gestützt zu werden. Denkwürdig in der That ist das Geschick einzelner Schriftworte, deren an und für sich mächtiger Inhalt den Auslegern dennoch oft zu leicht gewogen hat. Werfen wir einen Blick zunächst in die Geschichte von Ioh. 14, 2.

Fast alle Alten seit Iren äus schöpfen aus dieser Stelle einen Beweis für die Lehre von den Graden. Den mittelalterlichen Thomas, wie den Lombarden in seinen Ercerpten<sup>^)</sup> sehen wir getreu ihrer Spur folgen. Erst bei Gerhard, 2) nachdem freilich Euthymius Zigadenus und Petrus Martyr <sup>)</sup> schon das Richtige deutlich gesehen, kommt die Stelle wenigstens unter die Beweismittel zweiter Ordnung zu stehen, und die Einwendung, daß die „vielen“ Wohnungen nicht grade mit Nothwendigkeit verschiedenartige seien, wird in Betracht gezogen, aber doch schließlich mit dem Hinweis auf die großartige Einstimmigkeit der alten Ausleger beschwichtigt: eine Schüchternheit, wie sie auch dem Buddeus eignet <sup>^)</sup>. Die neueste Zeit ist diesem wenigstens etwas besonneneren Zuge vielfältig wieder fremd geworden. Für,Olshausen<sup>^)</sup> ist freilich auch der nächste Sinn nur: für die Iünger, für alle Meinigen ist Raum da. Allein folgern könne man doch, meint er, aus dem Epitheton, daß die höchste Mannigfaltigkeit in den Verhältnissen der himmlischen Welt statthaben werde, je nach den Entwicklungsstufen derer, die in sie eintreten werden. Wie das aber, abgesehen von einer anderweitigen schriftmäßigen Begründung aus der Stelle für sich genommen auch nur gefolgert werden könne, ist nicht abzusehn. Wenn nun u. a. auch neuere Predigtsammlungen in dieser Stelle die Lehre von den Graden sehn, so ist dies schwerlich verwunderlich. Die „vielen Wohnungen in dem unermeßlichen Vaterhause“ gelten in der That K apf „sogleich als vielerlei Aufenthaltsorte für die vermiedenen Klaffender Seligen.«) Wenn Hoffmann in seiner vortrefflichen Sammlung<sup>)</sup> einer ähnlichen Auffassung der Stelle huldigt, so thut er wenigstens wohl, hervorzuheben, es sei nicht allein diese Stelle der heiligen Schrift, die uns nöthige, eine jenseits bestehende Mannigfaltigkeit anzunehmen, es sei alles, was uns der Mund Christi und feiner Apostel über die Vollendeten sage. Was weiter die Stellung der neuesten Com« mentatoren betrifft, so treten Stier und Peter Lange auf die Seite der hergebrachten Auslegung, Lange mit der wenig befriedigenden Bemerkung, daß, wenn die Vielheit der Wohnungen bloß quantitativ, nicht auch qualitativ sein sollte, ein anderer Ausdruck, etwa: es ist Raum genug, genügt haben würde. Dagegen sieht Th olu ck richtig, daß der Zusammenhang der Stelle auf Gradunterschiede nicht führt«). Bemerkt mag schließlich noch werden, daß ein Mann, den wir freilich zu den theologischen Auslegern, nicht zählen dürfen, sich unserer Stelle gelegentlich bedient, um die Mannigfaltigkeit der Himmlischen in seinem Sinne

zu erhärten. Göthe, von der Gräsin Bernstorff aufgefordert, „den zu suchen, der sich so gern finden läßt“, bezieht sich in seiner Erwiderung auf die „vielen Provinzen in unsres Vaters Reich ^).“ Gewiß gerade diese Stelle würde seiner Beweisführung am mindesten dienen.

Ein ähnliches Ergehen, wie dieses Wort Jesu Johannes 14, 2 hat seit Alters ein apostolisches Dictum gehabt: 1. Cor. 15, 41. Schon Chrsostomus<sup>1)</sup> setzt, auf seinem Standpunkte mit hoher Klarheit, die Beziehung dieser Stelle auf die Seligkeitsgrade auseinander. Ambrosius geht in der gleichen Spur, und seine Bemerkungen werden von dem Lombarden<sup>2)</sup> getreulich wiedergegeben. Der Klarheit der Sonne entspricht ihm zufolge die himmlische Würde derjenigen, welche auf Erben hundertfältige Frucht, die des Mondes der Herrlichkeit derer, die sechzigfältige, die der übrigen Sterne dem Glanze derjenigen, die dreißigfältige getragen haben. Luther ist in demselben Irrthum: „da sind nun so viel himmlische oder irdische Creaturen, und dennoch ein jegliches in seiner Art vom andern unterschieden und immer eines herrlicher und edler, als das andre. Desgleichen soll auch in jedem Leben mancherlei Unterschied sein der Klarheit und Herrlichkeit und doch allzumal ein Leib und Glieder Christi<sup>6)</sup>.“ Schärfer und richtiger hat schon Calvin gesehen:«) in der Anwendung dieses Verses werde gemeinhin geirrt: wie wahr auch die Lehre von den Graden, wie stark durch andre Schrift<sup>7)</sup> stellen bezeugt, mit diesen paulinischen Worten habe dieselbe nichts zu thun. Hier handle es sich darum, daß unsre gegenwärtigen Leiber von denen, die wir einst empfangen würden, verschieden seien. Von den Graden der Seligkeit hier zu reden, lag, wie auch Billroth, Calvin folgend, bemerkt<sup>8)</sup>, nicht im Interesse der paulinischen Beweissührung.

Hatten wir soeben allegorisirende Auslegungen und dem Aehnliches zu rügen, so bleibt uns noch jenes Dritte, ein unberechtigtes Haften an dem biblischen Buchstaben, um zu zeigen, wie man auch auf diese Weise den Schriftgrund unserer Lehre ungehörlich verbreitert hat. Zwei Fälle mögen hier genügen. Wenn Origenes «) offenbar in dem Bestreben, den biblischen Inhalt möglichst concret zu fassen, den Sanftmüthigen in der Bergrede nur das Erdreich, dagegen den geistlich Armen das Reich Gottes verheißen sein läßt, so ist dies eine ebenso eigenthümliche, als unberechtigte Spaltung. Wenn ein Neuerer<sup>9)</sup> in der Absicht, die Stufen der Seligkeit möglichst bestimmt in Schriftworten auszudrücken, behauptet, die niedrigste Stufe der Seligkeit bezeichne Jesus mit den Worten: „aufgenommen werden in die ewigen Hütten;“ die, welche keine eigne Wohnung haben, stünden viel niedriger, als diejenigen, welche ihre eigne herrliche Friedenschütte von Gott erhalten, so mag dies immerhin für eine geistreiche Bemerkung gelten, auf Zuverlässigkeit kann sie wohl wenig Ansprüche machen.

Eine vollständige Aufzählung der in den verschiedenen Zeiten der Kirche mit untergelaufenen irrigen und gezwungenen Auslegungen, die in den Dienst des Dogmas von den Graden getreten sind, wird niemand, der mit dem Umfang der einschlägigen Literatur vertraut ist, an dieser Stelle erwarten; sie kann überhaupt kaum wünschenswerth erscheinen. Dagegen muß gefragt werden, wie es sich denn, zumal offenbar von dem traditionellen Beweisvornch so nennenswerthe Abzüge zu machen sind, mit denjenigen Schriftstellen verhalte, die von Alters her<sup>10)</sup> und bis in die neuere Zeit hinein gegen die Schriftmäßigkeit unsern Lehre geltend gemacht worden sind. Bekanntlich ist Iovinian der Erste gewesen, der von seinem, dem Hieronymus so verhaßten stoischen Standpunkte ein ganzes Heer von Einwendungen gegen die schon zu seiner Zeit alt hergebrachte Lehre von den Graden aufgestellt hat. Mögen wir es auch mit Cotta ^) beklagen, daß von den Lehren dieses italienischen Mönches keine zuverlässigere Kunde, als die in dem Werke des Hieronymus enthaltene auf uns gekommen ist, mögen wir feine auch durch die feindselige Schrift des letzteren hindurchschimmernde, hie und da gesund reformatorische Richtung anerkennen, unzweifelhaft geht doch aus der Polemik des Gelehrten von Stridon das hervor, daß Iovinian ein Gegner der Lehre von den Graden war, und daß er diese seiner Gegnerschaft vornehmlich durch Berufung auf die Schrift zu rechtfertigen suchte. Was nun den Inhalt seiner Einwendungen anlangt, so ist nicht zu verwundern, daß er die Schwäche der Ausleger seiner Zeit theilt und so in dieselben Fehler verfällt, deren auch die alten Vertheidiger der Lehre vielfältig sich schuldig machen <sup>2)</sup>. Er kann nicht davon loskommen, daß der Herr in der bekannten Stelle bei Matthäus <sup>1)</sup> von einer Scheidung von Böcken und Schafen redet, und von einer weiteren Differenzirung des Looses der Seligen absieht — eine Hartnäckigkeit, für die der „hochgelehrte Ausleger“ von Hieronymus weidlich verspottet wird. Ioviuian macht ferner die „armselige“ Einwendung, daß der Apostel die Christen zu

Corinth einen Tempel, nicht aber viele Tempel des heiligen Geistes nenne: ^) als ob es, meint Hieronymus, nicht im Tempel vielerlei Bleibestätten geben könne. Von der hergebrachten Deutung von Ioh. 14,2. läßt sich Iovinianus so sehr imponiren, daß er eine noch weiter vom Wege liegende Auslegung anstrengt. Nicht verschiedene Bleibestätten im Himmelreich, sondern die Zahl der Gemeinden des Erdkreises sei von Jesu verstanden. „Ich gehe Euch die Stätte zu bereiten" °) gilt dem Mönche von Mailand als ein Beweis für die Gleichheit d«s Loofes de« Vollendeten, der Erlöser habe ja nicht von Stätten, sondern von einer Stätte geredet. Auch die Spur einer ernsthafteren Ginwendung findet sich indessen. Das Gleichmß von den Arbeitern im Weinberge«) hat ihm, wie fast allen, die sich irgend mit der Lehre von den Graden befaßt haben, zu denken gegeben. Offenbar wird der Denar, der an alle gleichmäßig gegeben wird, als die eine allen gleichmäßig beschiedcne Seligkeit gedeutet: wogegen denn Hieronymus ihm zu wissen thut, der Denar sei nicht der eine Lohn, sondern das eine Leben, indem verschiedner Lohn Platz habe.

Seit Iovinian der Erste, der mit Schriftgründen gegen die Lehre von den Graden auftrat, ist Petrus Martyr, der Lehrer von Straßburg, Basel und Oxford^). Christus hat, so sagt er, über diese ganze Sache nur ganz allgemein sich geäußert, wie z. B., daß wir „im Vaterlande gleich sein werden den heiligen Engeln" 2). Demnach lönne er in der Schrift weder Beweise für noch wider die Gleichheit der Seligen finden. Beides lasse sich wahrscheinlich machen, keines ausmachen. Sicher, zur Seligkeit thue es nichts, ob man so oder anders denke. Für bedeutend können nun die neun Argumente für die Gleichheit der Seligen, welche Martyr vorbringt, obwohl sie immerhin eine größere Besonnenheit in der Auswahl, als sie dem Mönche des vierten Jahrhunderts eigen ist, verrathen, ihrer Mehrzahl nach nicht gelten. Mehr als Anderes fordert es noch das Nachdenken heraus, wenn Martyr fragt, was denn, wenn den Zwölfen die zwölf Stühle vorbehalten sind, dem Paulus, der doch mehr gearbeitet hat, als sie alle, für Ehren vorbehalten sein möchten 1 obwohl sich auch da im Hinblick auf die schon oben erwähnte Fassung der Verheißung, °) auf den Umstand, daß diese Zwölf, deren Ausharren bis zur Stunde dieser Verheißung gerühmt wird, im Augenblicke der Gefahr flüchtig werden und einer unter ihnen durch seinen Verrath der Anwartschaft auf den Richterstuhl in der Wiedergeburt zweifelsohne verlustig wird, gar leicht eine befriedigende Entscheidung treffen läßt. Auch die Heranziehung von 1. Cor. 6, 3 hat eine Spitze, der sich ohne Weiteres nicht ausweichen läßt. Wenn alle corinthischen Christen berufen sind, die Engel zurichten, so kann gefragt werden, was denen, die in so ausgezeichnete Weise, wie die Zwölf gethan hatten, mit ihrem Herrn ausharren, für eine besondere Herrlichkeit vorbehalten bleibt. Scheint es doch, als ob das Richteramt über die Engel über dem Nichteramt unter Israel wie der Himmel über der Erde emporrage. Und in der That mahnt uns die Stelle, uns bei der Beurtheilung dieser Fragen der Meinung gründlich zu entschlagen, als ließen sich die Aussichten auf eine besondere Tätigkeit im Himmelreich in eine absolute Formel bannen. Sie lehrt uns auch darauf achten, daß in den verschiedenen Zeiten des Reiches Gottes auf Erden — und eine andere Zeit ist die von Luc. 22, 30 und die von 1. Cor. 6, 2 — die himmlische Hoffnung in andre Gestalten sich kleiden mußte: die Richterschaft über Israel konnte ja begreiflicher Weise vom Apostel den fernen Heidenchristen Corinth, und wären sie von apostolischem Eifer gewesen, nicht also verheißten werden, wie vom Herrn den judenchristlichen Zwölfen. Etwas Entscheidendes aber gegen die Idee einer Differenzirung der Aemter, wie sie in Luc. 19 unzweifelhaft niedergelegt ist, ja gegen die Lehre von den Graden überhaupt, vermögen wir auch aus dieser Stelle nicht zu schöpfen. Wer wollte auch wohl ausmachen, daß der Apostel, der seinen Corinthern diese Herrlichkeit des Engelrichtens verheißt, in den Worten des Herrn über die Zwölf eine besondere Prärogative nicht ausgedrückt gefunden habe. Und wenn es denn auch dunkel bleiben mag, in wiefern die Richterschaft über Israel, die des Richteramts über die Engel überrage, daß den Zwölfen etwas ihnen Gigenhümliches verheißten werde, darf darum nicht verkannt werden. Die stärkste Waffe nun aber wird, wie es scheint, wie schon von Iovinianus, so auch von Martyr aus Matthäus 20 geschmiedet. Dem Martyr scheint ein Bewußtsein davon beizuwohnen, daß er damit sein Bestes liefert, denn er stellt dieses Argument an die erste Stelle: ein Denar werde allen Arbeitern zu Theil und dem Herrn des Weinberges komme es nicht in den Sinn, sich den früher eingetretenen gegenüber etwa damit zu entschuldigen, daß ihr Lohn zwar wesentlich gleich, aber im Unwesentlichen doch verschieden und der ihrige größer sei, als der der Spätlinge. Der Lohn, das betont Martyr, ist von allen Unterscheidungen über Wesentliches und Unwesentliches abgesehen, gleich für alle. Wir wollen nun nicht, wie später Quenstedt, darüber rechten, ob unter dem Denar nicht statt des endschaftlichen Lohnes vielmehr irgend welche gnadenreiche diesseitige Vergeltung, in leiblichen oder in

geistlichen Gaben bestehend, zu denken sei, noch weniger ihm seine Folgerung zugestehen, daß unter der von ihm bestrittenen Voraussetzung das Gleichniß eine Verleihung des ewigen Lebens auch an murrende Knechte lehren würdet, wollen auch nicht mit Stier darauf Gewicht legen, daß für den „überschwenglichen Gnaden- und Ehrenlohn im Himmel unser Tagelohn-Groschen ein schlechtes falsches Bild wäre)“; uns liegt vielmehr der wesentliche Nachdruck im Gleichniß auf den verschiedenen Zeiten der Berufung zur Arbeit, ein Gedanke, den schon Hieronymus ausführte, wenn er zur ersten Stunde Abel und Seth, zur dritten Henoah und Noah, zur sechsten Abraham und Isaak, zur neunten die Propheten und Moses, endlich zur eilften die Schaar der Heiden berufen werden läßt«), wobei denn nicht ausgeschlossen wäre, daß das Gleichniß auch auf mehr simultane Verschiedenheiten, das ist das frühere oder spätere Berufensein Zeitgenössischer eine Beziehung erleide. Den früher und den später Berufenen ist nun allerdings nach dem Gleichniß das eine Leben bereitet: daß der Heiland das ausspricht, hat einen unmittelbar paränetischen Zweck, „es ist das Gleichniß gerichtet gegen allen Hochmuth der Einen, wider alle falsche Demuth und Verzagtheit der Andern, es will uns Alle gleich machen darin, daß wir ohne knechtischen Blick auf den Lohn, ohne verkehrte Meinung von Verdienst einzig und allein dem himmlischen Kleinod nachjagen ^).“ Daß aber dieses eine Leben oder dieser eine Lohn nun für alle ohne Unterschied nach Umfang und Inhalt unter allen Umständen gleich sei, das würde doch auch bei ganz stricter Fassung nicht folgen; was gefolgert werden kann, ist eben nur, daß die Zeit der Berufung oder die Dauer der Arbeit bei der Austheilung des Lohnes einen Unterschied nicht begründen werde; die Ausdeutung des Gleichnisses ist in ihren rechtmäßigen Grenzen zu halten. Mag darin liegen, „daß Gott das Verdienst unseres Lebens nicht nach der Größe des Pstichtkreises, den er uns angewiesen hat, also auch nicht nach der Masse des Guten, das wir vollbrachten an sich“ beurtheilen werde, °) die Ausschließung der Ungleichheit wird immerhin dem Gleichnisse selber zufolge als eine hypothetische angesehen werden müssen. Gegen die Sehung dieser Ungleichheit, insofern sie sich auf etwas Anderes, als die früher e oder spätere Berufung gründen könnte, kann sich aus dieser Stell« nichts ergeben.

Den richtigen Grundsatz übrigens bei diesen Grenzstreitigkeiten über die von einzelnen Schriftworten beherrschten Wahrheitsgebiete hat übrigens bereits ein lutherischer Dogmatiker aufgestellt. Man muß, sagt Gerhardt/) die Stellen unterscheiden, die «n^Hz und die anderen, die tt^x^n<^ zu fassen find. Wenn z. B. Martvr 2) unter seinen neun Instanzen auch die geltend macht, daß laut d«s Apostels Wort die Leiden dieser Zeit nicht werth seien der Herrlichkeit, die an uns solle offenbar werden,') — woraus er eine gleiche Herrlichkeit aller folgert — so ist dies offenbar eine «^X13g zu fassende Stelle. Denn wo wäre wohl geschrieben, daß die Herrlichkeit derer, die auf den zwölf Stühlen zu sitzen nicht berufen sind, daS Leiden dieser Zeit nicht verlohne?

Haben wir es bisher mit der schriftmäßigen Begründung des Dogmas zu thun gehabt, so gehen wir nunmehr zur dogmatisch-geschichtlichen Behandlung desselben über. Stellten wir bei der erfteren die thetische Beweisführung voran, so erscheint es hier zweckmäßig, von vorn herein wenigstens einen Theil der gegen unsre Lehre angestregten Polemik ins Auge zu fassen. Es sollen nämlich unserem Dogma, auch abgesehen von den biblischen Bedenken, die gegen dasselbe geltend gemacht wurden, innerlich gewisse unüberwindliche Schwierigkeiten und Widersprüche anhaften. Im Begriffe der Seligkeit als des höchsten subjeetiven Gutes soll es liegen, daß es seiner eigensten superlativischen Natur gemäß einer Steigerung und Verminderung unfähig sei. Das Erste also, was uns obliegt, ist, daß wir die Existenz von Graden der Seligkeit nach ihrer inneren Möglichkeit erwägen, und zwar wird dieselbe theils von logischer, theils von psychologischer Seite zu erweisen sein. In dieser zwiefachen Hinsicht wollen wir, unsre im Gingang angekündigte Methode einhaltend, die kirchlichen Zeugnisse und Argumente für und gegen jene Möglichkeit ins Auge fassen.

Zuerst scheint, logisch genommen, in dem: Seligsein und dabei Verschiedensein ein Widerspruch zu liegen. Schon der Cappadocier Basilius sucht offenbar solchem Einwand zu begegnen, wenn «r, Wesentliches und Unwesentliches in dem Besitzstand der Seligm unterscheidend sagt, der Natur nach freilich feien alle Seligen einander gleich, der Unterschied gehe nur die Würde an. Wie unter den Engeln Gottes diese dienten, jene herrschten, wie der Geist Gottes vom Vater verschieden, wie die Sterne ungleich an Klarheit, so seien verschieden der Würde nach allerdings auch die vollkommenen Gerechte«. Aber wenn an Würde und an

Rang einer den zweiten oder dritten Platz Hab«, so folge daraus noch mit Nichten, daß er seiner Natur nach von dem ersten in feiner Ordnung verschieden sei/) in der That eine wenig glückliche Unterscheidung, bei der die Verschiedenheit der Würde als rein zufällig erscheinen muß. War aber diese Lösung nicht glücklich, so kann es nicht auffällig erscheinen, wenn Thomas der Scholastiker den alten Faden wieder aufnimmt und nunmehr ausdrücklich da« schon der Betrachtung des Basilius zum Grunde liegende Problem aufstellt, wie, wenn doch der Kleinste« im Himmelreich schon d«s höchsten Gutes theilhaftig sei, es über das hinaus, was auch dem Kleinsten zu Theil geworden, noch etwas Höheres geben könne, ^) Mit der Lösung des Thomas nun wollen wir uns an dieser Stelle nicht zu thun machen; offenbar ist, man sollte, genau genommen, von dem hohen Gute, von dem subjectiven Gute schlechthin reden. Man sollte das Gut nicht nur in seiner Relation zu den irdischen Gütern, man sollte es auch an sich fassen. Selbst wenn man es, in solcher Relation betrachtet, als die höchste Stufe einer Güterleiter ansieht, sollten sich nicht auf dieser Stufe als gemeinsamer Unterlage auch wiederum andre aufbauen? Freilich sehen wir auch den Albertus, den Zeitgenossen des Thomas, noch einmal auf die Bahn des Basilius einlenken. Weit entfernt, meint er, daß das Aufnehmen der ganzen Fülle göttlichen Seins und göttlicher Wahrheit, wie es sich Albert als bei den Seligen eintretend vorstellt, noch wesenhafte Gradunterschiede 'gestatte, ist vielmehr daS Vorhandensein solcher natürlichen Unterschiede auch in der diesseitigen Welt, wie thatsächlich auch immer, doch gerade ein Hinderniß der Vollkommenheit;-') beiläufig bemerkt, eine Behauptung, die ethischer Weise ihre Bedenken hat, wie sehr auch die Sünde an den creatürlichen Unterschieden Anlaß nimmt. In der Welt der Vollendung nun findet nach Albert freilich eine Vertheilung der Geschäfte unter Verschiedene aber ohne wesentlichen Unterschied der Personen statt. Es ist wie bei den Engeln: auch unter ihnen Unterschied der Unter- und Ueberordnung, aber nur auf die heilig« Handlung, das Geschäft in der Hierarchie bezüglich. Also fast ganz wie Basilius, nur daß statt der Würde das Geschäft steht. Das gegen Basilius Bemerkte trifft darum Albert in gesteigertem Maaße: wo ohne Unterschied der Naturen Unterschied der Geschäfte, da finden wir schon hier Widerspruch: sollte zdas im Himmel anders sein?

Auch in der erneuerten Kirche ist man anfangs dem vor Alters betretenen Wege treu geblieben. Die von den Scholastikern überkommene sehr allgemeine Unterscheidung von essentiellen und acccstotischen Gütern') ist wesentlich als ein Versuch anzusehen, jener logischen Schwierigkeit: selig und doch verschieden, Herr zu werden. Auch dieser Versuch kann indessen befriedigend so lange nicht genannt werden, als man das Accidentelle als solches nicht irgendwie dogmatisch begründet. ^) Indessen werden später jene Schwierigkeiten, mit denen man sich lange wenig glücklich abmühte, allerdings befriedigender gelöst. Ein Andres, bemerkt Scherzes) richtig, sei ungleich« Vollkommenheit, ein Andres Unvollkommenheit, und wie letztere auszuschließen, so sei erste« allerdings zu setzen. Einen Fortschritt möchten wir darin wenigstens insofern erkennen, als von der unbestimmten Unterscheidung von Wesentlichem und Unwesentlichem, sowie von der unbefriedigenden von Würde und Natur abgesehen wird. Insonderheit aber ist mit Bretschneider daraufhinzuweisen, daß alle Polemik gegen die Möglichkeit der Grade, insofern sie ihre Argumente aus der Idee der Seligkeit hernimmt, von der unerwiesenen Voraussetzung ausgeht, daß die Seligkeit ein einfacher Zustand sei, und daß sie ihrem ganzen Inhalt nach etwa durch das Gottschauen, diesen Ausdruck gleichbedeutend genommen dem intuitiven Erkennen bezeichnet werden könne. Bretschneider — dessen übrige Anschauungen man selbstverständlich nicht mit in Kauf zu nehmen hat — hat im Allgemeinen nicht Unrecht, wenn er die Seligkeit als eine höhere innere Vollkommenheit, verbunden mit neuer Thätigkeit, Verbindung mit andern Wesen, einem neuen Verhältniß zur Sinnenwelt, überhaupt für etwas Gemischtes erklärt ^): natürlich daß die Vorstellung willkürlicher Zusammensetzung auszuschließen ist.

Konnte man nun logischer Weise die Frage auswerfen, ob mit dem Begriffe der Seligkeit nicht jedwede Verschiedenheit der Seligen streite so könnte man jenen ähnlichen Einwand auch psychologischerseits auswerfen. Hier sei doch Verschiedenheit der Christen, damit auch noch oft Neid der einen, Ueberhebung der andern, kurz ungeordnete Affecte. Würde nun jene Verschiedenheit auch jenseits noch sein, wie wolle man dann ihre diesseitigen Folgen ausschließen? Die Frage, so gestellt, beantwortet sich allerdings schon von einem ziemlich vulgären moralischen Standpunkte kurz dahin, daß von einer Rivalität der verschieden gearteten Seligen, eben weil sie vollendet sind, im Himmel nicht die Rede sein könne. Wenn so die Möglichkeit einer Verschiedenheit von dieser Seite kaum mit dem geringsten Schein beanstandet werden

kann, so scheint sich, und das führt freilich über die Frage nach der Möglichkeit, mit der wir es jetzt zu thun haben, zum Theil hinaus — das aufgestellte Bedenken in der That in ein positives Argument für die Lehre, von den Unterschieden zu verwandeln. Ist nämlich an der moralischen Güte der Seligen irgend welches Grades von vom herein kein Zweifel, so scheint jedes Verhältniß, welches die Offenbarung dieser sittlichen Vollkommenheit ermöglicht, resp. denkbar macht, wie die Verschiedenheit der Seligen offenbar ein solches ist, von denen, die über diese Dinge denken, eifrig ins Auge gefaßt werden, unter Umständen als ein wirklich bestehendes angenommen werden zu müssen.

Die Freiheit der Seligen von Neid sowohl als Hochmut!) ist im Interesse der Lehre von den Graden von den Lehrern der Kirche von jeher betont worden. Von Neid wird nach Augustinus in jenem seligen Reiche, wie auch ein Stern sich von dem andern unterscheidet an Klarheit, nichts zu finden sein. Man wird des großen Gutes sich freuen, daß niemand seinem Oberen, gleich wie auch kein Engel dem Erzengel seine höhere Stellung mißgönnt. Verschiedene werden verschiedene Gaben haben, doch so, daß sie alle die eine Gabe gemein haben, nicht mehr, als sie haben zu wollen.°) Prosper von Aquitanien folgt dem Augustinus mit einer gleichen Betrachtung. °)

Diese Gabe, nicht mehr, als man hat, zu wollen, ruht aber, wie Gregor d. G. auseinandersetzt,^) auf jenem allen Seligen gemeinen universalen Liebessinn, der der Gemeinschaft der Gaben sich freuet: was man nicht für sich selber empfangen hat, das freue man sich in einem Andern empfangen zu haben.— Und wie der alte Gregor, so beschäftigt sich auch der mittelalterliche Duns mit der Frage. Will Linus, der Bischof, fragt er, mehr seine eigne Seligkeit, als die der seligen Jungfrau? Er ist vorsichtig mit der Entscheidung. Man solle doch vor Todsünden sich selber noch eifriger bewahren, als Andere; das heiße, man müsse sich mehr als Andere lieben, d. i. mehr als Anderer, seine eigene Seligkeit suchen. Aber freilich nun die eigene Seligkeit doch nur nach dem göttlich bestimmten Maße: und was dies Maß anlange, so sei das der Maria größer, als das des Linus; weil größer nach Gottes Willen, so müsse auch Linus es größer wollen.^) Auch die lutherische Theologie, wie sie in Bezug auf die Lehre von den Graden überhaupt das Erbe der mittelalterlichen Kirche fast ungeschmälert antritt, hält es der Mühe für werth, die Neidlosigkeit der Vollendeten aller Grade hervorzuheben. So ist Mevfart bemüht, von den Jungfrauen, Lehrern und Märtyrern, von allen Auserwählten, trotz ihrer Eigenart den Verdacht des Neides abzuwehren.°) So wird treffend von Scriver auf Phil. 2, 3. 4. hingewiesen: wenn durch Demuth schon hier Einer den Andern höher halte, denn sich selber, wie viel mehr werde man dort auch diesen Befehl des Herrn vollkommen erfüllen.°) Sehr entschieden und mit bestimmter Beziehung auf die Lehre von der gerechten Vergeltung wird auch in dem Jahrhundert der Aufklärung die Neidlosigkeit aller Ordnungen der Seligen von Schubert behauptet. Die Seligen, heißt es, auch der niederen Grade, würden Verdruß empfinden, wenn sie erführen, daß ungleiche Werke mit einer gleichen Herrlichkeit belohnt würden. ^) Bei Schubert's berühmtem Zeitgenossen Bahrdt ist die Vorstellung der Neidlosigkeit durch den sehr energisch hingestellten dogmatischen Satz befürwortet, daß Gott unsere Seelen umschaffen und die niederen Gesinnungen irdischer Menschen, alle unsere Wünsche und Begierden tödten werde, s)

In neuerer Zeit ist die Lehre von der Neidlosigkeit der Seligen auch mit der Voraussetzung einer Verschiedenheit der Arbeit und des Berufes im Himmelreich in Beziehung gesetzt worden. Die Bitte der Söhne Zebedäi um eine besondere Wirksamkeit im Reiche der Herrlichkeit wird von Schlei ermacht, mit welchen Einschränkungen auch immer, wegen des ungeordneten Affectes, der in dieser Bitte wenigstens mit zum Ausdruck komme, entschieden als eine unberechtigte angesehen. Es möge, sagt er, anfangs einerlei zu sein scheinen, ob man die Sache Jesu liebt, oder ob man sich bestrebe, unter den Vorkämpfern dieser Sache einen ausgezeichneten Rang zu behaupten. Aber in Wahrheit sei dem doch anders, da oft der Dienst der Sache gerade dasjenige erfordere, wodurch man am wenigsten leuchten und glänzen könne. Da heiße es freiwillig zurücktreten in die zweite und dritte Reihe, wo man in der ersten nicht am Orte sei.«) Bei Schleiermacher reicht diese Betrachtung freilich, wie sehr auch der biblische Tert dazu anleitet, kaum über das Diesseitige hinaus. Bei Nihisch») dagegen ist dies entschieden der Fall, wenn er, den Früheren sehr ähnlich, das Bedenken ablehnt, ob nicht irgend einen sein Dienst im Himmel verdrießen werde.



Der Vorstellung vom Neide der Geringen entspräche auf der andern Gelte die vom Hochmuth der Großen im Himmelreich. Bei der Selbstverständlichkeit dieses Correlats kann man sich nicht wundern, das letztere nicht überall ausgesprochen zu finden. Schön wird die Vorstellung vom Hochmulh der Seligen abgewiesen von Thomas von Kempen: „Alle Heiligen, je größer sie sind in der Glorie, je demüthiger sind sie in ihnen selbst.“<sup>2)</sup> Sie werden also auch wohl nichts von dem, was Schleier» mach« „das trügerische Gefühl der Herablassung“ nennt, in sich nähren. Sie sind, wie Stockmeyer sagt, „frei von dem Schmutze des Neides sowohl als des Stolzes.«)

Beruhet auf dieser Freiheit von Stolz und Neid die psychologische Möglichkeit der graduellen Verschiedenheit der Seligen, so ist freilich hervorzuheben, daß sich hier die früher erwähnte Unterscheidung von Herrlichkeit«- und Telligkeitsgraden aufdrängt. Ist nämlich die Neldlosigkeit ein wesentlicher Bestandtheil nicht nur der sittlichen Vollkommenheit, die den Vollendeten eignet, sondern unmittelbar auch, wie des diesseitigen ZufriedenseinS, so des jenseitigen Seligseins, so liegt die Folgerung nahe, daß nicht nur in Beziehung auf diesen, sondern auch auf alle Bestandtheile seligen Lebens eine Gleichheit der Vollendeten zu denken sei. Und allerdings ist nicht zu verkennen, daß, obwohl eine bewußte Unterscheidung von Sellgkeits- und Herrlichkeitsgraden keineswegs auch nur der Mehrzahl der Lehrer und Väter geläufig ist, hier eine Instanz gegen die Seligkeits- und für die Herrlichkeitsgrade vorliegt.

Hatten wir es soeben mit der Möglichkeit der Verschiedenheit im Allgemeinen zu thun, so ist weiter zu fragen, welchen Spielraum diese Möglichkeit im Besonderen haben werde. Dieser letztere ist auf verschiedene Weise bestimmt worden.

Die erste Stufe der Versuche, ihn auszumitteln, ist die der irgendwie eigenthümlich gewandten, dabei zuweilen nicht ohne Willkür gruppirten Wiederholungen von Schriftaussagen. Dergleichen bieten namentlich die schon mehrfach erwähnten neueren Predigtsammlungen, die auf diese Gegenstände gern und ausführlich eingehen, gar manches. Essen und Trinken über dem Tische Iesu, Essen von dem Baume des Lebens, Essen von dem verborgenen Manna, Trinken von dem Gewächs des Weinstocks, Theilhaftigsein des guten Zeugnisses, des neuen Namens, der weißen Kleider, der lichten Leiber, alles das sind nach Kapf besondere Seligkeiten — unter den Herrlichkeiten aber ist das Sitzen auf Iesu Stuhl die alles überragende, größte. \*) Was wir in dieser Zusammenstellung etwa noch vermissen, gibt uns Hoffmann, wenn er verweist auf das Pfeilersein im Tempel Gottes u. A.) Es ist der Ruhm dieser Ausführungen, daß sie sich von dem Schriftgrunde nicht trennen und trotz des hie und da Spielenden und Willkürlichen in der Gruppierung, wenigstens in der Sache selbst der subjectiven Phantasterei sich enthalten. Daß sie Anspruch auf dogmatische Schärfe machten und den bildlichen Character der biblischen Schilderung ganz wegläugneten, wird man ihnen nicht nachsagen.

In strengerer Form aber hat man jenen Spielraum der Unterschiede in vier verschiedenen Richtungen ausgemessen. Man hat den Sitz der letzteren gesucht in den verschiedenen Objecten der Freude, in besonderen Eigenthümlichkeiten der Subjecte, in der Beziehung der letzteren zu Gott, in ihren Thätigkeiten im Himmelreich.

Wenn von den Objecten der Freude die Rede ist, die eine besondere Seligkeit begründen sollen, s« ist es die Lehre von den Kränzen oder Kronen, die zuerst uns beschäftigt. Wie spät auch diese „Abenteuerlichkeit“ in dem anspruchsvollen Tone eines dogmatischen Satzes auftrat, eine Spur davon, freilich z. Th. in dem Gewande eines poesiereichen Traumgesichts finden wir schon bei Augustinus in einem nach dem Tode des Hieronvmus an Cyrill von Ierusalem gerichteten Briefe. ^) Nachdem der Bischof von Hippo die großen Tugenden und Verdienste des viersprachigen Theologen gerühmt hat, unternimmt er es, dessen Stellung im Reiche der Herrlichkeit zu ermitteln. Er will nicht so kühn sein, zu behaupten, daß der Abgeschiedene, in der Kraft der Gnaden Gestandene vor dem Vorläufer des Gnaoenspenders einen Vorzug habe. Der Herr wisse ja von keinem vom Weibe Geborenen, der größer sei, als er. So erklärt er ihn denn vorläufig für gleich selig mit dem Täufer. Doch macht er nachträglich auch von dieser Gleichheit noch einen kleinen Abzug. Iohannes trägt nämlich im Himmel ein Diadem mit dreien Reifen, während das des Hieronvmus nur deren zwei

aufweist. Später wird dies Dogma von den Kränzen auch biblisch begründet,') zunächst von Rabanus.) Er ist der Meinung, der goldene Kranz, der auf dem Tisch des Herrn in der Stiftshütte angebracht war, und der der Vulgata zufolge als ein ciselirter gedacht wird, müsse, vorgeblich^') schon nach Bcda's des Ehrwürdigen Vorgang anagogisch gedeutet werden. Dieser Kranz, meint er, würde glatt und nicht ciselirt gearbeitet sein, hätte nicht die ungleiche Herrlichkeit der himmlischen Gerechten eben dadurch angedeutet werden sollen. Und so kann denn dies Wort vom Kranze von Rabanus mit dem Paulinischen 1. Cor. 15, 41 als ein locus pi.oban» zusammengestellt werden. — Wie äußerst haltlos auch alles das war, die Stelle Raban's hat offenbar der Blossa «i,äinai.ia Walafrids, der auch hier in die Fußstapfen seines Lehrers getreten ist, gleichsam den Weg bereitet. ^) Mit der ciselirten Arbeit an dem Kranze des Tisches macht sich freilich Walafrid nicht mehr zu thun. Da die Vulgata das doppelte ser s»Ii»b einmal durch coi.on», dann aber durch corou« nureolu, wiedergibt, so ist jener eiselirte Kranz ihm nur die Seligkeit im Allgemeinen, deren jeder, „der die Gebote hält“, theilhaftig wird. Diesem Kranze wird nun aber ein Kränzlein aufgesetzt, und das ist die besondere Seligkeit. Behalten ist nach Walaftid dies Kränzlein denen, die dem Worte des Herrn Marc. 10, 21 nachkommen, die selber unbefleckt von dem Umgang mit Weibern »ach Apoc. 14, 3. mit jungfräulicher Seele dem Lamme das neue Lied singen. Wenn in alle dem Poesie ist, aber verlässliche Wahrheit keine, so gilt das Gleiche von dem, was die Scholastik, insonderheit Thomas und Duns bringt. Der letzte« hat schon ausgemacht, nicht nur, daß es verschiedene Kränzlein gibt, sondern auch, daß dieselben bei den Jungfräulichen von weißer, bei den Blutzengen von rother, bei den Kirchenlehrern von grüner Farbe sein werden. Ia, auch das istno ch nicht genug, beiläufig wird noch hinzugefügt, daß die Märtyrer „vielleicht“ Palmen, die Jungfrauen weiße Lilien, die Lehrer grüne, unverwelkliche Zweige in den Händen tragen werden, l) Solchen Phantasien kann denn wohl auch die ernsthaftere Betrachtung eines Thomas, mit welcher er die Annahme der Dreizahl der Kränzlein zu rechtfertigen sucht — über das Fleisch siegen die Jungfrauen, über den Teufel die Lehrer, über die Welt die Märtyrer — keinen Zuwachs von Gunst verschaffen. In Erwägungen, wie: ob dieses oder jenes von den Kränzlein den Vorzug verdiene, oder: ob dem heiligen Sebastian, dem nach der Legende zweimal Getödteten, nicht etwa eine doppelte Martyrkrone beschieden sein dürfte,2) hat sich diese Art von Dogmatik vollenos das Todesurtheil gesprochen. — Wenn auf lutherischem Kirchengebiet auch später noch Aehnliches auftritt, — die Starrheit des dogmatischen Begriffes, mit der sich das ursprünglich bildlich Gemeinte in der Zeit der Scholastik umgeben hatte, ist geschwunden. Auch Meyfart') weiß noch von der rosenfarbenen Klarheit der Märtyrer, der schneeweißen der Jungfrauen, der sternengleichen ^) der Lehrer der Kirche zu reden. Aber immerhin sind es nicht mehr „Kränze“, sondern „Klarheit“, immerhin will er doch eigentlich nichts weiter, als durch Beispiele und Sinnbilder die Idee der jenseitigen Verschiedenheit erläutern, immerhin hält er es für nöthig, auch von der andern Auserwählten eigenthümlichen Vorzügen zu reden. Ihn kann der Spott billiger Weise nicht treffen, mit dem der Reformirte Rivet spät, aber immer noch gerecht jene scholastischen Fündlein geißelt, wenn er die auf den „grünen Kranz“, den Lohn ihrer Weisheit, ungeduldigen Kirchenlehrer einstweilen wenigstens mit einer grünen Kapuze bedenken will. °)

War diese Lehre von den Kränzen einmal aufgegeben, so konnte es kaum anders sein, als daß sich in Bezug auf die Vorstelligmachung eines in den Objecten der Freude beruhenden Unterschiedes der Seligen die Tendenz großer Verallgemeinerung Bahn brach. Calirt, aller anmaßlichen Bestimmtheit feind, begnügt sich, auf die tausend und abertausend Gegenstände hinzudeuten, welche Gott den Seligen, dem einen diesen, dem andern jenen, zu ihrer Freude vor die Geistesaugen zu stellen die Macht habe.«) Er, wie in unseren Tagen Stockmeyer weist auf die besonderen Offenbarungen hin, mit denen Gott die Einen mit diesen, die Andern mit jenen, erquickten werde. ')

Was die Möglichkeit eines Offenbarwerdens von Unterschieden an den seligen Subjecten betrifft, so ist die Lehre von der Klarheit der Leiber schon frühe kirchlich recipirt gewesen. ^) Schon Augustin freilich, bei dem diese Lehre noch mit einem schüchternen „Vielleicht“ auftritt, fühlt, indem er sie vorträgt, das Nedürfniß einer Vergeistigung derselben. „Wir brennen“, sagt er, „von Liebe zu den seligen Märtyrern, und wünschen, jenseits ihre Wundenmale zu sehen, und vielleicht werden wir sie sehen.“ Dabei aber bemerkt er sogleich, die Schönheit der Leiber werde, obwohl eben am Leibe fichtbar werdend, doch vornehmlich eine geistige Tugendschönheit offenbaren, natürlich in den verschiedensten Abstufungen') Wenn nun Augustinus

noch zweifelt, ob Menschen fähig sind, diese Dinge zu denken, geschweige denn, sie geziemlich auszusprechen, wird die verschiedenartige Herrlichkeit der Leiber von der Scholastik in der sinnlichsten Weise ausgemalt. Eine besondere Schönheit soll nach Petrus Paludanus<sup>1)</sup> bei dem Prediger am Munde, bei den Märtyrern an den Narben, bei den Jungfrauen sogar an den Geschlechtstheilen zu Tage kommen. Ja, nicht nur die herrliche Klarheit, sondern auch die große Beweglichkeit der Auferstehungsleiber, auch die letztere als der Steigerung und Verminderung fähig, wird als Dogma sirirt. \*) Auch die protestantische Dogmatik des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts nimmt, mit Abzug des offenbar Anstößigen und Abgeschmackten diesen Stoff doch meist fertig herüber und betont besonders die verschiedenartige Klarheit der Leiber. °) Erst Calirt, wie er für die Objecte der Freude die größte Mannigfaltigkeit in Anspruch nahm, protestirt gegen die Einseitigkeit dieses Dogma's von der Leibesklarheit, freilich, ohne viel gehört zu werden.«) Selbst das Jahrhundert der Aufklärung, sofern es nicht überhaupt allen ähnlichen Stoffen gleichgültig oder verneinend den Rücken gewandt hat, weiß von „ungleichen Graden der Vollkommenheit der Leiber der Seligen".<sup>1)</sup> Ja, auch unsere Zeit, an wiedererwecktem Leben nicht minder, als an todtgeborenen Verjüngungstendenzen reich, hat nicht nur die Lehre von der Klarheit, sondern auch jene scholastische von der Beweglichkeit der Leiber erneuert. Daß „die Trennungen des Raumes drüben nicht sind," möchte man vielleicht noch zugeben; daß aber darum die Auferstandenen mit ihren Geistleibern im Augenblick die weiten Räume durchfliegen/ muß doch wohl zu den Phantasien, die kaum auf Probabilität Anspruch haben, gezählt werden.

Solchen wenig glücklichen Verjüngungen scholastischer Anschauungen gegenüber müssen Betrachtungen, wie sie über eine mögliche subjective Verschiedenheit im Jenseits von Martensen<sup>1)</sup> angestellt werden, als ein heilsamer Fortschritt erscheinen. Nicht zu der Vorstellung eines problematischen Fliegen« haben wir uns da zu versteigen, mit der Fortdauer eines Unterschieds der Talente haben wir «S zu thun. Mag auch Leiblichkeit immerfort als das Ende der Wege Gottes gelten, — da diese Leiblichkeit ein? verklärte Geistleiblichkeit sein wird, wird es besser sein, erst dem Geist zu seinem Rechte zu verhelfen, ehe man der Leiblichkeit ein so bestimmtes, unbeweisbares, von der gefiederten Creatur entlehntes, sich selber aber von dem Menschen höchstens im Schlaf beigelegtes Attribut andichtet.

Nenn man die Grade theils durch das Object, theils durch Eigenthümlichkeiten des Subjects der seligen Freude bedingt dachte, so lag von vorn herein ein Drittes nahe, sie nämlich von der Relation zwischen Subject und Object abhängig zu machen. Diese Relation konnte vorwiegend sinnlich, konnte aber auch vorwiegend geistig gefaßt werden. Was das Erste betrifft, so nahm man frühzeitig verschiedene Oertlichkeiten an, an denen die Seligen verschiedener Grade ihren Sitz hätten. Und da als der Mittelpunkt des seligen Reiches sonder Zweifel die heilige Dreieinigkeit zu denken war, so mußte die Herrlichkeit der verschiedenen Orte der Seligen nach ihrem größeren oder geringeren Abstand von dem Throne der Dreieinigkeit gemessen werden. Schon Irenäus ist auf dieser Spur, wenn er der Seligen einen die Speise des Paradieses genießen, andre die leuchtende Herrlichkeit der glänzenden Stadt innehaben, noch andre in den Himmel eingehen läßt. ^) Origenes folgt ihm, indem er Abrahams Schooß hinzufügt, und von verschiedenen Orten und Wohnstätten ausdrücklich redet. 2) Wie ferner das Mittelalter, mit der Lehre von den Kränzen nicht zufrieden, durch bedeutende Vertreter feiner Anschauungsweise auch die von den Orten der Seligen ausgemalt hat, ist aus Dante's göttlicher Comödie genugsam bekannt. Auch die nüchterneren Dogmatik!<sup>1)</sup> der lutherischen Kirche, wie fern sie auch den ausgesponnenen Phantasieen des katholischen Dichters stehen, haben es doch nicht schlechthin für Phantasterei geachtet, von verschiedenen Orten der Seligen zu reden. Freilich der alte Chvt 1 äus, obwohl er eine große Verschiedenheit in den sogenannten accidentellen Gütern zugesteht, hält doch die Vorstellung verschiedener räumlicher Entfernungen von Christo für entschieden bedenklich. Fast uneingedenk seiner übrigen Zugeständnisse bemerkt er, so sehr dürfe man das Leos auch der Geringsten im Himmel nicht herabsehen, daß man sie Christo, dem Mittler des Heils ferner rücke, als die Großen.<sup>1)</sup> Quenstedt aber ist dies ältere Bedenken schon geschwunden. Der günstigere oder der ungünstigere Platz bei dem Mahle im Himmelreich gehört ihm ausdrücklich zu den accessorischen Gütern, in Betreff deren eine große Verschiedenheit stattfindet.^) Auch Calirt fragt, warum man nicht in der näheren oder entfernteren Stellung zu dem Herrn eine stufenmäßige Verschiedenheit der Seligen erkennen wolle. ^)

Diesem verhältnißmäßig großen Conservatismus der älteren Zeit gegenüber geht die neuere nun mich in dieser Beziehung in die verschiedensten Richtungen auseinander. Der unwürdigen, an einem dem unsrigen wenigstens sehr verwandten Gegenstande geübten Persiflage eines Strauß, der da nicht begreifen kann, wie bei dem Gericht auch nur ein Territorium, wie das Königreich Böhmen die Menge der zu Richtenden weide fassen können, werden wir wenigstens bis zu dem Eingefüß folgen, daß, die finnliche Vorstellung einmal festgehalten, über die Verschiedenheit der Entfernungen von dem Herrn auch in dem auf das Gericht folgenden Leben der Verklärten kein Zweifel obwalten könnte. Denn de« Bemerkung Bretschneider«, ^ daß die Lehre von den Graden auch darum aufrecht erhalten werden könne und müsse, weil es eine irrtümliche Vorstellung sei, daß die Seligkeit „durch den Eintritt in einen Ort geschenkt werde“, vermögen wir keinen befriedigenden Sinn abzugewinnen. Solchem SlepliciSmus in Bezug auf den Ort der Seligen gegenüber hat denn auch die neuere Zeit zum Theil positiver e Lehrformen angestrebt. Die modeme Weltansicht hat selbst Schrifttellen benutzt, „um ihren Traum von einer Vertheilung der Seelen auf alle Planeten und Firsterne biblisch zu begründen.“ Auch Peter Lange 2) will den Himmel Gottes, in dem die verschiedenen Wohnungen der Seligen sind, „nicht von der Sternenwelt spiritualiftisch unterscheiden“, wenn gleich nicht „alle Sterne als himmlische Wohnungen zu betrachten“ feien. Daß die heilige Schrift nichts von Sternenbewohnern meldet, „am wenigsten die ihrer Körper entkleideten Seelen auf andere Sterne gehen lasse“, wird zugestanden werde» müssen.) Uebrigens gehört hierher auch, was von Kapf (a. a. O.) von den „Königspriestern“, die den Tempel der neuen Erde bewohnen, im Unterschied« v«n den übrigen Bewohnern der neuen Erde gelehrt wird, welche ersteren mit dem über zehn Städte Gesetzten in der Parabel Jesu identifizirt weroen.

Die nähere oder fernere Relation der Seligen zu dem Quell aller Freud« und Seligkeit ist nun durch den Ort, wenn auch zum Theil, doch nicht ausschließlich bedingt. Die Möglichkeit, auch von fem« her mit dem Throne der Herrlichkeit in die innigste Beziehung zu treten, ist schon, die Sache ganz finnlich angesehen, vorhanden. Die Vollkommenheit des Organe«, besonders aber die Intensität des Lichtes als Medium bedingen schon für das leibliche Sehen, von allen Entfernungen abgesehen, verschiedene Deutlichkeit deS Schauens. Wäre es nun wahr, was Buddeus sagt, daß die intuitive Gotteserkenntniß, die wir den Seligen beilegen, nach Analogie des leiblichen Sehens zu denken ift, ^) so gälte auch für die erstere, was eben vom letzteren gesagt wurde. In dieser intuitiven Erkenntniß der Seligm werden denn auch in der That von Alters her graduelle Verschiedenheiten angenommen. Bei IrenäuS') hängt das aufs engste mit seiner Theorie über die Oertlichkeiten zusammen. „Alle werden den Heilaud und Erlöser sehen“, aber von verschiedenen Standpunkten. Bei Origenes dagegen herrscht ein merkwürdiger Widerstreit. Hat er, wie wir vorher sahen, allerdings auch von Orten der Seligen gesprochen, so will er wenigstens, daß diese Orte mit der Deutlichkeit des Schauens nichts zu chun haben, Gott wird auch im Himmel nur gesehen, wenn er gesehen sein will; er wird unsichtbar, sobald er es nicht will. Er will aber nicht gesehen werden von denen, die nicht reines Herzens sind, ein Vorzug, der nach Origenes keineswegs allen Seligen eignet.«) Und wie diese Alten, so weiß auch die Scholastik von Graden des Schauens. Thomas macht sie von dem Licht der Herrlichkeit, als dem göttlichen Medium abhängig. Die Liebe freilich ist es, die die Sehnsucht nach Gott und dadurch auch die größere Empfänglichkeit für das Licht der Herrlichkeit zu Wege bringt.

Die Neueren haben zumeist von dieser Bahn abgelenkt. Das Schauen von Angesicht zu Angesicht wurde als Ausdruck für die wesentliche Seligkeit genommen, die allen gemein sein mußte. Ori» genistische Phantasieen durften hiervon nichts abziehen. So verwahrt sich denn Gerhard ausdrücklich gegen die Einführung von Unterschieden, wo es sich ihm um wesentliches Seligkeitsgut handelt.») Wie verschieden auch die Orte sein mögen, meint auch Lavater, an denen sich Selige bewegen, das ist vor Allem zu betonen, daß man immer den Herrn sieht „und ihn niemals aus dem Gesichte verlieren wird“. 2) Freilich gibt es auch Abweichungen von dieser Verwahrung, die freilich zu den glücklichen nicht zählen können. Wenn Origenes auch unreine Herzen in seinen Himmel hineindichtete, was ist es anders, wenn auch nach Heubner „kalte, selbstgenügsame Geister, in denen der Hochmut!) und Dünkel nichts als höchstens kalte Achtung gegen Iesum aufkommen ließ“, des seligen Reiches Bürger werden. Freilich kann man sich dann nicht wundern, daß diese „in düsterer Dämmerung“ wandeln müssen, „wo sie nur einen matten Wiederstrahl der himmlischen Sonne wie beim Mondlicht“ empfangen.)

Die größere oder geringere Unmittelbarkeit des Schauens war es eben, was die Verschiedenheit der Grade bedingte. Als Medium dieses Schauens galt dem Thomas das Licht der Herrlichkeit, welches selber wiederum von der scholastischen Philosophie für ein unerschaffenes erklärt wird. Ein Schritt weiter ist es demnach, wenn nun selbst geschaffene Wesen die Vermittelung des seligen Lebens an andre Creaturen übernehmen sollen, und durch die größere oder geringere Mittelbarkeit des Empfangens eine Verschiedenheit der Seligen bewirkt gedacht wird. Auch diese Vorstellung ist eine alte, schon dem Origenes eignende. Gemäß seiner Ueberzeugung von der erhabenen Reinheit, die den Gott Schauenden zukommt, kann er die Seligkeit des Schauens nicht allen Seligen zuerkennen. Auch im Himmel wird ja Gott wie auf Erden sein auserwähltes Volk haben. Gehört nun eine Seele nicht zu diesem Volk des Eigenthums, so ist sie darum noch nicht zu der Schaar der Unseligen verstoßen, <sup>^</sup>) nur eines geringeren Seligkeitsgrades, etwa des Schauen der heiligen Engel als eines Abglanzes der göttlichen Herrlichkeit, ist sie nach Origenes theilhaftig. <sup>^</sup>) Dieser Origenistischen Ansicht ist die des Areopagiten und des Erigena <sup>2)</sup> ähnlich, welche beide den Gott entfernter Stehenden die Erkenntniß desselben in alle Ewigkeit durch Höherstehende vermitteln lassen. — Wenn endlich auch Kapf's erwähnte Auslegung des „Aufgenommen werden in die ewigen Hütten" <sup>2)</sup> hierher zu zählen ist, so verdient freilich gegen sie und alles Aehnlich« Lavater's Bemerkung gehalten zu werden, daß alle Seligen nicht nur alles im Ueberfluß vor sich finden, sondern auch alles nicht gleichsam leihweise, sondern „als ihr Eigenthum " genießen werden. <sup>^</sup>)

Wenn in dem Bisherigen der Gesichtspunkt des seligen Genießens vorwaltete, sei es der Genuß der verklärten Leiblichkeit, sei es der der Kränze und Kronen, sei es endlich der des Schauens der göttlichen Herrlichkeit, so mußte auch der Gesichtspunkt der Thätigkeit, wenn auch einer solchen, in der der selige Genuß bereits mitgesetzt ist, bei dem Bestreben, den Spielraum der Verschiedenheit aussindig zu machen, zur Geltung kommen. Die Lehr-fähigkeit und -thätigkeit, welche nach Origenes gewissen Auserwählten eignet, — nämlich den in der Parabel über fünf und über zehn Städte Gesetzten, schien denen, welchen sie beiwohnt resp. vertraut ist, verglichen mit dem ihrer Leitung vertrauten Cötus, eine höhere Befriedigung zu gewähren. <sup>o</sup>) Wenn nun später die sonst nichts weniger als origenensirende alt-lutherische Kirche den Spielraum der Verschiedenheit in Betracht der accefforischen Güter einen weiten sein läßt, und die „freie Thätigkeit im Reiche Gottes" als ein solches accessorisches Gut gefaßt wird, <sup>«</sup>) so ist sie wenigstens in dieser Beziehung dem Origenes nicht ferne. Auch in neuester Zeit ist Ols Hausens') Auseinandersetzung über die Stufen der herrschenden Kraft mit der Steinmeyer's Ausführungen <sup>s</sup>) zu vergleichen sind, unter diese Kategorie der Versuche, die Gradverschiedenheit aus der Idee einer jenseitigen Thätigkeit zu begreifen, zu zählen.

So weit über den Spielraum der Unterschiede. Was auch von phantastischen Ausschreitungen im Einzelnen zu sagen wäre und gesagt ist, von den Richtungen, in welchen man denselben auszumessen trachtete, verhält sich keine gegen die Schriftanalogie feindselig. Die Möglichkeit, daß in jeder dieser Beziehungen sich jenseits Unterschiede verwirklichen, ist vollkommen offen zu halten. Welches sind dann aber, von Möglichkeiten abgesehen, die dogmatischen Gründe für die Nothwendigkeit der Grade?

Die geschichtliche Untersuchung wird es hier mit einer Gruppe dogmatisch-ethischer und einer anderen dogmatisch-metaphysischer Betrachtungen zu thun haben. Es kann nämlich erstens gefragt werden, ob in dem verschiedenen sittlichen Verhalten der Christen diesseits eine Nothwendigkeit verschiedener Grade jenseits gesetzt sei. Der Begriff der göttlichen Gerechtigkeit ist es, welcher diesen ersten Theil beherrscht. Auf der andern Seite ist zu fragen, ob etwa, von allem empirischen Verhalten des Christen diesseits abgesehen, die Idee eines in alle Ewigkeit fortdauernden Unterschiedes der Seligen in einem ewigen göttlichen Rathschluß begründet sei. Die Idee der göttlichen Weisheit wird es sein müssen, mit der es dieser zweite Abschnitt zu thun hat. — Mit Beziehung auf die Idee der Weisheit sowohl als die der Gerechtigkeit wird hier denn auch die bereits angeregte Frage: ob Seligkeits-, ob Herrlichkeitsgrade ihre weitere Beantwortung fordern.

Zunächst von der Begründung der Lehre von den Graden durch die Idee der Gerechtigkeit Gottes. Diese Gerechtigkeit hat es zu thun mit Werk und Arbeit des Christen. Da diese Arbeit der Christen im Reiche

Gottes erfahrungsmäßig eine gar verschiedene ist, verschieden nach Dauer und Umfang, so schien diesen augenfälligen Verschiedenheiten auch im Jenseits etwas entsprechen zu müssen. Haben die Apostel, meint Clemens, nicht vor vielen Andern gearbeitet? So wird ihnen, urtheilt er auch der Vorrang im Himmel nicht fehlen: und zwar eben wegen dieser ihrer Arbeit wird er ihnen nicht fehlen, denn von einer besonderen Vorzüglichkeit ihrer Natur zu reden, wäre widersinnig. ^) Des Origenes Urtheil ist dem des Clemens verwandt. Warum Paulus besonders selig sei, geht ihm aus 1. Cor. 15, 10. hervor, 2) und ää Natth. lom. XV §. 12 werden die Stufen der Seligkeit aus dem Schriftworte bewiesen, daß einem Jeglichen vergolten werden solle nach seinen Werken. Wer meinen wollte, unbillig sei es, daß noch über dieses Leben hinaus Unterschiede bestehen sollen ^ der würde selber, urtheilt Origenes,) in hohem Grade unbillig denken. Denn in der Iullsljualit»s der Seligen kommt gerade die höchste aeyuiws Gottes zum Vorschein; nur in der Ungleichheit des Lohnes kann die rechte Angemessenheit des Jenseitigen zum Diesseitigen zu Tage kommen. Auch nach Chrysostomus offenbart sich in der Ungleichheit des Lohnes die ganze Schärfe und Sorgfalt des gerechten Gerichtes Gottes; ^) nach Hieronymus scheint diesseits noch die Sonne Gerechten und Ungerechten, jenseits wird sie auch den Gerechten, einem jeden nur nach seinem Verdienst scheinen. °) Sich gegen diese Wahrheit zu verhärten, anzunehmen, daß Paulus, der große Arbeiter im Weinberge etwa mit jenem Blutschänder in Corinth im Himmel gleiches Ergehen habe, das muß Hieronymus einfach für Lästerung erklären. — Wenn weiter diemittelalterliche Dogmatikmit ihrer Lehre von den verdienstlichen Werken naturgemäß auf die letzteren die Grade der Seligkeit gründete,«) so kann selbst der akatholische Soein, eigentlich der Lehre von den Unterschieden abgeneigt, doch auch, hierin dem Hieronymus ähnlich, nicht recht denken, daß jener Paulus mit der Fülle seiner Thaten und Leiden vor dem Schächer nichts voraus habe, der erst im letzten Stündlein Christum als Herrn erkannt hat. ^) Würde denn nicht, urtheilt Bahrdt, 2) zwei Jahrhunderte später, die Gerechtigkeit Gottes ebenso verdunkelt, als sie jetzt scheint, wollten wir annehmen, daß ein Mensch, „der sein ganzes Leben Gott und der Tugend gewidmet hatte, nicht mehr Vortheil (?!) davon haben sollte, als ein anderer, der vielleicht in den letzten Wochen seines Lebens gerettet und bekehrt wurde?“ Ebenso hält es Knapp für unmöglich und durchaus der christlichen Lehre für unangemessen, daß ein Mensch, der sein ganzes Leben der Tugend und Frömmigkeit gewidmet hatte, einem andern, der erst spät seinen ehemaligen Sünden entsagt hat, in Absicht der Belohnung gleich gedacht werde.)

Nicht gering an Umfang, wie theilweise durch das Ansehen der Vertreter ist der hier aufgestellte Consensus der Lehrer, die bei der Begründung der Grade ein Hauptgewicht auf die Werke legen. Verstärkt wird das letztere z. B. noch durch die Erwägung, daß das Gericht Gottes nur insofern das absolut gerechte sei, als es eine vergleichende Schätzung der von allen Einzelnen aufzuweisenden Summen der Werke mit in sich einschließt. Schon Origenes, indem er, an ein Wort des Herrn anknüpfend, beim Gericht Ierusalem mit Sodom verglichen werden läßt, läßt durch eben diese Vergleichung Sodom gerettet werden. Und, wenn man Bedenken tragen will, die Sodomiter am Ende noch in den Himmel zu denken, ihnen etwa den geringsten Grad von seligem Leben beizulegen, so mangelt es Origenes auch nicht an anderen Instanzen. Aus der Vergleichung mit jeder höheren Vollkommenheit geht ja nach ihm für die leichter Befundenen ein verdammendes, aus der Vergleichung mit jeder geringeren für den, der schwerer wiegt, ein freisprechendes Urtheil hervor. Mit Christus verglichen, müssen da alle verdammt werden, Christus mit allen Andern verglichen, wird von allen gerechtfertigt: er wird gerechtfertigt auch von Abraham, Isaak und Iacob, wogegen seine Gerechtigkeit auch einen Moses verurtheilt. ^) Freilich war es der individuellen Eigenthümlichkeit dieser Betrachtung entsprechend, daß sie wenige Nachfolger gefunden hat. Wir finden Aehnliches bei Duns, wenn auch er von Christi Seligkeit in Vergleich mit der der Christen handelt und des höchsten Seligkeitsmaßes allein die Seele Christi theilhaftig sein läßt, da sie allein des Lebens Werk vollkommen gethan hat. °) Auch Gerhard hat diesen Gedanken bei seinen Erörterungen über die Seligkeitsgrade ausgedrückt: wer die Seligen mit einander vergleicht, muß erfahren, daß über allen Vergleich erhaben, Christus glänzt als Haupt im Reiche des Vaters.«)

Aber auch die einzelnen Positionen, die zusammen die Summa der Werke eines Christen ausmachen, werden den Zeugnissen der Kirche zufolge auf's genaueste erwogen und gegen einander abgewogen, wodurch dann begreiflicher Weise die Verschiedenheit des Facit sich steigert. Es konnte nicht fehlen, daß man hierbei zum Theil auf bedenkliche Wege kam. Einzelne Laster und Gebrechen — das ist der Grundton dieser

Aeußerungen — schließen nicht an und für sich aus von dem seligen Leben, voraus, gesetzt, daß überwiegende Tugend die Waage hält, — wohl aber gehen sie das Maß an, das jedem Einzelnen zu Theil wird. Origenes nimmt geradezu Anstoß an der Strenge eines apostolischen Wortes und wagt es, die letztere durch Interpretation zu verringern. Es kann hart erscheinen, sagt er, daß die Lästerer nicht sollen in das Reich Gottes kommen, ^) aber diese 'Härte ist nur scheinbar. „Das Reich Gottes" umfaßt ja nicht alle Seligen, sondern nur einen Theil derselben, einen besonders bevorzugten. 2) Aehnlich verhält es sich nach Origenes mit den sl)«/unl. Wenn weder Bischof noch Presbyter, noch die Wittwe, die es wahrhaft ist, eine zweite Ehe eingehen, so ist das unstreitig ein Vorzug, und die so gewandelt haben, umfängt im Himmel das Reich der Erstgeborenen und Reinen, die Gemeinde ohne Flecken und Runzel. Ist aber darum der <^«,<ag unselig? Mit Nichten. Denn empfängt er auch nicht die unverwelkliche Krone, so gehört er doch zu denen, die in Iesu Namen anrufen und selig werden.') So wird nach Origenes alles im Gericht gewürdigt, alles gegen einander gewogen, auch, wie wir weiter erfahren, Glaube gegen Werke, Werke gegen Glauben.') Mit den Werken mag es einmal, bei einer gewissen Trägheit und Lässigkeit des Christen nicht zum Besten bestellt sein; die Werke allein angesehen, möchte derselbe im Himmel, mit Origenes zu reden, zu Ruben, Gad, Halb-Manasse zu stellen sein. Aber es wird auch der Glaube gewogen, der ihn vielleicht der Gemeinschaft Israels diesseit des Iordans würdig macht: in Rücksicht auf beides wird die absolut gerechte Entscheidung getroffen und jeder mit seinem eigenthümlichen Seligkeitsgrade bedacht werden ^) Auch auf das Verhältnis; von Werken und Gnosis wird diese Ausgleichungs-Theorie ausgedehnt: wer tapfer und treu die Kämpfe des Lebens bestanden hat, dem wird der Mangel an Gnosis nicht schlecht» hin zum Schaden gereichen.«) — Nach Origenes ergeht sich später auch Basilius d. Gr. in ähnlichen Belrachtungen des gerechten Gerichtes Gottes: auch er findet in den gedachten Eompensationen den Grund verschiedener Grade. Sollte Gott, fragt er, das Böse in einem Christenleben anschlagen, das Gute aber in der Rechnung vergessen? Wie viele Märtyrer, die zuerst verläugnet haben, haben doch nachher den Kampf wider das Fleisch aufgenommen! Sie haben mit der Zunge, nicht mit dem Herzen (?) verläugnet. Da liegt nun der Herr nicht gleichsam auf der Lauer, das Böse zu erspähen, während er das Gute bei Seite läßt. Sollte er das schnelle Wort der Verläugnung, nicht aber die langen Martern in seine Gedenkbücher schreiben? Nein, ruft Basilius aus, wir sind Menschen, nicht Engel, Gott weiß es: eine Stunde ist es, die uns stehen und fallen sieht. Da gilt es, nach Basilius, zu wissen: ein Stern übertrifft den andern an Klarheit ^); wenn dem schlechthin Standhaften ein volleres Maß beschieden werde, so gehe doch auch der Gefallene, der aufsteht, der Seligkeit nicht verlustig.') Liegt in Form und Inhalt dieser Betrachtungen allerdings etwas Unangemessenes, noch mehr in demjenigen, was Hieron ymus beibringt. Er redet den Iovinian an, der „Jerusalem mit Kittos, Iudäa mit Kypros, Christus mit Zeno" vertauscht hat. „Sagst du: ni« log ich, so lügst du; gestehst du's, so trifft dich, was WeisH. 1, 11 geschrieben ist, und zwar, nach deiner eignen Lehre, zu ewiger Verdammnis)" Dagegen, meint Hieronymus, sei die Wahrheit die, daß auch, wer gelogen hat, selig, obwohl in minderem Grade werde.') Hierher gehört auch Theodoret's sehr abenteuerliche Meinung, daß der Herr die thörichten Iungfrauen im Gleichniß auch nicht einmal seiner Anrede gewürdigt haben würde, wären sie nicht eben Iungfrauen gewesen. Da sie dies sind, und wenigstens einige Compensation zu üben ist, werden sie wenigstens dieser Ehre theilhaftig. ^)

Allen bisherigen Begründungen der Lehre von den Graden eignete derselbe Typus. Der Widerspruch gegen den letzteren, von Einzelheiten ganz abgesehen, konnte nicht wohl ausbleiben. Die Theorie von der vergleichenden Schätzung der Werke konnte leicht anthropovathisch erscheinen, die von der Compensirung in falsche Satisfactionslehren ausarten, was bekanntlich im Mittelalter im reichsten Maße der Fall war. Ueberhaupt aber kam die Zeit, wo, Werke und Seligkeit in Zusammenhang zu bringen, für gefährlich und verderblich galt: natürlich um so mehr der Versuch, besondere Werke mit einer besonderen Seligkeit. Es fehlte nicht an solchen, die die ganze Lehre von den Graden wegen ihres katholisch-verdienstlichen Anstrichs verworfen wissen wollten. Schönfeld, zu diesen gehörig, kommt auf den Schächer zurück, der, obwohl er von Werken nichts aufzuweisen hat, doch an Seligkeit dem Petrus nicht nachstehe: Werk hin, Werk h», Christus habe so gut für den Schächer, wie für Petrus gelitten;«) und daraus folge die gleiche Seligkeit beider. — So weit ging man nun freilich nur selten. Quenstedt ist ganz bereit, die Lehre von den Graden beizubehalten; nur in der Begründung muß er entschieden abweichen. Der Grund der Grade der Seligen ist auf keine Weise in menschlichen Verdiensten, sondern in der freiesten Dispensation und Verheißung Gottes zu suchen.«)

Dieser Protest schloß nun freilich Unklarheiten ein. . Abgesehen davon, daß die Freiheit Gottes denn doch von der älteren Theorie nicht geläugnet ward, war mit der schon von Gerhard beliebten Unterscheidung: nicht wegen, sondern gemäß den Werken') doch gar zu wenig gewonnen. Ein Neuerer, Strauß, hatte Recht, wenn er der altprotestantischen Dogmatik hier eine „Verwickelung in besondere Schwierigkeiten" Schuld gab.«) Auch von anderem, als Straußischem Standpunkt, ist ja neuerlich anerkannt worden, daß alles was in der älteren protestantischen Kirche in Betracht der kehre von den Werken dem bekannten Amsdorsischen Paradoron nahe kommt, auf einer „Vermengung von Rechtfertigung und Seligkeit" beruhe. Mag man die letztere immerhin mit Schneckenburger^)) „als reales Correlat" der ersteren ansehen, die Rechtfertigung am Anfang der Christenlaufbahn — darin wird man Lange beipflichten — darf nimmer mit dem Vergeltungsgericht am Ende derselben verwechselt werden. 2)

Der Widerspruch, sahen wir, ist selbst auf Widerspruch gestoßen und zwar innerhalb des Gebiets der gereinigten Kirche. Soll von Vermittelung die Rede sein, so wird es vor allem auf die richtige Fassung des Begriffes der Werke ankommen, die, obwohl schon vor der Kirchnerneuerung und damit vor jenem Proteste Schönfeld's und Quenstedt's in ihren Elementen vorhanden,') doch bald vielfach verdunkelt, nun nachdem sie auch neuerdings wieder an's Licht gezogen, insonderheit jenen erwähnten Protesten gegenüber von Bedeutung ist. Nur von der Totalität der ihrer innerlichen Entstehung nach gewürdigten Werke, konnte nämlich gesagt werden, daß sie für die Eeligkeitsgrade Bedeutung haben. Nicht auf das Werk an sich, auf Charakter und Tugenden kommt es nun darum Lavater an, wlnn von der Anweisung des Platzes in der Residenz Gottes die Rede ist;^)) ja auf die Vertraulichkeit des diesseitigen Umgangs mit Iesu und die Innigkeit des Gebetes. °) Das „einzig« Werk, welches gelohnt wird", ist nun nach Schleier m acher dieTreue;von allen äußerlich genommen guten Werken aber gilt, daß es keins gibt, das nicht auch von solchen Menschen vollbracht werde, denen vor Christus gar kein eigentlicher Werth eignet.«) „Thatkräftige Erweisung christlichen Lebens in fruchtbarer Gesinnung, thatkräftige Entwicklung des durch Christum gewonnenen Lebenskeimes", das sind nach de Wette die Werke, nach denen bei Anweisung der Stelle im Himmel gefragt wird.?) Nach Heubner ist es die „Herzensstellung zu Iesu",«) nach Kapf die ^verläugnngsvolle und überwindende Nachfolge",') auf welche es, wie bei der Entscheidung: ob selig, so bei der: in welchem Grade selig? ankommt.

Iene tiefere Fassung des Begriffes der Werke ist eine Vorbedingung der wahrhaften Vermittelung der Gegensätze. Es ist von Wichtigkeit, die wirklichen Vermittelungsversuche kennen zu lernen. Bei manchen der älteren Protestanten müssen wir sie freilich mehr als geschehen voraussetzen, als daß wir den Modus derselben genau anzugeben vermöchten. So ist Calvin bekanntlich durchaus der Lehre von „der freiesten Dispensation" Gottes in Bezug auf die Seligkeit zugethan, darum aber in Betreff der Begründung der Grade nicht etwa mit Quenstedt einverstanden: es ist ihm vielmehr gar nicht zweifelhaft, daß der Triumph der Seligen um so größer ist, je herrlicher die Werke sind, die ihnen ins Ienseits folgen ^): wie er sich aber die Lösung dachte, erfahren wir nirgends ausdrücklich: da, wo man Zusammenhängendes darüber erwartet, begnügt er sich mit Verweisung auf die Schrift.2) Später hat man mit verschiedenem Glück wirkliche Lösungen angestrebt. So sieht Morus in der Seligkeit im Allgemeinen ein Gnadengeschenk Gottes, in dem besonderen Grade derselben einen Lohn der Werke, oder des der Gnade gegenüber unterlassenen ereatürlichen Widerstandes.)) Aehnlich wird von Vretschnid er die Behauptung, daß aus der Allgenugsamkeit des Verdienstes Christi die gleiche Seligkeit aller folge, auf eine Verkennung des Wesens der Seligkeit zurückgeführt: das Verdienst Christi ändert an diesem Wesen nichts, sondern erwirbt es den Christen, doch so, daß es dieselben zuvor diesseits zu Werken anregt, denen gemäß ihnen gelohnt wird aus dem mannigfaltigen Schatze göttlicher Gnaden. Auch daß die zu erlangende Seligkeit alles menschliche Verdienst unendlich überragt, ist nach Bretschneider kein Hinderniß der Anerkennung einer genauen Angemessenheit von Verdienst und Belohnung: wenn allen mehr gegeben werde, als sie verdienen, werde darum nicht allen das Gleiche gegeben; dabei sei natürlich die Rücksicht Gottes auf den Gehorsam der Christen eine freie. ^) Aus neuester Zeit gehört hierher noch die an Morus erinnernde präzise Unterscheidung de Wette's, wenn er für die Seligkeit im Allgemeinen den Glauben, für den Grad derselben die Werke entscheidend sein läßt;^)) eine Unterscheidung, die freilich trotz ihrer Präcision nicht befriedigt.



So innerlich man nun auch — und de Wette, wie wir sahen, nicht zum mindesten — den Begriff des Werkes faßte, daß der Grund der Grade doch immer im Umkreis des Subjectiven gesucht wurde, könnte als pelagianisirend und rationalisirend gelten. Die Abwehr dieser Deutung könnte in vollem Umfang nur im Zusammenhang mit der Lehre von der Gnade überhaupt geschehen. Es wäre hervorzuheben, daß das Gute nicht, wie nicht ohne den göttlichen Willen, so nicht ohne den menschlichen wirklich werde, daß, wenn nicht Göttliches und Menschliches zur Einerleiheit zusammensinken sollen, dem menschlichen Willen eine relative Selbstständigkeit zu vindiciren ist und daß Gott das Heil aller in unbedingter Allgemeinheit nur an sich, d. i. in Form des absoluten höchsten Zweckes will, dagegen in Wirklichkeit das Heil aller derer, welche das Heil frei ergreifen. ») In Bezug auf die Lehre von den Graden insonderheit aber ist zu behaupten, daß das Verhältniß auch des christlichen Willens dem göttlichen gegenüber ein verschiedenes ist, daß es Grade gibt des sterbenden Fleischeslebens ^) und daß der heilwärtige Glaube, die Quelle aller christlichen Werke, selber entweder ein schwacher oder ein starker ist. 2) Insofern es dann wahr ist, daß auch dieser Glaube selbst, trotz aller Verantwortlichkeit des Menschen für denselben, nach seiner größeren oder geringeren Intensität Gabe Gottes ist, kann srellch immer wieder von der „freiesten Dispensation“ in Bezug auf die Grade die Rede sein. Ia, da die Concurrenz göttlicher Wirksamkeit eine beständige ist, wird es nicht genügen, etwa den Anfang des Glaubenslebens, wie Origenes thut, 8) vorwiegend auf göttliche, das dem Anfang Treubleiben nach seinen verschiedenen Graden auf menschliche Rechnung zu setzen; insofern menschliches Verdienst in jedem Moment zugleich göttliche Gabe ist, wird die Ertheilung der Grade Verleihung von „Gnade für Gnade“ sein. ^) Gott wird, wenn er die Werke aus Gnaden lohnt „seine eignen Gaben krönen“. ^) „Er wird die Gnade der Seligkeit in Gemäßheit der Gnade der Heiligung nach seiner Barmherzigkeit zutheilen.“ «)

Daß es nun Seligkeit s- und nicht Herrlichkeitsgrade sind, auf welche die Betrachtung der verschiedenen Dignität christlicher Werke führen muß, darf nicht bezweifelt werden. Nur auf die Seligkeitsgrade im engeren Sinne paßt der Begriff des Gnadenlohnes, welcher den Einzelnen beigelegt werden soll laut der Verheißung. Die einzige wahrhafte Beschränkung dieser Ansicht liegt, nächst jenem vorläufig bei Beurtheilung der Lehre von Neidlosigkeit geltend gemachten Bedenken, in dem früher besprochenen biblischen Canon von der bei dem Gericht einzuhaltenden Rücksicht auf das ursprünglich beigelegte Maß') individueller Begabung, weil und insofern dasselbe für das christliche Werk von Bedeutung ist.

Gerade dieser Canon ist es nun, der uns zu der anderen Gruppe von Betrachtungen hinüberführt, die wir als dogmatisch-metaphysische bezeichneten. Ist nämlich jenes ursprüngliche Maß des Individuums diesseits ein von Gott gegebenes, so läßt sich fragen, ob nicht diese Verschiedenheit des individuell Christlichen als Weg und Werk der schöpferischen Weisheit Gottes auch in der jenseitigen Welt zu betrachten sei.

Wie die Gerechtigkeit Gottes mit dem christlichen Werk, so hat es die Weisheit Gottes mit der christlichen Entwicklung zu thun. Und, wenn es Seligkeitsgrade waren, die dem christlichen Werke beschieden wurden, so sind es Herrlichkeitsgrade, die wir, der Idee der Entwicklung gemäß, den christlichen Individuen jenseits beigelegt denken. Freilich ist hier zweierlei zu beachten. Einmal, daß wir die Frage nach einer über das Gericht hinausliegenden Entwicklung in einem gewissen Sinne von unserer Betrachtung ausgeschlossen haben, daß es sich also hier nur um das Stetigkeitsverhältniß zwischen dem diesseits vollendeten und dem jenseits beginnenden Leben handelt. Zweitens aber, daß der Gesichtspunkt der Entwicklung immer nur als ein ergänzender, die Idee des Gerichts und der Verantwortlichkeit für die Werke nichts weniger als beseitigender zu betrachten ist.

Die Idee der Entwicklung ist hier im Allgemeinen auf das christlich Individuelle zu beschränken. Dieser auch für die richtige Begründung die Lehre von den Graden wichtige Grundsatz ist freilich nicht immer genügend gewürdigt, und die Idee der Entwicklung auch auf das rein sittliche Gebiet übertragen worden: wie es scheinen könnte, mit dem günstigsten Erfolg für die Begründung unserer Lehre. Wenn nämlich die einzelnen Christen in verschiedenen sittlichen Entwicklungsstadien aus der diesseitigen Welt scheiden, die Idee der Entwicklung aber das — ihr zu bestreitende — Recht hätte, die des Gerichtes gleichsam zu verschlingen, — so wäre auch damit schon, wie es von dem Standpunkte des gerechten Gerichtes der Fall

war, die äußerste Mannigfaltigkeit der Grade in der jenseitigen Welt gegeben. Sehen wir auch hier in die Geschichte.

Was auch von Ausnahmen im Einzelnen zu melden wäre, die Freiheit von Sünde hat die Kirche im Allgemeinen als ein gemeinsames Gut aller Grade der Seligen angesehen. Selbst bei Origenes halten die beiden Behauptungen, daß „niemand ohne Sündenschmutz werde auferstehen können“, und daß es, „nur zu denken, daß wir schmutzig und besudelt auferstehen, ein Verbrechen sei“, sich insofern die Wage, als ihm zufolge ein „reinigendes Saerament“ den unreinen in den reinen Zustand hinüberbildet. ^) Daß die Negation der Sünde, wie jede Verneinung, kein mehr oder minder vertrage, ist der wiederholte Ausspruch auch der Scholastik.2) Auch von der lutherischen Dogmatik eines Quenstedt wird die mindeste Spur sündlichen Wesens an den Seligen geläugnet.) Sind nun Neuere dieser Ueberzeugung entfremdet, so ist das eine Folge eben davon, daß ihnen die Idee des Gerichts in der der Entwicklung untergeht. Daß nach Schleiermacher „eine vollkommene Gemeinschaft mit dem Vater und dem Sohne und untereinander nicht gleich könne von uns gefunden werden“/.) daß also mit Notwendigkeit Grade der Unvollkommenheit übrig bleiben, schließt, wie eine gewisse Verzweiflung an der göttlichen Allmacht, so eine Verkennung der Bedeutung des Gerichts ein. Daß nach Strauß in den gewöhnlichen Vorstellungen vom Gericht „eine gewaltsame Unterbrechung der selbstthätigen Entwicklung des menschlichen Geistes“ eine „mechanische Procddur, eine zauberische Operation“ 2) soll gesetzt sein, beweist seinen Fanatismus für die Idee der Entwicklung. Daß endlich der auch „philosophische“ Romang, — so sehr er sonst von Strauß abweicht, und z. B. die von dem letzteren „ungeistig“ gescholtene Vorstellung von den Wirkungen der Trennung des Leibes und der Seele probabel findet — doch schließlich im Gericht nur eine so große Veränderung will stattfinden lassen, als sie „der übrigen Verhältnisse wegen“ geschehen müsse, bezeichnet ein Schwanken zwischen den Ideen von Gericht und Entwicklung, wie es schwer zu verzeihen ist. ^) Nicht einmal die Idee der Entwicklung, kann man sagen, kommt, abgesehen von der Schädigung, welche durch Einführung einer Art von Naturproceß die Lehren von Freiheit und Gericht erleiden, bei diesen Aeüßerungen Neuerer zur rechten Geltung. Denn wenn „entwickeln“ heißt: in Gemäßheit und in Kraft des innersten Grundes einer Person oder Sache Veränderungen an derselben hervorbringen, so soll diesen Neuere zufolge das Gericht die Selbigkeit des allerdings auch bei dem Frömmsten diesseits immer noch sündigen Lebens eigentlich in keinerlei Hinsicht ändern; die Forderung auch nur schlechthiniger Allmäligkeit der christlichsittlichen Entwicklung aber müßte, genau genommen, selbst an den Wirklichkeiten diesseitigen christlichen Lebens zu Schanden werden.)

Wenn wir der Idee der Entwicklung, — insofern sie als ein Moment der Begründung der Lehre von den Graden auftrat — nach der rein sittlichen Seile hin das Recht versagten, so geschah das darum, weil in der That bei einer Erwägung, die es mit der durch das Gericht von Hemmungen befreien und nur noch durch Gott bedingten Entwicklung zu thun hat, allein die großen gottgesetzten Positiva menschlichen und christlichen Lebens, nicht aber zugleich die Sünde in Betracht kommt, die, obwohl in aller diesseitigen Entwicklung durch menschliches Verschulden als Hemmung noch mitgesetzt, doch in ihrem Wesen Negation göttlichen Willens ist. Ein Recht auf Entwicklung hat alles Ursprüngliche; ursprünglich aber ist auf unserem Gebiete alles christlich Individuelle. ')

Menschliche Individualität ist Einheit von Natur und Freiheit; auch christliche Individualität ist diese Einheit, aber die unter die Gnade gestellte. Dieser Bund hat, — und die christliche Lehre hat das, im Ganzen genommen, nie geläugnet, Bedeutung nicht nur für das diesseitige, sondern auch für das jenseitige Leben. — Nicht daß die christliche Individualität mit allen ihren Attributen schlechthin dieselbe bliebe, vielmehr wird sie ihrer rein irdischen Hüllen entkleidet, wird entwickelt, doch so, daß die Selbigkeit ihres Substrates gewahrt bleibt. Diese Entwicklung aber des christlich Individuellen wird sich von zwei verschiedenen Seiten anschauen lassen. Nehmen wir nämlich den Moment des Gerichts zum Standort, so wird die vollendete Seele einmal von ihren so oder so gearteten und gebildeten Gaben, von ihrer zeitlich und örtlich bedingten Eigenthümlichkeit manches hinübernehmen; auf der anderen Seite wird die diesseits gebildete Individualität eben in ihrer Eigenart für die jenseits zu empfangenden Gnadengüter ein gewisses Maß von Empfänglichkeit mitbringen. Die Stetigkeit der Entwicklung wird demnach einmal rückwärts schauend auf das Irdische, dann aber auch vorwärts schauend auf das Himmlische zu erwägen sein: die beiden Tendenzen,

deren wir die zu beseligenden Individuen theilhaftig denken, mögen vor der Hand die erste als eine conservative, die andere aber als eine receptive bezeichnet sein.

Was die Eriere betrifft, so ist die christliche Individualität zunächst und zum Theil durch die Zeit bedingt. Daß diese Bedingungen auch noch in das Jenseits hinein fortwirken, dafür scheinen einzutreten die Stimme n mancher Zeugen christlicher Wahrheit. Anders wohnte Christus, bemerkt Hieronymus, diesseits in den Corinthern, anders in den Ephesern, anders in Timotheus und Titus, anders endlich in Paulus, und diese Verschiedenheit hat auch für das Jenseits etwas zu bedeuten. Wenn man diese diesseitige Verschiedenheit als lediglich in Freiheitsmomenten wurzelnd und die Werke der Einzelnen als mehr oder minder verdienstlich ansehen wollte, so hütet sich Hieronymus wenigstens, eine Seala des Verdienstes aufzustellen. Auch dürfte, das Werk ganz innerlich gefaßt, Timotheus schwerlich selbst einem Paulus nachstehen: vielmehr liegt es nahe, was auch dem Hieronymus wohl immer noch die Betrachtung getrübt hat, bei seinen Worten zu denken an Pauli größere Gaben, zumeist aber an die Priorität und Unmittelbarkeit seiner Berufung. Auch wenn dann mit Beziehung auf Galater 4, 19 dem Gebärer von Hieronymus ein größeres Verdienst beigelegt wird, als dem Geborenen, so wird doch wohl, genau genommen, der Unterschied anderswo, als im Verdienste zu suchen und mit der Priorität des Gebärenden ein eigentliches Verdienst nicht gesetzt sein. ^) Ist es nun in diesem Verhältnisse des Paulus zu den Galatern und zu Timotheus z. Th. die Zeit, welche diesseits die Unterschiede bedingte, die auch jenseits noch fortwirken, so war weiter auch, wie bald Theodoret<sup>2)</sup> und Augustinus<sup>3)</sup> wenigstens z. Th. erkannten / der Unterschied der Patriarchen, Propheten, Apostel und späteren Märtyrer Jesu durch die Zeit bedingt, und daß solche irdische Bedingtheiten ihr ewiges Gegenbild in himmlischen haben sollen, konnte der Glaubensanalogie in keiner Weise zuwider, ja mußte ihr gemäß geachtet werden. Freilich konnte es nicht fehlen, daß, hatte sich einmal eine übertriebene Schätzung gewisser, seien es Werke, seien es Leiden, die nur in gewissen Zeiten der diesseitigen Reichsentwicklung zu thun oder zu erdulden waren, festgesetzt, eine Neigung geltend machte, die göttlichen Schranken zu sprengen und die Attribute der Dulder und Helden, die göttlicher Fügung gemäß auch im Jenseits einen Bestandtheil ihres individuellen Seins ausmachen mußten, auch denen beizulegen, welche diesseits eines gleichen Lebens und Leidens nicht hatten theilhaftig werden sollen. Die Bedingungen des Martyriums z. B. konnten auch von den eifrigsten Christen in einem ruhigen Zeitalter, einem christlichen Staate nicht geschaffen werden. Und doch gefiel man sich später darin, den später und anders Nollendeten, gleich als ob sie dessen bedürftig wären, dieselbe himmlische Herrlichkeit beizulegen. Auch der h. Martinus gehört nach Sulpicius Severus zu denjenigen, die ihre Kleider im Blute des Lammes gewaschen haben; die eigenthümliche Herrlichkeit eines Märtyrers werde ihm nicht mangeln. Denn hättet er unter Roro und Decius gelebt, et würde den Zeugentod bestanden haben. ^richtiger aber hatte schon Augustinus<sup>4)</sup> Bedenken getragen, den Unterschied der Zeiten zu verwischen. Wenn er den Hieronymus mit dem Täufer vergleicht, so hat freilich auch der erstere getragen Schläge, Schimpf, Schande und Spott der Menschen: aber durch das Beil des Henkers sein Leben zu beschließen, ist ihm nicht vergönnt gewesen: darum, ob er wohl die Kränze der Jungfräulichen und Lehrer auf seinem Haupte vereinigt, die Krone des Martyriums ist ihm im Himmel versagt. Ist dieser Standpunkt Augustin's, alle Verdienstlichkeit solches der Zeit eigenthümlichen Christenleidens natürlich bei Seite, der gesunde und schon diesseits neidlose Standpunkt, so scheint auch dem mittelalterlichen Tauler ^) der Gedanke wenigstens vorzuschweben, daß Bekenner und Jungfrauen und alle Heiligen, die alle ihre eigene Zeit gehabt und in ihr gewurzelt waren, vermöge der Continuität der Entwicklung auch ihre eigene Herrlichkeit im Himmel genießen müssen. Auch wenn neuerlich Olshausen dem Augustinus „wegen seines über Jahrhunderte durch die Kraft der Wahrheit geübten Einflusses“ eine besondere Stelle im Himmel zu vindiciren scheint, so möchte der Gedanke sehr nahe liegen, daß diesseits wie jenseits die Stelle des Kirchenvaters durch die Zeit mitbestimmt sei, in der er die mächtigen Wurzeln seiner christlichen Individualität diesseits nach göttlichem Willen getrieben hatte. Auch, wenn nach Hoffmann<sup>2)</sup> Luther, Calvin und Andere jetzt in vielfachem Glanze strahlen, die Eigenart dieses Glanzes wird mit der Zeit der diesseitigen Reichsentwicklung, in die sie gestellt waren, zu thun haben. — Wie weit man diesen Betrachtungen folgen wird, das wird sich freilich darnach richten, ob und wie viel Spielraum man hier dem Zufalle zugesteht. Ist wirklich, wie Steinmeyer<sup>3)</sup> behauptet, Zufälliges an dem Ruhm der Maria, die den Herrn gesalbt hat, ist Zufälliges an dem der opferwilligen Wittwe, ja selbst etwa eines Luther u. A., so könnte dies Zufällige hier nicht in Betracht kommen.

Die Bedingungen der diesseitigen christlichen Individualität entziehen sich nun allerdings, von dem Allgemeinen, etwa der Zeit, abgesehen, in welcher sie sich gestaltet, der Berechnung dergestalt, daß wir, wo es sich um die Gesamtheit aller christlichen Individualitäten handelt, als den letztlich wirksamen Factor nur den schaffenden, erlösenden und heiligenden Gott erkennen; dennoch folgt gerade aus der absoluten Originalität des Wesens der letzteren auch ihr individueller Fortbestand im Jenseits, und damit der der Gaben, die als geschaffene, gelöste und geheiligte Natur dem innersten Freiheitskern des Individuums gleichsam vermählt sind.

Das christliche Alterthum hat für dieses ewige Recht des christlich Individuellen ein Auge, aber in den verschiedenen Vertretern seiner Anschauungsweise ist es von verschiedener Klarheit. Origenes ist wenig consequent, wenn er auf der einen Seite den heiligen Geist als das Princip auch des Individuellen im Christenthum nicht stückweise mitgetheilt werden läßt noch in einer Vertheilung der Gaben, \*) und doch auf der anderen Seite individuelle Beschränkungen annimmt, die auch bis zum Ende der Dinge fort dauern. °) Es ist nicht ein bloßer Streit zwischen christlicher Hoffnung und wissenschaftlichem Streben, ^) der sich in diesem Widerspruche darstellt, es ist ein Defect auch gerade des christlichen Denkens, der ihn an der fort dauernden Beschränktheit christlichen Einzeldaseins im Jenseits gelegentlich Anstoß nehmen heißt. Immer aber ist der Gesichtspunkt der Gabe doch bei Origenes klar festgehalten, den man bei manchen Alten sehr am unrechten Orte mit dem des Verdienstes vertauscht findet. Wenn es individuelle Gabe, nicht Gebot ist, jungfräulich und ehelos zu leben, so ist schon dem Ambrosius') diese Wahrheit verdunkelt. Jungfrauen und Ehefrauen eine gleiche Seligkeit verheißen, — das Wort gefaßt in dem erwähnten engeren Sinne, das gilt dem Ambrosius als barbarisches Geschrei verwirrungssüchtiger Gleichmacher. Es geht seine Meinung nicht darauf, daß besonderen Gaben diesseits auch besondere jenseits entsprechen werden, dies wäre eben unverwerflich, — sondern darauf, daß dem größeren Verdienste diesseits auch größerer Lohn jenseits entsprechen müsse. — Keuscher ist Augustinus, wenn er bemerkt, daß auf eine andere Weise im Himmel glänzen werde die eheliche Keuschheit, auf andere die jungfräuliche Reinheit«) wenn er von himmlischen Eonsonanzen handelt, von dem Zusammenklang verschiedener, aber nimmer disharmonischer Töne im Himmel \*): die verschiedene Herrlichkeit ist keine ungleiche Seligkeit. Noch viel deutlicher tritt der Gesichtspunkt der Gabe bei einigen Späteren hervor, wenn auch immer noch nicht mit voller Bestimmtheit. Es gibt, sagt Gregor der Nazianzener, vielerlei christliche Werke und Tätigkeiten; nicht alle sollen alles thun, auch nicht alle dasselbe. Warum drängt ihr euch, ruft er, alle zu dem beschaulichen Leben, das doch, — für den Unberufenen und anders Begabten — gerade seine großen Gefahren hat! Gehe jeder seine gewiesene Bahn und bestrebe sich, sie gut zu durchlaufen. Dann wird er in einer der vielen Wohnungen, die bei dem Vater sind, wie das Schiff in dem Hafen anlangen. ^) Theodoret von Cyrus macht ganz ähnliche Betrachtungen: freilich seien die Ordnungen der Himmlischen verschieden: Patriarchen, Apostel, Märtyrer, dann Jungfräuliche und Eheliche, auch Reiche und Arme, Staatsmänner und Eremiten; aber darauf komme es an, daß man hier seinem Beruf, er sei welcher er wolle, Ehre mache, und nicht lau und lässig, sondern tapfer und treu ihn verwalte.«) Fehlt bei diesen Lehrern eigentlich nur die ausdrückliche Anerkennung der Gabe als solcher, so ist selbst bei Gregor dem Großen das Streben nicht zu verkennen, in dieser Beziehung der Wahrheit gerecht zu werden. Anerkannt wird z. B., daß auch Eheleute, — nicht Jungfräuliche allein, recht handeln können und sich sehnen, den allmächtigen Gott zu schauen. Freilich ist Gregor nicht mächtig genug, dem Strome der Zeit zu widerstehen: den Jungfrauen, die ja ihren Sinn nicht theilen zwischen Himmel und Erde, ihnen gebührt schließlich nach Gregor der Vorzug diesseits und jenseits. Und, wie mit den Jungfrauen, so ergeht es Gregor mit den Lehrern: daß ihr Charisma in Ewigkeit nicht verloren sei, will man ihm wohl nicht bestreiten. Aber daß er die, „die nicht nur das eigene Fleisch meistern, sondern auch Andere am Sündigen hindern“, wegen solchen Verdienstes besonderer Seligkeit theilhaftig ^) macht, ist ein Beweis von der Verwirrung, in welche die Zeit verfallen war.

Das Mittelalter, bei all seinem Verdienststolze auf praktischem Gebiet, hat doch auch Denker hervorgebracht, die dasjenige, was wir die conservative Tendenz des christlich Individuellen nannten, klar und zum Theil überscharf betont haben. Scotus Erigena, auch sonst gewissermaßen «in Prediger in der Wüste seines dunkeln Jahrhunderts, legt ein sehr entschiedenes Gewicht darauf, daß, wie jede Creatur, so auch jeder

einzelne Christ eine bestimmte Grenze seines Seins und seiner Gaben habe und daß diese Grenze in Ewigkeit bleiben werde. Wenn darum verheißen werde, die Christen sollten Gott von Angesicht zu Angesicht schauen, so heiße das doch nicht etwa, daß sie im Stande sein würden, Gottes Dreieinigkeit von Grund aus zu erkennen, sondern nur, daß ihnen Erscheinungen derselben würden zu Theil werden, deren sie sich erfreuen dürften, wie es theils Geschöpfen im Allgemeinen, theils dem besonderen Individuum, de» Bedingungen seiner Natur gemäß, erlaubt sei. 2) Auch dem Thomas ist eine ähnliche Betrachtungsweise eigen. Die christlichen Individuen, von Anfang her graduell unterschieden, werden von Gott, dem Beweger, nach seiner unendlichen Weisheit zum Ziel geleitet: ein Ziel, welches, wie Thomas sagt, nicht Gott selber sein kann in pantheistischem Sinne; 2) —dann wären, wenn überhaupt selig, es alle in gleichem Maße; vielmehr sei das Ziel für jeden einzelnen Christen ein verschiedenes, gleichsam vor Gott gelegenes, welches der uranfänglichen individuellen Bestimmtheit gemäß für den einen in größerer, für den anderen in geringerer Gottferne liege. Wenn diese Anschauungen eines Scotus und Thomas von dem Gesichtspunkte der individuellen Entwicklung befriedigen, so sind sie allerdings insofern mit Vorsicht aufzunehmen, als sie, für sich genommen, die Lehre von der Freiheit gefährden können.

Wenn sich in diesen Zeugnissen mittelalterlicher Dogmatik die conservative Tendenz des christlich Individuellen sogar mit Gefährdung der Lehre von der Freiheit anerkannt findet, so bat auf der anderen Seit« das Individuelle, also das dem Freiheitsgebiete zum Theil wirklich Entnommene in dieser Zeit noch sehr nach Anerkennung zu ringen. Der Mystiker Tauler z. B. indem er auf die vielberegte Frage, ob jungfräuliches, ob eheliches Leben, zurückkommt, muß freilich das demüthige Eheweib der hoffärtigen Jungfrau auch in Absicht auf die Seligkeit vorziehen; dennoch ergeht er sich, während er die göttliche Einsetzung der Ehe übergeht, im Preise der Jungfrauschaft als der im Himmel erfundenen, im Himmel von den Engeln erlernten, im Himmel auch nach dem Gericht in den höchsten Ehren verbleibenden. \*) — Möchten, wäre zu sagen, die Ehren immerhin groß sein, das würde doch klar bleiben müssen, daß, — die Jungfräulichkeit als Gabe gefaßt, — von Vergeltung, und damit von gesteigerter Seligkeit nicht zu reden ist.

Solcher widerspruchsvollen — und verderblichen — Fassung der Bethätigung verschiedener Gaben als ebenso vieler Verdienste hat die Reformation in weitem Umfang ein Ziel gesetzt; nicht in allen ihren Trägern freilich nüchtern genug und besonnen. Wenn Petrus Martyr dazu fortschritt, überhaupt die Continuität des Diesseitigen und Ienseitigen in Bezug auf die Gaben zu laugnen, indem er dabei auf das Verschwinden der in der apostolischen Zeit vorkommenden Gnadengaben schon in der diesseitigen Entwicklung der Kirche hinwies, so war dies eine Meinung, die einmal etwas wie die spätere Irvingianisch« Antithese hervorzurufen geeignet, dann aber auch in Bezug auf die escha«, tologische Frage unhaltbar war. ^) Besonnen und klar wird dagegen die Bedeutung der Gabe in Beziehung auf ewiges Leben und Seligkeit in dem folgenden Jahrhundert von Rivet gewürdigt, wenn er z. N. Charismen der Ehelichen nicht minder als der Unbeweibten anerkennend, beiden auch im Himmel ihr eigenthümliches Lob nicht abspricht. ^) Daß die Polemik gegen die Jungfrauen, die es nur dem Leibe nach find, und die nie zur Herrlichkeit eingehen, ihm noch zu thun macht, wird man begreiflich finden. Ganz kurz vor Rivet hatte schon Ealirt den Umkreis der Gaben, die eine besondere Verherrlichung auch im Himmel gewärtigen, mit großartigem Sinne sehr weit gezogen. Nicht die Jungfrauen allein, — nicht die Beschaulichen, nicht die Lehrer, die Märtyrer allein, könnte man hinzusetzen — nein, auch die Kriegesfürsten, die ihrer Gabe brauchend, von der Liebe Christi getrieben zur Vertheidigung des Glaubens die Waffen ergriffen haben, werden nach ihm ihrer eigenthümlichen Herrlichkeit nicht verlustig gehen. ^) Daß später die Lehrer noch häufig, wie bei Quenstedt, ^) als in dieser Eigenschaft eigenthümlich zu verherrlichende hervorgehoben werden, °) darf natürlich für einen Rückschritt nicht gelten, vorausgesetzt, baß aller Anspruch auf besondere Verdienstlichkeit diesseits und besondere Seligkeit jenseits, soweit beides mit de« bloßen Amtscharakter zusammenhängen sollte, ausdrücklich aufgegeben wird.

Bonden NeuereniftdieMeinung,daß besondere aufbestimm ten Gaben beruhende Werke und Lebensweisen eine Anwartschaft auf besondere Seligkeit geben, mit Recht durchaus verlassen worden; nicht durchweg aber die nicht eben haltbarere, daß die vorzügliche Begabung überhaupt eine vorzügliche Seligkeit nach sich ziehe. „Vorzügliche Fähigkeiten und Hülfsmittel“, behauptet Storr«) alles Ernstes, „müssen den Christen im

Guten weiter bringen und also auch aus eine höhere Stufe der Seligkeit erheben", als geringe; eine Behauptung, die auch durch die Einschränkung, daß „die Vorzüge des Begabteren dem minder Begabten nicht nachtheilig werden können", von ihrer Unhaltbarkeit nichts einbüßt. Aehnliches gilt in neuester Zeit von Romang, wenn er aus der auch in Ewigkeit nicht aufzuhebenden verschie denartigen individuellen Beschränkung und Begabung des christlichen Einzelwesens eine entsprechend verschiedenartige „Verringerung der Seligkeit" folgert.^) Denn wenn auch immer zu beherzigen ist, daß Seligkeit und sittliche Vollkommenheit zusammen sind, und die erstere niemals jeweiliger subjectiver Befriedigung gleich zu setzen ist, — daß Seligkeit und metaphysische Vollkommenheit untrennbar sind, wird doch nicht behauptet werden dürfen. 2)

Dagegen wird nun von Anderen die Gabe in ihrer ewigen Bedeutung auch neuerdings richtig gewürdigt. Nach Lavater ist bei dem Eintritt in das jenseitige Leben nichts absolut neu zu gestalten, sondern die alten Triebe und Kräfte nach ihrer unendlichen individuellen Verschiedenheit werden „entwickelt, hergestellt, frei gemacht".«) Soll von Neuem die Rede sein, so kann es doch nur so sein, daß —wie wir Schleiermacher hinzufügen lassen, des ursprünglich verliehenen Maßes bei dessen Ertheilung nicht vergessen wird,^) nur so, daß darum nach einem jenseitigen Herrlichkeitsgrade diesseits nicht zu trachten, derselbe nicht vom Erlöser zu erbitten ist, da des Vaters weisheitsvoller Nach von Ewigkeit über dessen Verleihung entschieden hat.2) Dabei modisiziren die Gaben, wie neuerlich Hoffmann bemerkt, allerdings wie diesseits das Leben des Glaubens, so jenseits das des Schauens;«) ein anderer ist auch nach Steinmeyer jenseits ein Petrus, ein anderer ein Paulus, ein Iacobus, Iohannes.')

Was endlich die receptive Tendenz des diesseitigen individuell Christlichen angeht, so hat man sie von Alters her gern in Bildem verdeutlicht, wenn auch der eigentliche Ausdruck ebenfalls angestrebt wird. Schon Origenes braucht, um die individuell verschiedene Empfänglichkeit für die jenseitigen Güter darzustellen, ein Bild, vom Gemälde nämlich, dem ein Entwurf zu Grunde liege, auf dem dann die Farben sich bequem auftragen lassen; der anzuwendende Griffel ist der Griffel unseres Herm Iesu Christi, und nach Art des diesseitigen Entwurfes richtet sich jenseits die Ausführung.«) Besonders beliebt aber ist das Bild von Gefäßen verschiedenen Umfangs, das schon von Ambro sius<sup>o</sup>) und dann von Hieronymus") gebraucht wird: in jedes der verschiedenen Gefäße wird fo viel von der Gnaden« fülle gegossen, als sie zu fassen vermögen. Auch das Bild von der leiblichen Sättigung wird angewendet, z. B. von Prosper Aquitanus:") wie die letztere allen, die da satt genannt werden, gleichmäßig eignet, obwohl die Einzelnen nicht gleich viel Speise, sondern ihrem Verlangen gemäß genossen haben, so werden auch alle Seligen, obwohl einer und derselben seligen Befriedigung theilhaftig, doch graduell in Betracht der Herrlichkeitsgrade verschieden sein. Die Reihe dieser Bilder zu ergänzen, mag dann noch des von Seriver aus Drelincourt mitgetheilten gedacht sein: Krystalle verschiedener Größe werden alle von den Strahlen der Sonne an allen Enden erleuchtet und „jedes wird das Bild der schönen Sonne, die es ansieht, ausdrücken, aber solches wird nicht hindern, daß sie nach unterschiedlicher Größe nicht sollten mehr oder weniger Licht empfangen, und daß die Sonne nicht sollte mehr oder minder in einem oder dem anderen erscheinen": also ist es auch nach Drelincourt mit der Verschiedenheit der Seligen im Himmel. Bon Scriver aber wird seinerseits das Gleichniß von den verschiedenen Blumen, denen dieselbe Sonne „ihren Ginstuß schenkt" hinzugefügt. ^)

Zu den Versuchen aber, die verschiedene Receptivität des individuell Christlichen für die jenseitigen Güter in eigentlichem Ausdruck zu beschreiben, rechnen wir schon Gregor's Aeüßerung über die Correspondenz der Gaben diesseits und der Wohnungen des Vaters im Ienseits. Die letzteren sollen voll werden, keine vergeblich bereitet sein: bei Gott geschieht ja nichts umsonst. 2) Die Empfänglichkeit für die besondere Herrlichkeit aller dieser einzelnen Wohnstätten wird also diesseits gemäß der verschiedenen Gaben gewirkt werden. — Im Mittelalter ist es dann Duns vor allen, der dieser verschiedenen Empfänglichkeit der Individuen das Wort redet. Der Trieb nach einem bestimmten Grade geschöpflcher Herrlichkeit ist vom Anbeginn, wie einer jeden vernünftigen Creatur, so insonderheit jedem Christen von Gott eingepflanzt worden. Wenn dieser seine vollkommene Berechtigung hat bei allen, die selig werden, so ist das Trachten nach einem höheren, als dem ursprünglich bestimmten Grade schon darum unmöglich, weil der alles wirkende Gott zu einem solchen Trachten nicht mitwirkt. Ist aber das Ziel des berechtigten Trachtens

erreicht, so ist jedes Seligen Erkenntniß- sowohl als Willenstrieb — und der anerschaffene nicht minder als der in Gemäßheit des letzteren im diesseitigen Leben ausgebildete vollkommen gesättigt, so daß er schlechterdings nichts außer dem, was er hat, verlangen oder ersehnen mag.‘) So die Scholastik: von Neueren aber heben wir besonders Lavater hervor. Alle diesseitigen Gaben sind nach ihm von vorn herein für das Jenseits verliehen; hier liegt ihr letzter Zweck. „Diejenigen Kräfte werden schon hier mit besonderer Sorgfalt geübt, deren der Einzelne zu seiner ewigen Bestimmung am meisten bedarf.“^ Diese diesseits zu wirkende Bereitschaft ist dabei durchaus individueller Art: ein eigenes Paradies, ein für die besonderen Talente und Fähigkeiten, ja für die persönlichen Neigungen und für den besonderen Geschmack ausgesuchter Ort, °) eine Thätigkeit, zu der der Einzelne in dem ewigen Reiche durch alle Ewigkeiten hinauf am besten zu brauchen ist, eine Stelle, wohin sich unter allen Millionen Einwohnern des Himmels keiner so gut, so genau schickte, keiner so unentbehrlich wäre, als eben der Einzelne, >) wird ja Lavater zufolge von Gott, wenn er den Einzelnen diesseits zur Herrlichkeit vorbereitet, für ihn in Aussicht genommen. Auch Lavater's älterem Zeitgenossen Bah rot war es ja schon als ein „würdiger Gegenstand des großen Geistes“ erschienen, zu untersuchen, wie groß und mannigfaltig die Fähigkeit des Menschen ist, selig zu sein. Da Gott keinem Geschöpfe die Receptivität zu etwas geben könne, ohne die Absicht zu haben, ihm dasselbe irgend einmal selbst zu geben, so werde, hatte Bahrdt geurtheilt — so groß und mannigfaltig die Fähigkeit des Menschen sei, selig zu sein, auch diese Seligkeit — oder vielmehr Herrlichkeit — selber sein.») In neuester Zeit ist endlich auch Martensen auf diese Frage eingegangen, und zwar so, daß er einen besonderen Gesichtspunkt hervorkehrt. Iene Receptivität war nämlich offenbar nicht als eine Bereitschaft zu denken, schlechthin äußerliche, dem seligen Subjecte fremde Güter zu empfangen, sondern vielmehr als eine Fähigkeit, gerade mit dem innersten Wesenskern in die himmlischen Verhältnisse einzugehen. Was da nun auch diesseits die unter die Gnade gestellte Freiheit an der individuell gearteten Natur geleistet, wie sie die letztere relativ verklärt haben mochte, eine göttliche Action bei dem Eintritt in das neue Leben mußte trotzdem nothwendig erscheinen. Diese nennt Martensen eine Metamorphose der Talente;‘) eine relative Receptivität für den durch dieselbe zu erreichenden Grad von Herrlichkeit ist dabei offenbar bereits vorher vorhanden zu denken. Durch Martensen's Ausführungen sind übrigens die erwähnten von Martyr erhobenen Bedenken, wohl ohne bewußte Polemik gegen den letzteren, so gut wie erledigt.

Zum Schluß mag noch von einer Combination der beiden von uns getrennt behandelten Begründungstheorien die Rede sein, einer Begründung der Grade, die zwar von dem Gesichtspunkt der Entwicklung, aber nicht der individuellen, zwar von dem Gesichtspunkt der Werke, aber nicht des Gerichts ausgeht: wir meinen jene Theorie, die aus der verschiedenen Dignität christlicher Werke einerund einer behaupteten Rückerinnerung an dieselben im Jenseits andererseits verschiedene offenbar nicht Herrlichkeits-, sondern Seligkeitsgrade ableitet. Die Vorfrage: ob überhaupt eine solche Rückerinnerung anzunehmen, können wir getrost mit Steinmeyer dahin entscheiden, daß die Auferstandenen zwar „alles das vergessen haben werden, was bloß ihr sinnliches Erdenleben berührt hatte, daß sie aber an das zurückdenken können, was ihnen bereits hier zu einer Kraft des ewigen Lebens gediehen war“.\*)

Schon die alte Kirche hat nun mit dieser Rückerinnerungstheorie auch die Lehre von den Graden in Beziehung gesetzt. Hierher gehört es, wenn Clemens, allerdings im Zusammenhang mit seinen Vorstellungen von einer allmäligen Reinigung im Jenseits, von einer Schaam über die begangenen Sünden redet, °) die natürlich, je nachdem die letzteren so oder so beschaffen waren, größere oder geringere Abzüge von dem Vollmaß der Seligkeit machen muß. Auch Origenes weiß von einem Gedächtnis der Sünde im Jenseits; ja in diesem Gedächtnis ist eigentlich ihm zufolge wesentlich die Strafe beschlossen, die auch denen, die endlich selig werden — und dieser Lehrer denkt ja alle am Ende selig — nicht erlassen wird.^) Ist nun aber diese Vorstellung von einer Bestimmtheit des jenseitigen Zustandes durch die Erinnerung an das Diesseits im Allgemeinen eine alte, so ist doch die Meinung, daß auch die wirklich Vollendeten, in ihrem seligen Zustande dauernd Befestigten noch immerfort unter diesen Einflüssen des Diesseits stehen, neueren Ursprungs. Es konnte nicht fehlen, daß die Sache nun auch insofern anders gewendet wurde, als nicht an die Erinnerung an diesseitige Niederlagen des Geistes an sich gedacht, sondern die in verschiedenem Maße beseligende Rückerinnerung auf die in verschiedenem Maße herrlichen Siege des Geistes im Diesseits bezogen wurde: mit Recht gewiß, insofern nur in Bezug auf solche Siege des Geistes die Theorie der

Entwicklung, auch diese, gewissermaßen psychologische, Anwendung finden dürfte. 2) Petrus Martyr ist es — merkwürdig genug, der biblische Antagonist der Lehre von der Verschiedenheit der Grade, — der von dieser Seite her wenigstens die Probabilität des Dogma's nicht gerade in Abrede stellen möchte. Es ist wohl denkbar, sagt er, daß einige Selige, wenn sie bedenken, daß Gott durch sie mehr und größere Thaten gethan hat, als durch andere, nun deshalb mehr Freude und Ergötzen finden werden, als die anderen, die sich so großer durch sie vollbrachter Dinge nicht erinnern können. Bei Petrus tritt freilich diese Ansicht, begreiflich genug, nur beiläufig auf; viel zuversichtlicher wird sie später von Schubert vorgetragen. Die Freude der Seligen wird nach ihm um so größer sein müssen, „je härter und gefährlicher der Kampf und je bitterer die Leiden gewesen sind, die sie vormals ausgestanden haben“. Am entschiedensten aber tritt doch Knapp für die Sache ein: es sei gewiß, daß ein Theil der himmlischen Seligkeit im Bewußtsein und Andenken an das im vorigen Leben genossene und gelohnte Gute bestehen werde. Zunächst darf die Tragweite dieser Theorie nicht überschätzt werden. Wer in den vollkommeneren Zustand übergegangen ist, für den ist die Erinnerung an den unvollkommeneren, insofern auch aus ihr noch Freude stieß, von secundärem Belang. Auch wäre zu bedenken, daß, wie Schleiermacher einmal ausführt, selbst im diesseitigen Leben an die Rückerinnerung an vollbrachtes Gute sich gerne die Sünde zu heften pflegt, daß wir darum im Allgemeinen schon diesseits wohl thun, „was überstanden ist und vollendet, zu vergessen und nicht weiter darauf zurückzusehen“, um alle Selbstgefälligkeit, die auch bei Christen sich gern noch einschleicht, zu meiden. Im Uebrigen haftet dieser Theorie nichts an, was dem Glauben zuwiderliefe. Sie will, obwohl sie unmittelbar mit der Idee des Gerichts nichts zu thun hat, dieselbe nicht verdrängen noch vertreten, und beruht ihrerseits auf dem an sich keineswegs gefährlichen, vielmehr wahren Satze, daß — wie das Böse sich selber bestraft macht — so auch das Gute zum Theil schon nach einem dem irdischen Geiste immanenten Gesetze sich selber belohnt macht. — Am Schlusse unserer Untersuchung eine gesichtete Summa der Wahrheiten, die nun als Gesammttertrag derselben gelten könnte, aufzustellen, würde einem Hinausgehen über die uns gestellte Aufgabe gleichkommen. Nur einige Andeutungen scheinen im Rückblick auf den durchlaufenen Weg nothwendig. Was den grundlegenden biblischen Abschnitt betrifft, so ist ersichtlich, daß sich eine endschaftliche Beantwortung der Frage, ob nicht doch etwa der Luc. 12, 48 aufgestellte Canon bis zu einer wirklichen Egalisirung der von den Einzelnen beim Gericht aufzuweisenden christlichen Lebensarbeit hinaufreiche, an keiner Stelle unserer Betrachtung ergeben hat. Es konnte das nicht der Fall sein. Denn wie die Frage, ob viele, ob wenige selig werden, wie die andere, ob etwa die „Noachischen Sünder oder sonst geschichtliche Personen“ schlechthin und ewig verdammt sind, weder in der Affirmative noch in der Negative direct zu beantworten ist, so fehlt auch hier für die Entscheidung alles zureichende Material, eine Statistik christlicher Rechtschaffenheit sowohl als Begabung\* hienieden. Die Frage, ob bei gleicher Ausrüstung einer Anzahl von Gläubigen nun auch am Ende die gleiche Summa von christlichen Lebenserweisungen von ihnen in Wirklichkeit werde aufgewiesen werden, oder ob unter Umständen auch der entgegengesetzte Fall eintrete, entzieht sich, in dieser Allgemeinheit gestellt, von selber der Antwort. Die prophetischen Aeußerungen des Herrn, mit denen wir es zu thun hatten, scheinen allerdings auf das letztere hinzuweisen; es wird dabei aber darauf ankommen, ob man, wie wir es allerdings thun, das Prophetische dieser Aeußerungen streng als solches behauptet, oder ob man, was uns ohne Willkür nicht thunlich scheint, dieses Prophetische in's Paränetische umdeutet. — Daß weiter das von Matthäus und Lucas gebotene Parabelpaar nach seinen beiden Grundgedanken uns das Theilungsprincip für den letzten und wichtigsten Abschnitt unserer dogmengeschichtlichen Betrachtung geboten hat, wird ersichtlich geworden sein. In der That liegt hier der Ausgangspunkt für die Unterscheidung von Seligkeits- und Herrlichkeitsgraden, von christlichem Werk und Gabe, Begriffe, deren Correlation uns aus all der Trübung, welche auch dieser Theil der Eschatologie z. Th. im Laufe der Zeit erfahren, doch immer wieder leuchtend hervortritt. — Was den genannten dogmatischen Hauptabschnitt selber angeht, so hat der Begriff der Seligkeit grade, abgesehen von den geschichtlich ausgeprägten Theoremen, bekanntlich noch jetzt nach Anerkennung zu ringen. Hoffmann bezeichnet es als unerlaubt, Unterschiede in der Seligkeit zu denken; es werde in der Seligkeit keines der Vollendeten noch „Sehnen, Vermissten, Mangel“ sein. Da er an der Gerechtigkeit Gottes selbstverständlich nicht zweifelt, so wird er die oben an Luc. 12 geknüpfte Frage sich so beantworten, daß alle die wirklich selig werden, die Rücksicht auf die Verschiedenheit des Verliehenen mit eingerechnet, sich diesseits subjectiv gleich verhalten haben. Wir können diese Annahme nicht theilen. Auch wenn Lange behauptet, daß, wenn von Graden die Rede sei, damit nur Grade der werdenden Seligkeit oder der



gewordenen Herrlichkeit gemeint sein können.«) so ist dies zunächst eine Behauptung, die noch des Beweises gewärtig ist. Sie scheint auf ein Analogon der Apokatastase-Theorie hinauszulaufen: aber eine Nothwendigkeit in Gott, diejenigen, die in irgend einem Maße sich den Glauben an den Sohn öffnen, zu dem schlechthin höchsten und damit zu einem gleichen Maße wahrhaftiger Befriedigung gelangen zu lassen, wird schwerlich erwiesen werden können. Alles kommt hier darauf an, daß die Begriffe der göttlichen Gerechtigkeit und Gnade in tiefinnerlicher Durchdringung und nicht so, wie es zuweilen mißverständlich genug geschieht, gefaßt werden, daß nämlich vor Christo die Gerechtigkeit und nach seiner Erscheinung die Gnade sei. Treffend ist, im Grunde nur Repetition des Wortes der Wahrheit, Schleiermacher's Wort: es ist die Treue und Gerechtigkeit Gottes, daß er uns die Sünde vergibt;^) ja es ist die Treue und Gerechtigkeit, und darum gar nicht minder die Gnade. — Freilich sind wir mit diesem Anerkenntniß nicht am Ende unserer Probleme. Ist es die Gerechtigkeit Gottes, welche wirklich Grade der Seligkeit zuteilt, wie stimmt damit die jedenfalls von einem großen Concentus der Lehrer vertretene Ansicht, daß von Graden des Gutseins im Himmel doch nicht zu reden ist. Wir theilen diese Überzeugung; folgen auch der bekannten Kantischen Theorie dahin, daß eine Ausgleichung von Gutsein und Glücklichsein im Himmel erfolgen werde: aber von diesseitigem Gutsein; das Seligkeitsmaß wird dem diesseitigen, durch die Gnade gewirkten Gutsein entsprechen. Daß jenseits alle, weil sie im Gericht des Schmutzes der Sünde entkleidet sind, nothwendig gleich selig sein werden, dafür würde der Beweis der diesseitigen Ethik schwer fallen. Die Schrift bezeugt verschiedene Seligkeitsgrade; wenn sie aber ethische Fortschritte und damit ethische Verschiedenheit im Jenseits zu bezeugen scheint, so redet sie von den Seelen der Noachischen Fluthzeit,') und nicht, wie hier nur von solchen die Rede ist, von denen, die diesseits in Christo dem Heil entgegenreifen. Damit erledigt sich uns, was wir vorläufig als Instanz gegen die Lehre von den Seligkeitsgraden aufstellten;') sie wird als solche durch die andere aus der Idee der göttlichen Gerechtigkeit fließende nicht nur aufgewogen, sondern weit überwogen. — Was dann die Herrlichkeitsgrade anlangt, so können wir sie uns allerdings ohne einen mehr oder minder beseligenden subjectiven Rückschlag, ohne also zugleich Seligkeitsgrade zu sein, nur so denken, daß — und da bleibt freilich der Name kein getreuer Ausdruck der Sache mehr — die Verschiedenheit nicht sowohl als eine graduelle, als vielmehr als eine spezifische gefaßt wird. Alle sollen etwas sein zum Lobe von Gottes herrlicher Gnade diesseits und jenseits; über den Vorzug aber der Gaben diesseits und jenseits zu streiten, ist Thorheit: schon darin liegt, daß es sich um spezifische Verschiedenheiten handle. — Schließlich könnte noch gefragt werden, was denn, da doch allem Dogmatischen, also auch wohl unserem Dogma die praktische Seite eignet, von dieser letzteren zu halten sei. Wenn man sie zu Zeiten so hoch anschlug, daß man behauptete, leichtsinnig mache es, sich alle Seligen und Herrlichen gleich selig und herrlich zu denken, ^) so hat nun wohl ein Anderer gewarnt, wenn er auch auf Grund der Schrift Verschiedenheiten der Seligen einräumte, sich mit den wenig nützlichen Speculationen da rüber zu befassen. °)

Beiderlei Aeußerungen dürften des Zieles fehlen. Daß man nothwendig ein leich ts i n ni g er Christ werde, wenn man die Lehre von den Graden nicht habe, ist darum unrichtig, weil diese Lehre von den «ntralen Wahrheiten des Glaubens verhältnißmäßig ferne liegt. Wäre es doch gar wohl denkbar, obwohl ein Irrthum, daß man gerade diese Lehre wegen der vermeintlichen Abschwächung, die die gewiß ernste Lehre von dem ewigen Verderben durch dieselbe erleidet, auf's höchste beanstandete. — Daß aber die Beschäftigung mit peripherisch gelegenen Dogmen, wie das unsrige ein solches ist, wenig nütze, ist eine auch einem großen theologischen Denker einmal mit untergelaufene irrige Schätzung alles dogmatischen Arbeitens. Mit etwas minderem, aber doch entschieden mit analogem Rechte würde der Vorwurf das Streben nach theologischer Finrnung selbst der Lehre von der Gnadenwahl, von dem Mahle des Herrn treffen. Dem gegenüber beschließen wir diesen Aufsatz mit dem sich unter uns bereits erfüllenden Wunsche, daß das christliche Denken fortfahre, sich mitten unter allen zum Theil entschieden feindseligen Gegensätzen der Zeit einen vernehmlichen Ausdruck zu geben, immer eingedenk des Wortes, das der Apostel zu den Coloffern geredet hat.

**1864**

**William Branks (1812-1879), Minister of the Parish of Torpichen & Author**

**Differences Of Rank Exist Among God's Children In State Of Grace; Analogy Countenances View, Which Scripture Confirms, That Same Is Case Among Those Who Are In State Of Glory**

**Meet for Heaven: A State of Grace Upon Earth the Only Preparation for a State of Glory in Heaven**

**Chapter X – Tenth Analogy**

Differences of rank exist among God's children in a state of grace; analogy countenances the view, which Scripture confirms, that the same is the case among those who are in a state of glory.

Perfect equality in rank and in attainments does not exist, and never has, among the inhabitants either of earth or of heaven. Perfect equality of rank never has, at any period, existed upon earth. Christianity was introduced into the world, not to destroy, not to change, the institutions of society in this respect, but to sanctify them just as they previously existed in the providence of God, so that judgment might flow down our streets like a stream, and righteousness as the mighty waters.

Christianity has introduced a mighty change into the world, as through it the wilderness and the solitary place have become glad; the desert has been made to rejoice, and to blossom like the rose. The Lord's house is established upon the top of the mountains, and is exalted above the hills, so that all nations are seen flowing into it. Christianity, however, came not down from heaven, and lit upon the earth, with the object of introducing among mankind a religious republic everywhere over the world, and thus to put an end to all distinctions in rank and in attainment; but to emancipate men from the dominion of Satan and sin, and to introduce them into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Differences in rank and in attainment always existed among men, and, I apprehend, will continue to exist as long as the world stands. Nicodemus is a ruler; Lazarus is a beggar; Paul is an accomplished scholar; Peter and Andrew, James and John, are illiterate fishermen.

How different are God's children in the world, not only in rank, but in their attainments also, both natural and spiritual! Newton is endowed with powers that dimly shadow forth to us the attribute of omniscience on the part of God. He grasps a universe of material orbs in one comprehensive survey; and, wherever he traverses mentally in space, he sees the skirts of that robe with which He is arrayed who covers himself with light as with a garment. Bacon, with his patience in experimenting, and with his power of generalization, made himself, to a great extent, master of all knowledge in all its various departments. Locke was possessed of an understanding brilliant as the noonday sun, and of logical and analytical powers that were never surpassed. Howe had powers of mind of a transcendental nature, with which he not only looked into heaven, but seemed, even whilst upon earth, actually to live in heaven; to walk through all its courts of bliss, and to hold converse with the adorable Godhead, with angels and glorified saints; and, in all the views he has given us of the upper sanctuary, shows, that, in addition to the possession of great intellectual powers, he had, in an eminent degree, - what is termed heavenly-mindedness. Edwards had a comprehensiveness of theological acquisition that was probably never surpassed. He viewed theology, metaphysics, and logic, as a person would do a valley, with the stream winding through it, and the palm-trees growing along its brink, whilst standing upon an eminence on a clear, cloudless day, and looking downwards with the aid of a powerful telescope. Calvin viewed theology with a cold, clear, legal comprehensiveness; saw God in his high sovereignty, the scheme of salvation -in all its parts hanging and depending upon Him, whom he beheld sitting with something like a legal inflexibility upon the throne. Contrast these giants of the faith whilst upon earth — whose understandings still blaze forth upon us through their religious writings, like so many bright intellectual suns shining over our heads to enlighten us in the way of salvation, in the things that belong to our everlasting peace — with other Christians, whose mental attainments are so small and limited, that they simply know the Bible is true; that God speaks to us in it, and makes known to us the way of salvation through its inspired vocables; that Jesus is an all-sufficient Saviour, whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and

is able to save to the very uttermost; that the Holy Spirit comes down from the Father and the Son, in answer to their prayers, to regenerate their souls; and that heaven is prepared, into which Christ the forerunner has entered, to be the eternal home of all the people of God. But these Christians, low in mental attainments, are living before God under the influence of divine grace, and are spending a life of love to God and to man here. Thus grace does not equalize the mental powers of Christians: it merely sanctifies those they have.

Similar differences in rank exist among the inhabitants of heaven. Angels differ in rank. There are angels and archangels; there are principalities and powers; there are cherubim and seraphim. I cannot exactly say what the particular distinctions are among the angels of God, which these epithets, applied to them, point out; but assuredly they indicate that the angelic community is not a presbyterial equality, is not a republican dead level. I cannot tell — for on this the Scriptures are entirely silent — what has led God to appoint these diversities in rank and in attainment among the angels who stand in his presence, and minister to him in the upper sanctuary, no more than I can tell what leads God, when sending children to be born into the world, to assign one the position of being born of a sovereign, in one of the palaces of earth, and another to be born of a beggar, cold and comfortless, by the wayside; no more than I can tell what it is that leads God to assign such a difference in rank and attainment to the different members of the human family; no more than I can tell what has led God to give such differences in their degrees of brightness to the different orbs of the firmament.

Angels may all possess the very same form and appearance, with their complexional differences, and be all equally shining and lovely in their countenances; -and the differences of rank existing among them may be merely in the authority and rule which they exercise over their compeers. Why this dignity in rank is assigned by God to some of the angels over others, I cannot tell. It may be as a reward, for a season, for zeal in the work of God, in doing his will, and in executing his commands. It may be that government is needed even in heaven; that governors are required even among the angels; and that God appoints certain of their number for an assigned period, irrespective of reward altogether, to fill the places of honor he has prepared, and to exercise the authority he commits into their hands. In this way, angels may be changing places from a higher to a lower, or from a lower to a higher sphere, as men upon the earth are found doing, in executing that power which God, in his providence, puts into their hands.

There are also different degrees of rank and of attainment among the redeemed who are now glorified in heaven. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." The question may be put, How is this difference, in the degrees of glory which God gives to his children in heaven, assigned? Upon what principle does God act when determining the position which this saint and that saint is to occupy in a state of glory? I believe that God is neither partial nor capricious, and that, in assigning to each glorified saint his and her position in glory, he is guided by the two principles of infinite rectitude and of infinite wisdom. There are two principles, upon one or other of which, or upon both, God may assign to us, who are believers in Jesus, our position in glory, — the degree of our state of grace upon earth may determine our degree of glory in heaven, or work done for Christ here may determine the reward that we are to receive when we enter into heaven. If our degree in a state of grace is to determine our degree in a state of glory, this surely ought to be a powerful motive to stimulate us not to rest contented with small attainments in the divine life here; or, if it be work done for Christ upon earth that is to determine our position in glory, this should be a powerful motive to lead us to work the works of God whilst it is called to-day. Paul, after a long life of arduous labor in the cause of Christ upon earth, will thus be advanced to a higher position in glory than the thief upon the cross, who never performed even one good work in the cause of Christ, except the example which he gave, when, feeling himself approaching, and now on the very verge of, an undone eternity, he looked with a broken heart to Christ, and cried that Jesus would remember him when he entered into his kingdom. Men reward those who work for them, in proportion to the time they have been engaged in their service, and the amount of work performed by them; and it is upon the principles of equity that the God of heaven should do the same.

1877

**F W Farrar (1831—1903), British Pastor and Theological Writer**

**Sermon IV - Are there Few that Be Saved?**

**Eternal Hope: Five Sermons Preached in Westminster Abbey**

Sermon, Westminster Abbey

**Luke xiii. 23, 24.**

**“Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate.”**

THIS passage, my brethren, gives us the very essence of our Lord’s teaching respecting the present and the future. Since He had dwelt so often on the difficulty and narrowness of virtue’s uphillward path, and on the few who toil in it, whereas many are to be seen rushing along the broad road that leadeth to destruction,—some one (who perhaps had more speculative curiosity than moral earnestness) wanted to know the issues of this fact;—and therefore asked Him the plain, direct question, “Lord, are there few that be saved?” Now supposing that it were so;—supposing that, as thousands of theologians have taught for thousands of years, the vast majority are in the next world for ever lost,—would not our Lord have said so? would not His teaching have gained a terrific awfulness from admitting it? Had the answer to the question been a plain “Yes!”—and had that view been as essential to morality as some assert,—surely it would have been worse than dangerous,—it would have been unkind to suppress it! But what is the answer of Divine wisdom? Is it some glaring agony of fire and brimstone for billions of years? Is it in that style in which the coarse terrorism of the Puritan is at one with the coarse terrorism of the Inquisition? No; but it is a refusal to answer. It is a strong warning to the questioner. It is a tacit rebuke of the very question. It is the pointing to a strait gate, and a narrow way, whereby alone we can enter into the kingdom of God. In this sad world it is but the few who find that way, and until they find it they cannot see the kingdom of God. But there is not one word here about an irreversible doom to a material torment; not one word to tell us that all who walk in that broad road inevitably reach its fatal goal. And are we not ‘bound to consider the silences of Scripture no less than its utterances?’ If we still yearn for any answer about the future we may find it perhaps in the glorious words of Isaiah, “Fear not; for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the East, and gather thee from the West; I will say to the North, Give up; and to the South, Keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;” or in the dazzling vision of the seer of the Apocalypse, “I beheld, and to! a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;” or in the calm promise of our Blessed Lord Himself. “In My Father’s House are many mansions.” But the spirit of the answer of our Blessed Lord was this, “The fate of the souls that He hath made is in the hands of Him that made them, not in thine. Enter thou in at the strait gate.”

2. It was in that spirit, my brethren, that I strove to speak to you last Sunday, believing that much of the popular teaching about the awful subject of future retribution—its physical tortures, its endless duration, its irreversible finality at the instant of death,—gives us an utterly false picture of the God of Love, which, though it may find warrant in the *primâ facie* aspect of texts wrongly translated or totally misunderstood, finds no warrant either in the general tone of Scripture or in God’s no less sacred teachings to our individual souls. And if some would represent such a view as dangerous, I reply that my only question is, ‘Is it true?’ It is falsehood which is always dangerous; but truth never. It is not for us to construct after our own fashion the unseen world. You think that men will not love God without the terror of an endless hell? So thought not David. He said, “There is mercy with Thee: therefore shalt Thou be feared.” And in any case it is useless to dogmatise about things which God has not revealed. “Things are as they are, and will be as they will be;” and for us to misrepresent them by the fallibility of human system, or at the bidding of human expedience, is a blasphemy against truth and against God. What is dangerous is to drive some into indignant atheism, and to entangle others with an evil superstition, and to crush others under a deep despair, by representing Him whose name is Love as a remorseless Avenger, instead of as a Father, who is gracious and merciful, slow to

anger and of great kindness, neither keepeth He His anger for ever. Evil souls and foolish souls can make any doctrine dangerous. St. Peter tells us that they wrested the writings of St. Paul, as they did also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction; would you, therefore, have had the Scriptures unwritten? or ought St. Paul never to have taken up his pen? Some of the Fathers, I am afraid, held what I believe to be the truth on this matter,—just as hundreds of our ablest clergy do,—but feared to preach it;<sup>1</sup> but the best and greatest of the Fathers did preach it, and many saints at whose feet I gladly sit have preached it in this age. And, if we see a truth, are we to be “liars for God”<sup>2</sup> by suppressing it, because those think it dangerous who believe in no more potent motive for virtue and the love of God than a ghastly terror? Are we to go before the very God of truth with a lie in our right hands? Richard Baxter—a saint of God if there ever was one—avowed his belief that even a suicide, if hurried by sudden passion into self-slaughter, may be saved, and “If,” he nobly added, “if it should be objected that what I maintain may encourage suicide, I answer, I am not to tell a lie to prevent it!” We English can’t do that. But, oh, my brethren, I am not afraid, I never shall be afraid, of doing harm by asking you “to think noble things of God.” I am not afraid to bid you plead with Him in the spirit of righteous Abraham, “That be far from Thee, Lord: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” I am not afraid to say of Him with holy Paul, “Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid!” I am not afraid to plead with Him, in that syllogism which, as Luther said, sums up all the Psalms of David—“the God of pity pities the wretched. We are wretched; therefore”—not surely in this short world only, but for ever—“God will pity us.” Punish us? Yes, punish us because He pities. But “God judges that He may teach, He never teaches that He may judge.” His æonian fire is the fire of love; it is to purify, not to torture; it is to melt, and not to burn:—

We would be melted by the heat of love  
By flames far fiercer than are blown to prove  
And purge the silver ore adulterate.

God Himself tells us that “He afflicteth, not willingly, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness;” but could it be “for our profit” to be tortured for ever in a hopeless hell? And shall He belie His own words? Our Church, thank God—wiser than her wisest, tenderer than her tenderest ministers—speaks not in such tones in her burial service; and I, who believe in a God whose name is Love—I, who rely with all my heart on “the mercy of the Merciful,”<sup>1</sup>—I who put my whole trust and confidence in that living God who is “the Saviour of all men”—I, who think that the key to all the dreadful perplexities of life and death lies in the belief that Christ lived and died—I, for one, say, God forbid! I would rather go to the instinct of the Christian saint than to the system of the dogmatic theologian; I would rather accept, as reflecting the mind of God, the broad humanitarian charity, the keen and tender sensibility of the Christian poet, than the hard logic of the inflexible systematist. And our great living poet ends his dread “Vision of Sin” in the very spirit of my text:—

At last I heard a voice upon the slope  
Cry to the summit, ‘Is there any hope?’  
To which an answer pealed from that high land,  
But in a tongue no man could understand:  
And, on the glimmering summit far withdrawn,  
God made himself an awful rose of dawn.

Dismissing then all controversy, which I never wish to introduce into this or into any pulpit,—not thinking it well to answer that part of controversy which springs from mere ignorance or angry prejudice, but realising, with deep responsibility, the sacredness of this place, and desiring, in deep humility, to lead aright the thoughts of men and women of open minds and loving hearts,—I will ask you to glance a little closer with me at God’s ways with man. Not in idle speculation, not in the interests of any dogma, but because, a few years hence, death will stare every one of us in the face, and because the faith in the future may beneficently influence our work in the present—let us, for a few moments, glance at what men are, and at what we may hope in the future for them and for ourselves.

3. There are, in the main, three classes of men: there are the saints; there are the reprobates; there is that vast intermediate class lying between yet shading off by infinite gradations from these two extremes.<sup>1</sup>

I. Of the saints, my brethren, I shall not speak; their promise is sealed; their lot is sure. Beautiful, holy souls, into whom, in all ages, entering, the Spirit of God hath made them friends of God and prophets, these are the joy of heaven—they are the salt of earth. We, every one of us, are better for them, as the dull clods of the earth are better for the snowy hills whence the rivers flow; as the stagnant air of earth is better for the pure winds which scatter the pestilence. Oh, what would the world be—what would England be—what would this huge oppressive city be—without them? without the ten righteous, the thirty, the forty, the fifty righteous, for whose sakes the heavens do not burst to drown, with deluging rain,

The feeble vassals of lust, and anger, and wine,  
The little hearts that know not how to forgive?

What would this city be if it were nothing more than one mad greedy coil of jarring slanders, of reckless competition, of selfish luxury, of brutal vice? Few, we know, are these saints of God, and mostly poor, and often despised; and yet it is they alone who save the world from corruption by the gangrene of its vices, from dissolution by the centrifugal forces of its hate. Their gentle words break our fierce wranglings with the balm of love; their calm faces look in upon our troubles with peace and hope:—

Ever their statues rise before us.  
Our loftier brothers, but one in blood,  
At bed and table they lord it o'er us,  
With looks of beauty and words of good.

A millionaire, a successful man, though the world crawl at his feet, is but as the small dust of the balance; but, “O God, O God, give us saints!” About them we have no controversy. We know that they shall be happy; we know that God shall treasure them in the day when He maketh up His jewels; we know that “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived” what God shall give to them that love Him.

II. But if they be unassailably secure, eternally happy, what of the other extreme? What of the reprobates? We see sometimes an heroic virtue; would to God that we never saw also a brutal vice. Not far from here is a vast prison, holding some 1,200 criminals. Every time the great clock of Westminster booms out its chimes to the tune—

Lord, through this hour,  
Be Thou my guide;  
So, by Thy power,  
No foot shall slide:

those prisoners hear it. Among them are some who have got within the arm of the law, but are hardly criminals at all; those might be even liberated: others who have fallen into crime only from surrounding temptations, and from natures weak but not depraved; these might be reclaimed: but some there are whom those who know them describe as filthy, cruel, brutal, irreclaimable, and whom society gives up.<sup>1</sup> It is thus (but I have been obliged altogether to soften down his words) that a great living writer speaks of them: “Miserable distorted blockheads,” he calls them, “with faces as of dogs or oxen; angry, sullen, degraded, sons of greedy mutinous darkness; base-natured beings, on whom, in a maleficent, subterranean life of London scoundrelism, the genius of darkness has visibly set his seal. Who,” he asks, “could ever command these by love?” A collar round the neck, a cartwhip on the back, these, in an impartial and steady human hand, are what should be afforded them,—and he proposes, with all the speed possible, to make an end of them at once. Well, my brethren, the punishment of crime is just, and society has a right by stern punishment

to protect the innocent; yet I am glad that the Saviour of man spake never in terms like these. I rejoice that He rather said that He came to call sinners to repentance; to seek and save the lost. And if you ask me whether I must not believe in endless torments for these reprobates of earth, my answer is, Ay, for these and for thee, and for me too unless we learn with all our hearts to love good and not evil; but whether God for Christ's sake may not enable us to do this even beyond the grave, if we have failed to do so in this life—I cannot say. I know that God hates sin, because He loves the soul which it destroys; I know that “the path of that hatred is as the path of a flaming sword; which he who hath eyes may see, divinely beautiful and divinely terrible, everywhere burning, as with unquenchable fire, the false and death-worthy from the true and life-worthy.”<sup>2</sup> Yet I know also that for these Christ died. The bigot may judge their souls if he likes; the Pharisee may consign them with conventional orthodoxy to endless torment; but so cannot and will not I. “Forbear to judge,” said the holy king by the awful death-bed of Cardinal Beaufort, who died and made no sign—

Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all!  
Close up his eyes, and draw the curtain close,  
And let us all to meditation.

Born and bred as these have been, surrounded as they have been from infancy with sights and sounds of degradation, what should we have been,—what wouldst thou have been, O comfortable bigot, or thou, O prosperous Pharisee—hadst thou had but as small a chance as they? Pointing to a murderer on his way to execution, “there,” said a good and holy man, “there, but for the grace of God, goes John Bradford.” If, as we look into the abyss of our own hearts, we see infinite potentialities of guilt and vice, so, as I look on these I see in them, in spite of all their shame and stain, the infinite potentialities of virtue. And is it not almost blasphemous to suppose that He who made a human being with such rich capacities will in one moment “throw it from Him into everlasting darkness?” Not mine at any rate shall it be to close against them “with impetuous recoil and jarring sound,” the gates of hell, lest those gates should more justly be clanged on me; I but I commend them with humblest hope, even after this life of hopelessness, to Him who did not loathe the whiteness of the leper, and who suffered the woman that was a sinner to wash his feet with tears. That without holiness none can see God; that every guilty deed, if unrepented of, must bring its own just and awful retribution; that, for every impure and cruel soul there remaineth, behind the clouds of this world, the dark night of the next; that I know. But when I remember that even these have been known to burst into tears at a mother's name; that even these have been known at times to flash out into high deeds of momentary heroism—I see that God's Spirit has nowhere taught us that He who gave cannot give back; that He who once made them innocent children cannot restore their innocence again; that He who created them,—He who will have all men to be saved,—cannot recreate them in His own image, cannot uncreate their sins. At any rate no arrogant word, no theologic dogma, no acrid prejudice of mine, shall ever utter to them the language of despair, or stand between these—God's lowest—and His love.

Nay, I believe that the Good Shepherd, for so He Himself has told us, will not cease to search for these His lost sheep, until He find them. Here again the Christian poets teach us a truer charity than the hard theologians:

Still for all slips of her,  
One of Eve's family,  
Wipe those poor lips of her,  
Oozing so clammily.

Make no deep scrutiny  
Into her mutiny. . .  
Cross her hands humbly,  
As if praying dumbly,  
Over her breast.

Owning her weakness,  
Her evil behaviour,  
And leaving with meekness  
Her sins to her Saviour!

III. But, my brethren, the vast, vast mass of mankind belong to the third class: they are not utter reprobates any more than they are saints. They may rise to the one, they may sink to the other; but for the most part they are undecided. They face both ways; they halt between two opinions; they are neither saints nor criminals; they have not closed heart and soul with good, they have not abandoned themselves utterly to evil. They want to be pardoned, yet they want to retain the offence; they admire holiness, but they dally with iniquity; they shudder to be in a state of sin, yet they attain not to a state of grace; there “is an Adam in them, and there is a Christ;”<sup>1</sup> now they sin with reckless abandonment, now they repent in bitterest remorse; “the angel has them by the hand and the serpent by the heart.”<sup>2</sup>

To how many here do these words apply? We break no law of man; to the eye of man it might seem that we broke no law of God. But O what would be thought of us if we were all seen as we are?—if our hearts were naked and open to each other as they are to God? And it is those who do try to be God’s children who most realise their own exceeding sinfulness. This is why (as one has said) the cry of remorse and anguish which springs from the lips of a Fénelon or a Cowper is far more bitter than any confession which is ever wrung from a Richelieu or a Voltaire. Many, many of these better, and tenderer, and saintly souls have, I believe, been rendered utterly and hopelessly wretched, even to madness, as poor Cowper was, by that false view of God which is given by the pitiless anathemas of man. But to all these comes the cry, “Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith our God.” Your own holier instinct tells you so. Son, or brother, or friend, or father dies: we all have lost them; it may be that they were not holy; not even religious; perhaps not even moral men; and it may be that, after living the common life of man, they died suddenly, and with no space for repentance; and if a state of

sin be not a state of grace, then certainly, by all rules of theology, they had not repented, they were not saved. And yet, when you stood—O father, O brother—heavy-hearted by their open grave;—when you drank in the sweet words of calm and hope which our Church utters over their poor remains;—when you laid the white flowers on the coffin;—when you heard the dull rattle of “earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust;”—you,—who, if you knew their sins and their failings, knew also all that was good, and sweet, and amiable, and true within them,—dared you, did you even in the inmost sessions of thought,—consign them, as you ought logically to do, as you ought if you are sincere in that creed to do,—to the unending anguish of that hell which you teach? Or does your heart, your conscience, your sense of justice, your love of Christ, your faith in God, your belief in Him of whom you sing every Sunday that His mercy is everlasting,—rise in revolt against your nominal profession then?

You can bear to think of them,—as you can bear to think of yourself—suffering, as they never did on earth, the aching pang of God’s revealing light, the willing agony of His remedial fire. We should desire,—we should even pray for that—the natural consequence of our own alienation—meant not to torment us, but to perfect. But an arbitrary infliction—a burning torment—an endless agony—a material hell of worm and flame—a doom to everlasting sin;<sup>1</sup>—and all this with no prospect of amendment, with no hope of relief—the soul’s transgressions of a few brief hours of struggling, tempted life followed by billions of millenniums in scorching fire—and all this meant, not to correct but to harden; not to amend, but to torture and degrade:—did you believe in that for those whom you have loved?

Again, I say, God forbid:—again, I say, I fling from me with abhorrence such a creed as that! Let every Pharisee, if he will, be angry with me—let every dogmatist anathematise—but that I cannot, and do not believe. Scripture will not let me; my conscience, my reason, my faith in Christ, the voice of the Spirit within my soul, will not let me; God will not let me! What I do believe is this,—that for every wilful sin which we commit, unless it be repented of, we shall, as we do, feel the heavy and merciful wrath of God, until He have purged the vile dross from us, and made us as the fine gold for Himself. But what? Shall nature fill the



hollows of her coarse rough flints with purple amethyst; shall she, out of the grimy coal, over which the shivering beggar warms himself, form the diamond that trembles on the forehead of a queen; shall even man take the cast-off slag and worthless rubble of the furnace and educe from it his most glowing and lustrous dyes—and shall God not be able to make anything of His ruined souls? And what? shall we be able to pity and to love those that hate us; and to bless those who curse us; and to forgive those who have wronged us;—shall we be willing to pardon our prodigals and to call them home;—and shall God not be willing—(and if willing who shall dare to say that He is not able?)—beyond the grave? “Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall man be more just than his Maker?” We made them not; they are not people of our pasture, or sheep of our hands; yet if we can feel for sinners a yearning love, a trembling pity; and if that love and pity springs from all that is holiest and most Christlike in our souls;—and if it would be wholly impossible for any wretch among us to be so remorseless as to doom his deadliest enemy to an endless vengeance,—are we to believe this of God?—to believe that He who planted mercy in us is merciless, and that He will “hold us up with one hand and torment us with the other,” who knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are but dust? Or shall we not rather believe, as the wise woman of Tekoah said to David three thousand years ago, “We must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground; and God does not take away life, but devises devices that the wanderer may not for ever be expelled from Him.” Yes, where sin aboundeth grace shall much more abound. If God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the fourth generation of them that hate Him,—He showeth mercy, not only unto thousands, as our version has it, but “unto the thousandth and thousandth generation”<sup>1</sup> of them that love Him, and keep His commandments; and so always,—in God’s promises, though not in man’s systems,—in God’s revelations though not in man’s beliefs, there is a vast overbalance of mercy above wrath. Ay, my brethren, fear not; have faith in God; think noble things of God; be sure that trust in the righteous God means the ultimate triumph of good over evil;—be sure that the cross of Christ, Christ’s infinite atonement, Christ’s plenteous redemption, means,—for all who do not utterly extinguish within their own souls the glimmering wick of love to God,<sup>2</sup>—the conversion of earth’s sinners, far off it may be,—but at last, far off, at last, into God’s saints.

I say to thee, do thou repeat  
 To the first man thou mayest meet  
 In lane, highway, or open street,  
 That he, and we, and all men move  
 Under a canopy of love  
 As broad as the blue sky above.  
 And,—ere thou leave him,—say thou this  
 Yet one word more,—they only miss  
 The winning of that final bliss,  
 Who will not count it true, that love,  
 Blessing, not cursing, rules above—  
 And that in it we live and move.  
 And one thing further make him know,  
 That to believe these things are so,  
 This firm faith never to forego,—  
 Despite of all that seems at strife  
 With blessing—all with curses rife—  
 That this is blessing—this is life! (Arch Bishop Trench)

**1880**

**Elder Orson Pratt (1811 – 1881), Latter-day Saint Apostle**  
**The Power Of God To Communicate Intelligence—Difference In Capacity Between The**  
**Mortal And The Immortal—The Future Of Man, Etc**  
**Journal of Discourses**

## **Delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday Afternoon, June 13th, 1880**

I shall endeavor to occupy a few moments of time, and perhaps I may continue my remarks until it is time to close the meeting. I wish I enjoyed better health; I should then feel more like speaking. But as it is, I feel willing to exert myself as far as possible, and also to bring my mind to bear upon the great subject of salvation, and the principles that pertain to eternal life and happiness in the world to come. It is difficult, sometimes, for a person who does not feel well in body, to concentrate his mind upon those subjects which will be edifying and instructive to the people.

It gives me great joy and pleasure, at all times, when I have the opportunity to express myself in regard to the great and important work, which our Father in heaven has seen proper to commence in our day. We have been made partakers, in a measure, of the spirit of the living God, pertaining to this last dispensation. This spirit, when received, and when we give it our attention, and bring our minds to bear upon the object of its operations, is calculated to instruct and impart much information and knowledge to both male and female who are in the possession of it. The Spirit of God is a spirit of revelation. It always was a spirit that revealed something to the human family, when mankind were in possession of it.

There have been, however, many ages since the commencement of the world, when the children of men have so far wandered from the Almighty, so far departed from his ordinances and precepts, that the spirit of revelation has not had place within them. The world may be considered in a woeful state of darkness and unbelief, whenever this great and glorious gift is withdrawn from the children of men; for without this gift, without this spirit, without revelation from the Most High, it is utterly impossible for the human family to be saved in the celestial kingdom of our Father and God. Perhaps some may think that this is a very broad statement. They will refer back to the last sixteen or seventeen centuries, and will say, that our fathers have not enjoyed the spirit of revelation, during that time, and if your statement, Mr. Pratt, be true, our fathers are not saved in the celestial kingdom of God. I do not say that our fathers will all be sent to an endless hell. I have made no such assertion. I do not say that they will receive no happiness, no glory, no reward in the world to come; I have made no such assertion; but understand my assertion, that if the world have not been in the possession of divine revelation directly to themselves, during this long period of time, then there have none of them been saved in the celestial kingdom of our Father and God.

Now I hope that you have understood me. There is quite a difference between being saved in some kingdom, where there is some glory, some happiness, and being saved in the kingdom where our Father resides. There is only one way to obtain this kingdom—the kingdom that is represented, in its glory, by one of the most brilliant luminaries that shines in yonder heavens, namely, the sun. We are told by our Saviour that those who obey his commandments shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father. The Apostle Paul informs us that there are in the eternal worlds many different kinds of glory. In the 15th chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, he says, that

There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.

They do not all rise to the same glory, nor to the same happiness, nor to the same fullness, nor to the same kingdom; but they arise from their graves, and come forth—those who are counted worthy of any kind of glory—to receive that which they are worthy of, all that they have lived for, and nothing more.

Our Father who dwells in yonder heavens, and his Son Jesus Christ, inhabit the highest degree of glory in eternity. They are possessed of all the fullness of glory. They have a fullness of happiness, a fullness of power, a fullness of intelligence, light and truth, and they bear rule over all other kingdoms of inferior glory, of inferior happiness, and of inferior power. Their glory is like that of the sun, or at least, the sun being the most conspicuous body with which we are immediately acquainted, in regard to its glory, it is referred to as

being typical of the highest degree of glory in the heavens. The Gospel is intended to exalt the children of men to that same degree of glory, where our Father and where his Son reside. Hence it is said by our Savior, just as he was taking leave of his apostles in ancient times,

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

There is a mansion where he dwells. Where this mansion is located in the midst of the vast surrounding space, has not been revealed to us. It may have been revealed in former ages of the world, but to us, as Latter-day Saints, we have no revelation concerning its location. But there is a location, where these two glorious personages dwell. It has a location, just as much as our earth has a location in the solar system. But when I speak of our Father and our God being located in a glorious mansion, or celestial world, I do not wish to be understood that he is confined to that location. Do not misapprehend the subject. He is not confined to that particular locality, in the midst of universal space. He has power which we are not in possession of. He has power to waft himself from that particular locality to other dominions, other worlds, other creations; and to do this with an immense velocity. Of course, to accomplish this must occupy time. There are some, however, so foolish in their ideas that they suppose that it does not require time for the Almighty to go from world to world, or for any celestial messenger to do so. But this is a grand mistake. Time is included in all motion. Time is included between the event of a heavenly being leaving the celestial abode, where he dwells, and going to some other abode at a distance. How great this time may be is not revealed; but I have an idea that it is much swifter than any velocity with which we are familiar; I mean the velocity with which our Father and God can convey himself from the celestial abode where he dwells to some other kingdom. I believe it to be much swifter than that of the common light which shines from the heavenly bodies of our system, or from the distant bodies of the stellar system. Now, light travels with immense velocity-185,000 miles in one beat of the pulse, or in about one second of time. We might suppose that that is about as swift as any being would want to be wafted. But suppose that our Father, in the heavenly world where he dwells, should feel disposed to visit one of the vast dominions of his great creation as far distant as the nearest fixed star. If he could go no faster than light is transmitted through space, it would take him three and a half years to perform the journey. And to go to one that was situated some ten or fifteen times further off, it would take, of course, ten or fifteen times longer. And to go to some which are as far off from him as the distant creations that are just visible through our most powerful telescopes, it would take him six hundred thousand years to perform the journey, provided his velocity was only equal to that of light.

I draw the conclusion, therefore, that God is not confined to the velocity of light, or to any other velocity with which we are acquainted-that he can go with immense velocity, perhaps thousands and hundreds of thousands of times swifter than that of light, if he feels disposed so to do. It is out of the question for us to suppose that God does not travel in going from creation to creation. That he could be momentarily and instantaneously in two creations at the same time is something that I never could comprehend, although it is believed in by some of the religious professors of the present day. They believe that God, in his person, can be in infinite space all at the same moment. That is not our doctrine. It is not my doctrine, at least. He may be, by his power, by his intelligence, by his spirit, in infinite space, working throughout all the vast dominions of space, according to laws he has ordained and instituted.

Having said so much, in regard to the locality of our Heavenly Father, and of the celestial beings who dwell in the same abode, or in the same mansions where he resides, let me now say a few words more in regard to his presence being everywhere. I cannot, for a moment suppose, and I do not believe that any intelligent being who exercises his intelligence, independently of the traditions of the children of men, can suppose, that a person can be everywhere present at the same instant. "But," inquires one, "When a good man dies, passes out of this body of flesh and bones, it is said that he is in the presence of God. Does this mean that he has actually gone from his tabernacle, perhaps millions and millions and unnumbered millions of miles, to the

abode or mansion where Jesus is, because he is in the presence of God?" No; I do not look at it in this way, I look at it in this light: if this world in which we dwell had the veil withdrawn from off its face, and the veil taken away from our faces, I consider that we would see the Lord, however far distant he might be; hence we would be in his presence; and on the other hand, those who dwell in his abode, however distant, can see us; for there is no veil over his face, no veil over the celestial abode of our Father and God, and there being no veil over him, nor over the beings that dwell in his abode, they can behold the most distant creations, which they have made. Now, this is my view. I do not say this is the view of the Latter-day Saints, but my own individual views, in regard to these matters. If then we pass out of these bodies of ours, and the veil is taken away, we are in his presence, just as much as we would be if we were wafted to the mansion where he dwells: I have no doubt, but what we will be wafted (if we are worthy) to that mansion, in due time; but I say, that we are in the presence of God, while our spirits are yet here upon the earth; because the veil is removed and our eyes can pierce eternity, and eternal things.

Now, we have some examples of this, Latter-day Saints: and I sometimes wonder, when we have such plain examples as are to be had in this book which I hold in my hand, (The Pearl of Great Price) I sometimes wonder that people should be so limited in their ideas and in their views, concerning the future state of man (I mean the glorified man), as to suppose that he will be confined in his vision to some particular locality, and that he will be something similar to what we are here in this mortal life. Now, even mortal men, before they obtained immortality, have enjoyed this spirit of seeing things that were naturally supposed to be utterly impossible. Who that is acquainted with this book (the Pearl of Great Price) has not read with great and deep interest, the words of that great man, Moses, before he was sent down to Egypt to redeem the Israelites? Who is there among the readers of the Latter-day Saints who cannot comprehend, in some measure, how the vision of that man was enlarged, while he was yet here in a state of mortality? He went up into the Mount to pray to the Lord. The veil was removed. The glory of God rested upon Moses, and great and important things were made manifest to him. All things were not revealed; for he was incapable of receiving all things while yet a mortal being. But the Lord saw proper to reveal some things; and Moses sought to know some other things, but the Lord would not grant it and told him that no man could behold all his works, except he beheld all his glory; and no man could behold all his glory and afterwards remain in the flesh upon the earth; that is, in the state of mortality. But, said he, "Moses, my son, I will show unto thee some of the works of mine hands. I will reveal unto you concerning the heaven that is over your head, and this earth upon which you dwell." And as the Lord talked with Moses, the Spirit of God being upon him, his eyes were opened, the veil was taken away, and he saw the whole earth, not merely the surface of it, but the interior of it; every particle of it was before the eyes of Moses.

This, then, shows that there is within each of these mortal tabernacles a spirit, and this spirit, when lit up by the Holy Spirit from on high, has certain faculties and powers, far beyond that which we are able to develop naturally here upon the earth. We cannot, by our own natural powers, discern one foot underneath the surface of the earth. We cannot discern through anything that is opaque in its nature—anything that will not admit the natural light to be transmitted through its substance. But still, we have the faculties within us; we have the power; there is merely an obstacle, or obstruction, in the way; and when this obstruction is removed it shows the godlike powers that are planted within the tabernacles of men, by which they can behold and pierce those portions of creation that are not discernable by the natural man. This Moses obtained during the few moments that he was thus enwrapped in vision. He obtained more information in those few moments than could be imparted in all the universities and colleges that ever existed, since the creation of the world to the present day. We may study the ponderous volumes that are published by the learned, and it takes a long time to grasp the information that some very learned men have received. But oh, how different is the method of receiving revelation, when it comes from the Most High! In a moment, as it were, those faculties of ours that have been lying dormant ever since we were born into this world—those faculties which are enshrouded with the darkness of a fallen creation—those faculties, when once illuminated, when once touched by the finger of the Almighty, can pierce the creations of the Almighty, so far as he permits us to behold.

These things encourage me. I am in hopes, when I get to the other side of the veil, that it will not be so difficult for me to understand the different laws of science, and the different laws and branches of education, that are taught in this little creation of ours. I am in hopes that when my spirit shall launch forth out of this mortal tabernacle, and go into the eternal world, that I shall not, at that time, require Lord Ross's great six feet telescope; I am in hopes that I shall not need any of the telescopes, or other instruments invented in the nineteenth century; but I am in hopes there will be a telescope prepared for me, by which I can see the vast creations of the Almighty, and comprehend, in a short period of time, more than could be unfolded to the children of mortality in a thousand years.

I mention this in order to bring before the Latter-day Saints a principle which, I think, we should all, more or less, reflect upon. How encouraging it is to think we are not always going to be bound down to this slow process of gaining knowledge, and information, and wisdom, pertaining to the works of the Almighty! How glorious it is also, to reflect upon the celestial host, who dwell in the fulness of celestial glory, where there is no veil, and where they have their bodies; for some of them have been raised from the grave to immortality, and are clothed upon with all the fulness of the attributes of the Father. I say, how glorious it is to reflect upon the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of knowledge that will then be unfolded to the children of men! These things, as I said before, inspire my heart with joy. I do not confine my hopes to the volumes of works on science, with which I may come in contact here in this world; I do not confine my hopes to the slow process of advancing in knowledge and intelligence that the children of this world have; but I look forward to that higher school-that great university which will scope in boundless and eternal space, that will scope in the most distant creations that we can imagine in the vast field of eternity, in which we will be able to comprehend those laws by which the various creations are governed; not understand them as we now comprehend some few laws, but understand them in all their perfection and fulness, being like unto our Father and God, made like unto him, fashioned like unto his glorious body, and become indeed "sons of God." Shall I go still further and say Gods? Are we not the children of our Father? Will not the children ascend to the same height, to the same glory, to the same celestial world, and to the same fullness of the attributes of their Father? Are not our children, take them as a body, qualified to come up to all the perfections and attributes of their fathers, who came on the earth before them? It seems to be a general law that children will grow up and possess all of the perfections of their parents, provided that they take the necessary steps, and are favored with long life, and have the natural intelligence that is common to man. If, then, this seems to be a natural law in regard, not only to man, but also to all animated creation-that the children come up and possess the perfections of their fathers before them-may we not reason, by analogy, that our Father who begat us-our Father who dwells in yonder celestial world, intends to make us one with him, that we shall receive the same fulness with him, that we shall partake of light, and truth, and knowledge, and advance from grace to grace, as the revelations in the Book of Covenants state, until we shall receive a fulness of all truth? Then will not this make us, in one sense of the word, sons of God? Will it not make us Gods also, according to the word of God?

"But," inquires one, "how can two persons possess the same attributes without quarreling with each other?" That is not the order of heaven. That is not the pure law that God has ordained, that there should be quarrels with those that have the same degree of intelligence; but the law is that they shall become one, as "I and my Father are one, so that these my brethren may also become one in us as we are one." That is the law; and if they are one there will be as much unity between his children who are exalted to that high condition in the celestial glory, as there is a unity and oneness between the Father and his only begotten Son. Have they any quarrel? Have they any difficulties? Have they any difference of views? Does one intend to carry on one government, and another a different kind of government? No; whatever is the will of the Father, is the will of the Son; whatever the Father is prepared to do, throughout all his vast dominions, the Son is in accord with him; and whatever the Father desires to perform and accomplish, his children who are made like him and one with them, will take hold and perform the same work, with all that unity and oneness which exist between the Father and the Son. In the celestial glory they are made equal in oneness, in power, in knowledge, and in all perfections; and the Lord their God is with them, and they are one with him, to carry on all his purposes, and will be one with him throughout all the future ages of eternity.

I thought perhaps the time was expired; but I will say a few more words in regard to this great glory, this high destiny prepared for the sons of God. I told you that our process of gaining information would be very rapid-would be immense in its growth, and that we should have the faculties within us developed to the highest degree. But now let us for a few moments, look into this high state of perfection.

When our faculties are thus developed, and when we have all the wisdom that I have been speaking of, that dwells in the bosom of celestial beings, in the eternal worlds, what will we do with this wisdom? Will we fold up our arms, and remain throughout all the future ages of eternity, in perfect indifference and laziness, without anything to accomplish or perform? No; we will have works assigned to us to perform in the eternal worlds, that will be proportionate to all the fulness of that glory and knowledge which we are endowed with. Did the sons of God in ancient times, come forth and assist in the formation of this little creation of ours? Did they all shout for joy when the materials were brought together, and when the foundations of the earth were laid? Did they all feel happy and sing a song of rejoicing, and with great joy; did they look upon the works which they were performing? Yes. Jesus was there-the First Born of this great family of our Father in heaven. He had the superintendence of this creation. He had the power, because the power dwelt within him, to build this earth of ours, the same as you give to your superintendent power to build your temples, about which Brother Rich has been speaking. It is said that the worlds were made through our Lord Jesus Christ. But do you suppose that he alone made them? No; he had the sons and daughters of God with him. And there were prophets in those days, before our earth was made. They shouted for joy when they saw the nucleus of this creation formed. Why? Because they could look into the future, and by the spirit of prophecy, behold the designs and purposes of the great Jehovah in regard to the creation which they were then in the act of forming. Did they not understand that they would have the privilege of coming forth and peopling this earth? Yes. Did they not understand that they were to pass through a probation on this earth, the same as we are now passing through, in order to prepare them for a still higher exaltation and glory, with immortal bodies of flesh and bones? Yes; they understood these things, hence their joy, when they saw the creation being formed for them. I mention this, in order to show to the Latter-day Saints that the great work that will be entrusted to those who are prepared, will be proportionate to the wisdom, intelligence and understanding that will be imparted to those who enter into the fulness of the glory of the celestial kingdom. They will not remain in idleness to all eternity. They will have a work to perform. They will form worlds under the direction, no doubt, of those that may be appointed to superintend works of such vast magnitude. Furthermore, when they have formed these worlds, they will set them in motion in the midst of universal space, in some location, where they can continue their mission, and where all necessary things shall be fulfilled and accomplished during the days of the probation of these various creations. There will be laws given to govern these new creations, the same as there are laws given to govern the creations with which we are surrounded. The inhabitants upon these creations will be visited from time to time by those that have taken part in the great work of their formation. The inhabitants thereof will be dealt with according to law. They will be intelligent beings. They will have their agency, and they will pass through their probation the same as the people are now passing through their probations here in this world. Everything will be accomplished according to laws that shall be ordained when these creations are made. Will they visit these creations? Yes; for they will have the same power of locomotion, the same power to pass through space (almost in the twinkling of an eye) that our Father has-that his Son Jesus Christ has-that all celestial beings who are exalted in his presence have, and possessing the power, they will visit from creation to creation; they will impart knowledge and understanding to their children in these creations. They will visit them with the light of their countenances, and the children of these creations will be made glad in their hour, in their times, and in their seasons, by the light and countenances of the celestial beings who, from time to time, organized them.

These are the high destinies that await the Latter-day Saints, if they are faithful. These are the high destinies into which many of the Former-day Saints have already entered. These are the great, and choice, and exalted blessings in store for all who will keep the commandments of our Father and God. Amen.(Journal of Discourses, 26 vols., 21:, p.256-260,262-263)

**1881**

**President Wilford Woodruff (1807—1898), Latter-day Saint Prophet  
"Vision" Revelation Gives More Light, More Truth, More Principle Than Any Revelation  
Contained In Any Other Book  
Journal of Discourses**

**Conference Address, April Conference**

Journal of Discourses, 26 vols., 22:, p.148

We can afford to be true and faithful to God; we can afford to carry out every principle and commandment which God has given unto us; we can afford to do this, as much so as Prophets and Apostles and people of God of other dispensations and generations. And I would say to all Israel, there is not one soul of us who can afford to compromise one of the commandments which God has committed to our charge. No man can afford to do this who is called of God to build up this Kingdom. We can afford, however, to meet the consequences, whatever they may be. And I would say to all present this day, that we should have, and that we have as much comfort, as much hope and as much cause to trust in God, and have received as much encouragement, by the over-ruling hand of Almighty God in our behalf, to go on magnifying our calling and to be true and faithful to every commandment which God has given unto us, as the people of any other generation had in their day; and for one I can say, "It is the kingdom of God or nothing" for me and I am willing to risk the consequences.

I know that I cannot afford to disobey any commandment which God has given to me, because there is no man who holds the Priesthood, and possessing the inspiration and the gifts of God and the light of truth, but would be ashamed both in the flesh and in the spirit-world to meet his God, and to be obliged to acknowledge that he did not obey His commandments.

And I will here say that whenever we do our duty, whenever we keep the commandments which have been made known to us, we will see the fulfilment of the promises which God has made to us with regard to this day, age and dispensation. There is no promise which God has made to us but that will be fulfilled to the very letter. I read these—the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and I regard them as eternal truths. I cannot find any revelations given from the days of Moses down to the days of Joseph Smith, nor from the days of Joseph to our day, by men who have spoken as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost, but what has been fulfilled to the very letter, as far as time would admit of. Though the heavens and the earth pass away, not one jot or tittle which will fall unfulfilled.

When I read these solemn, these eternal declarations made through the mouth of Joseph Smith, my heart swells with gratitude and praise to God, my heavenly Father. I consider that the Doctrine and Covenants, our Testament, contains a code of the most solemn, the most Godlike proclamations ever made to the human family. I will refer to the "Vision" alone, as a revelation which gives more light, more truth, and more principle than any revelation contained in any other book we ever read. It makes plain to our understanding our present condition where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going to. Any man may know through that revelation what his part and condition will be. For all men know what laws they keep, and the laws which men keep here will determine their position hereafter; they will be preserved by those laws and receive the blessings which belong to them.

I say again, the Latter-day Saints have every encouragement; their pathway is plain and inviting before them. And the nearer we adhere to the commandments of God, the more confident we shall become that God is our friend and that He is watching over us, and that his son Jesus is our advocate, with the Father, that he is in the midst of this people, and that he will contend for the rights of his Saints, and will ward off every weapon which is formed against Zion.

1881

**l'abbé Charles Arminjon (1824-1885), French Catholic Spiritual Leader**

**Enfin Les Élus Ressuscités Posséderont La Clarté. Ils Seront Environnés D'une Telle Splendeur, Qu'ils Apparaîtront Comme Autant De Soleils – A La Vérité. Cette Clarté Sera Départie À Des Degrés Divers Aux Élus, Suivant L'inégalité De Leurs Mérites**

**Fin du monde présent et mystères de la vie future**

Le sentiment le plus probable et le plus conforme aux Écritures, c'est qu'ils ressusciteront « à l'état de l'homme parfait, dans la mesure de l'âge de la plénitude de Jésus-Christ, in virum perfectum, in mensuram ætatis plenitudinis Christi “En d'autres termes, tous les hommes restaurés sur le type et à l'image de Jésus-Christ, autant du moins que le comportera la mesure et le degré de leurs mérites, renaîtront dans la maturité de l'homme, dans le plein développement de leur être et de leur constitution physique, comme le Christ au jour de sa Résurrection et de son Ascension, lorsque entrant dans sa béatitude, il alla prendre possession de son éternelle souveraineté.

Enfin les élus ressuscités posséderont la clarté. Ils seront environnés d'une telle splendeur, qu'ils apparaîtront comme autant de soleils: Tunc justi fulgebunt sicut sol in regno Patris eorum – A la vérité. cette clarté sera départie à des degrés divers aux élus, suivant l'inégalité de leurs mérites », car autre est la clarté du soleil, autre est celle de la lune, autre est celle des étoiles. Les étoiles elles-mêmes diffèrent entre elles en clarté. Ainsi en sera-t-il à la résurrection des morts.

Les élus qui apparaîtront entourés de plus de gloire, seront les docteurs: « Ceux qui auront éclairé les peuples dans la vraie doctrine, brilleront comme la lumière du firmament. – Les pasteurs, ceux qui les auront formés à la justice, seront comme des étoiles, pendant toute la durée des éternités.» – La clarté dont les élus seront ornés jettera sans cesse de nouveaux reflets, elle prendra à tout instant une nouvelle croissance; les saints glorifiés se communiqueront éternellement les biens qu'ils possèdent. et ils réfléchiront les uns sur les autres les torrents de splendeur dont ils seront illuminés. La source et le foyer de cette clarté divine ne seront autres que Dieu lui-même , qui, selon saint Jean, est tout “lumière”et en qui il n'y a aucun mélange d'imperfections et de ténèbres: Cum apparuerit, similes ei erimus, quoniam videbimus eum sicuti est.

Ce qui est certain, c'est que tout dans cette cité sera paisible et divinement ordonné. – La tristesse et l'envie en seront à jamais exclues; car, comme l'explique saint Augustin, «la tristesse et l'envie procèdent de nos mauvaises passions et des désirs qui nous font convoiter le bien d'autrui; mais dans la cité de Dieu, il n'y aura plus de désirs puisque tous ceux qu'ont jamais éprouvés les élus seront entièrement satisfaits: – l'Agneau les abreuvera à la source des eaux vives et leur soif sera pleinement étanchée.» – Secondement, il n'y aura pas de bien d'autrui à convoiter. – Dans la cité sainte, les biens et les richesses ne seront autres que le Dieu Charité, qui se départira lui-même intégralement à chacun des élus, suivant le degré et la mesure de leurs mérites. Ainsi, l'universalité des anges et des hommes se trouvera consommée en une unité parfaite, par la vertu de Celui qui est appelé le premier-né de la création, la tête du corps de l'Église, qui a reçu la primauté de toutes choses afin que Dieu soit tout en tous: Ut sit Deus omnia in omnibus.

1881

**Rev. Samuel Cox (1826 – 1893), English Nonconformist Divine and Christian Universalist**

**Some Features of the Life Everlasting: St. John xiv. 2, 23.**

**The Expositor, edited by Samuel Cox, Sir William Robertson Nicoll, James Moffatt**

In discussing the Vision of Isaiah a number or two back, I said: "We often speak of that bourn from which no traveller returns, and lament that no one of those who have crossed the stream of death has ever come back to



tell us what would have added praise to praise, by bringing us a report of the land that lies beyond" And in rebuke of the thoughtlessness or ingratitude which prompts us to speak thus, I alluded to the fact that "He who could not be holden of death had returned to assure us that it is a wealthy land and a good," and passed on to point out that "a whole order of men, the prophets, have risen into the spiritual and eternal world, the world which lies beyond death and above life, and have come down from it to tell us what they had seen."

As my subject was "the Vision of Isaiah," I then naturally went on to indicate those features of the life eternal which were disclosed to the Prophet when he saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up, his train filling the temple. And now I should like to take up and expand the point I then passed over with a bare allusion, and to suggest how much we may learn of the life everlasting from the life and words of Him to whom all the prophets bear witness. For when I said that He who could not be holden of death had returned from beyond the bourn from which we have too hastily concluded that no traveller has returned, I did not tell the half of what He has done to reveal and illustrate the life of which we complain that we know so little, of which we sometimes complain that we know nothing at all. For not only did Christ enter into that life through the gate and avenue of death; He also came down from it through the gate and avenue of birth. The life everlasting was familiar to Him before He came and dwelt among us. It continued to be familiar to Him while He tabernacled with us. His whole life on earth is the express type and pattern of what our life in heaven, as well as in the kingdom of heaven, is to be. How, then, can we lament our entire ignorance of what the life everlasting is to be, when we have only to look at Him in order to see what it is! With what face can we go on repeating the old foolish complaints and longings—complaints of the darkness in which the future is hidden from us, and longings for some clear and cheerful light—when all the while the light is with us and the darkness has passed away!

What, then, it may be asked, do we learn, or what may we learn, from the life of Christ, of the life everlasting?

And, in reply, I may say that, in general, we learn that so often as we rise into the life of faith, the life of righteousness, the life of love and service, we lay hold on life eternal, we practise ourselves in the life we are to live for ever. But this is so obviously true that I need not dwell upon it. Yet there is probably great need to insist on the immense worth of this reply, this revelation of what the spiritual and eternal life really is. For, when we speculate about the future life, we are too apt to let our thoughts settle on its mere conditions and accidents, rather than on its supreme and essential qualities. We want to know, for instance, what the place we are to inhabit is like; or who our companions are to be, and how many or how few; or whether we shall be in a body or out of a body; or whether we shall recognize those whom we have known here, and love those whom we have loved. Nor are such speculations to be hastily or intemperately condemned: it is natural, I suppose, and may be right, that we should indulge in them. But these, we should remember, are not the main questions. If we want to know what the life of any distinguished man was like, and what it was worth, we do not determine our answer to that question by ascertaining what his income was, or what class of house he had for his abode, or what was his personal appearance, or what costume he wore; but by finding out what he knew, what he thought, what he did, what, above all, was the ruling character and animating spirit of his life. The former series of questions is not without importance, indeed; for the answers to them help to throw light on the character of the man and his achievements: but they are important mainly as they do throw light on these. And, in like manner, it is not the accidents or details, it is not the conditions and costume of the heavenly life which are of the first importance to us, but its essential character, its ruling and animating spirit. When, therefore, we learn from Christ that the life of heaven is a life of righteousness, of charity, of service, we learn what it is most important that we should know about it, and may well be content to leave its minor conditions and external accidents for future disclosure. Not that they are all of them so left; but that we should not need to fret and trouble ourselves even if they were. If our friends who are with God share his pure, loving, ministerial life,—if they possess the very life which was manifest in his Son Jesus Christ,—as they do,—what more need we ask or wish for them? And if we, when we die, are to share that life, what more do we need to know for ourselves, or how can we dare to say that we know nothing about the life beyond the bourn? We know all, or all that is of real and vital importance.

Nor is it only in his example that the Lord Jesus Christ reveals to us what we call the future life, but what He called "the life eternal." He also revealed it, or many of its main features, in his words. And it is a curious instance of the foolish and complacent ignorance with which men are too often content, that, at times, even those who believe in Christ should speak of the future life as quite hidden from them, though all the while they hold in their hands words which, if duly studied, would disclose its main features to them; and never so much as suspect that they are guilty of the basest ingratitude in thus casting on Him the onus of an ignorance for which they themselves are alone to blame. Nor are these illuminating words, as a rule, mystical and remote, hard to get at or hard to understand; there would be some excuse for us if they were.

Take, for example, the words of Christ reported by St. John: In my Father's house are many mansions. The words are simple enough. We have all read them, I suppose, almost as often as any words in the New Testament. We have only to meditate upon them for a few moments in order to find a meaning in them which gives us a new sense of the vastness of heaven, of the charm and variety of the life we are to live in it, and of that curious and happy combination of repose and progress in it which meets and satisfies the two main currents of our nature: and yet how few of us have made that meaning our own!

It tasks no scholarship to see that our Lord, like the prophet Isaiah when he was caught up into heaven, had the Jewish temple in his mind; and that He here represents heaven to us as "the spiritual and eternal antitype," or archetype, of that transitory tabernacle. For the temple at Jerusalem had many courts, and many chambers; it was the abode of many different kinds of men,—as priests, singers, scribes, porters, watchmen, soldiers. And in this respect, He tells us, it resembled his Father's house. That also has many mansions, for many different kinds of man and spirit. For by his Father's "house" I understand Him to mean the whole broad universe seen and unseen, with some of its mansions on this side the river of death, and some on that side; just as some of the courts and chambers of the house at Jerusalem were on one side of the little stream that ran through it, and some on the other. When He leaves his disciples, therefore, when He is parted from them and taken up into heaven, they are not to let their hearts be "troubled," as though He were really separated from them, He will but have gone from one mansion of God's house to another: the same great roof will still cover them both. And the mansions are many, because men are many, and that there may be room for them all. In other words, the universe is large and various because the Father in heaven has so many children, and must find a suitable home for every one of them. We are in one mansion of that great House even while we are on the earth. Our friends who have left the earth are only in another mansion, or chamber, of the same great House: they are still under the same broad roof with us; and God is still their Father, as He is ours. We may as easily pass to them as a Jew could pass from chamber to chamber, or go up from court to court, in the temple at Jerusalem.

And, lest even this familiar and homely figure should fail to reassure us, Christ passes on to say, I go to prepare a place for you,—to suit a place to you, to provide conditions for you so sweetly and delicately attuned to your individual needs and bents and cravings that each one of you will feel himself to be at home in it, feel too that his home is a heavenly home, whatever the chamber or mansion in which he may dwell; nay, for only thus do we reach the full force of the phrase, in a heaven of his own, a place that he may call and know to be his very own—his private heaven, his personal abode.

The mansions are many, then, that there may be room for us all, and because there are so many of us; and the places are prepared with a view to our personal idiosyncracies, our individual leanings, necessities, preferences. So that the heavenly life is at once a large life, having the whole universe for its domain, and a life of infinite variety, exquisitely adapted to every man's wishes, culture, needs; and this life, at once so various and so large, is —as we have already seen—a pure and holy life, a life of righteousness and service; for all its mansions are parts of a temple and partake its sanctity, a temple in which God is worshipped day and night for ever.

These, surely, are pleasant and helpful thoughts concerning the future life; they lie on the very surface of our Lord's words, and may be picked up by any one who looks at them with a heedful eye. But for the next thought we must go a little beneath the surface, though not much. For, although the word mansions will suggest to every reader ideas of solid endurance and stately repose, we may not all know that the word *mansiones*, like the Greek word which it translates, means "resting-places," and indicates those "stations" on a great road where Eastern travellers found, as they still find in similar caravanserais, both repose and refreshment. And that this is the true meaning of the word here, all scholars are agreed. So that when Christ says to us "In my Father's house are many mansions," by his very choice of this word He suggests to us that curious combination of the contrasted ideas of rest and progress which enter into all our conceptions of the heavenly life. When, and in proportion as, we enter on that life, we rest from toil, from strife, from care; and this rest, as it denotes an immense advance on our natural or earthly life, so also it predicts advances still to come, and speaks to us of an endless progress into the likeness and fellowship of God our Father as we pass from mansion to mansion of his great Home—resting in each, yet rising from one to another. Advance without restlessness, a journey in which every day will bring us to a fresh station, and every station will be a mansion, and every mansion a home, and every home made glad by our Father's presence and companionship; to be for ever drawing nearer to God, while yet we are for ever enjoying Him—this is the thought suggested to us by the phrase, In my Father's house are many mansions.

How much, then, have we learned from Christ; how many essential features of the life everlasting become plain to us as we study his life and words! The future life for which we look is not to be separated by any deep gulf, by any abrupt break, from the life we are now living, or may and ought to live. Our friends who have passed into it are not divided from us; they are under the same roof, though in different chambers or mansions of the same House; they are in the presence of the same Father; they share the same life with us. For we too enter on the life everlasting when we live a life of faith, of righteousness, of love, of service; and this life is at once large and various, at once pure and genial, at once stable and advancing, at once a constant rest and a constant progress to a deeper rest; it has the whole universe for its theatre; and this theatre is a sacred and august temple, in every chamber of which we may worship the Father of our spirits, rejoice in his presence, and enter into a closer and more inward fellowship with Him.

All this, too, remember, we have learned from a single word of Christ; and there are many such words, all waiting to yield us their store of precious meaning, and to enlarge our conceptions of the life that now is and of that which is to be, the very moment we meditate upon them.

Yes, the life that now is, as well as that which is to be. Let us mark that well, and lay the keenest emphasis upon it. For it is "the life everlasting" of which we are speaking, the true life of man in time as well as in eternity. And there are many who, while curiously speculating on the mysteries of the future life, neglect the duties of this present life, and fall short of the peace which might be theirs. Like Judas (Verse 22)—the honest and loyal Judas, not the traitor—they fail to understand how they may share the life eternal in the fleeting hours of time, how they may realize a Divine Presence, and feel that even here and now they are resting in one of the many mansions of the Father's house. Jesus had said (Verse 21) that He would manifest Himself to as many as loved Him and kept his commandments even after He had been taken up and vanished from their sight. Judas quite understood that in these words his Master was promising a special revelation of Himself, a revelation which would carry everlasting life with it, which would raise as many as received it into the very life that dwelt in Him, and draw them into a vital and constant fellowship with his Father. But Judas did not understand how these things could be. And so Christ had to teach him (Verse 23) that men's power of receiving a Divine revelation depends on their active obedience of Divine commandments; and that active obedience, again, depends on personal and fervent love for the Giver of those commandments. Judas asked: "Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" And Jesus replied: "If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him." In other words, Christ taught him that the Divine manifestation and fellowship are limited, not by any lack of love and bounty in God, but by the lack of love, and therefore the lack of receptivity, in man. For how can even God Himself give men what men cannot or will not take? But

if any man will take, God will give. Let him but open the hands of love and obedience, and his hands will instantly be filled. Now, and here, he will see God, and in God his Father, and by that vision be raised into the life everlasting. And, as if to impress this thought upon us, our Lord uses in Verse 23 the very word He had already used in Verse 2; and as there He had spoken of the many mansions in his Father's house, so here He says, "If any man love me and keep my word, my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode"—our mansion— "with him."

Here, then, and now, we may dwell, we may work and rest, in one of the many mansions. Here, and now, we may have our Father always with us. Here, and now, we may enter on the life everlasting, the life of love, of obedience, of service; that large yet various life, that stable yet advancing life, that life of rest and yet of progress, of growth and yet of peace, which is the strength and joy of heaven. For if we know and are sure that, whatever our lot and outward conditions may be, or however they may change, we are always in God's house, and that God is always with us—loving us because we love Him, ministering to us because we serve Him, blessing us because we worship Him in all we do—we are settled and stablished in a peace which none of the chances and changes of time can disturb; at a single stroke we are freed from the stings of vanity, and the frets of care, and the torments of fear, and the pangs of loss. We are one with God in a growing fellowship, in a growing yet always satisfying peace; and what harm can time and change do to those who are one with the Lord of change and time? what harm can death itself do us when even death is, for us, only a messenger sent to call us to some ampler mansion of the House and Temple in which we already abide, and to conduct us to a place still more exquisitely prepared for us?  
S. Cox.

**1882**

**Marcel Bouix (1806-1889), French Catholic Spiritual Leader**  
**Que l'Union des Bienheureux avec Dieu aura Différents Degrés**  
**Traité de l'amour de Dieu**

(page 376)

**Chapitre IX**  
**Que l'Union des Bienheureux avec Dieu aura Différents Degrés**

Or ce sera cette lumière de gloire, Théotime, qui donnera la mesure à la vue et contemplation des bienheureux; et selon que nous aurons plus ou moins de cette sainte splendeur, nous verrons aussi plus ou moins clairement, et, par conséquent, plus ou moins heureusement la très sainte Divinité, qui, regardée diversement, nous rendra de même différemment glorieux. Certes en ce Paradis céleste tous les esprits voient toute l'essence divine; mais nul d'entre eux, ni eux tous ensemble ne la voient, ni peuvent voir totalement. Non, Théotime; car Dieu étant très uniquement un et très simplement indivisible, on ne le peut voir qu'on ne le voie tout. Et d'autant qu'il est infini, sans limite, ni borne, ni mesure quelconque en sa perfection, il n'y a, ni peut avoir aucune capacité hors de lui, qui jamais puisse totalement comprendre ou pénétrer l'infinité de sa bonté infiniment essentielle et essentiellement infinie.

Cette lumière créée du soleil visible qui est limitée et finie est tellement vue toute de tous ceux qui la regardent, qu'elle n'est pourtant jamais vue totalement de pas un, ni même de tous ensemble. Il en est presque ainsi de tous nos sens-. Entre plusieurs qui entendent une excellente musique, quoique tous l'entendent toute, les uns pourtant ne l'entendent pas si bien, ni avec tant de plaisir que les autres, selon que les oreilles sont plus ou moins délicates. La manne était savourée toute de quiconque la mangeait, mais différemment néanmoins, selon la diversité des appétits de ceux qui la prenaient, et ne fut jamais savourée totalement; car elle avait plus de différentes saveurs qu'il n'y avait de variétés de goûts ès Israélites. Théotime, nous verrons, et savourerons là-haut au ciel toute la Divinité; mais jamais nul des bienheureux, ni tous ensemble, ne la verront ou savoureront totalement.

Cette infinité divine aura toujours infiniment plus d'excellences que nous ne saurions avoir de suffisance et de capacité: et nous aurons un contentement indicible de connaître, qu'après avoir assouvi tout le désir de notre cœur, et rempli pleinement sa capacité en la jouissance du bien infini qui est Dieu; néanmoins il restera encore en cette infinité des infinies perfections à voir, à jouir et posséder, que sa divine Majesté comprend et voit elle seule, elle seule se comprenant soi-même.

Ainsi les poissons jouissent de la grandeur incroyable de l'Océan; et jamais pourtant aucun poisson, ni même toute la multitude des poissons, ne vit toutes les plages, ni ne trempa ses écailles en toutes les eaux de la mer. Et les oiseaux s'égayent à leur gré dans la vasteté de l'air; mais jamais aucun oiseau, ni même toute la race des oiseaux ensemble, n'a battu des ailes en toutes les contrées de l'air, et n'est jamais parvenu à la suprême région d'icelui. Ah! Théotime, nos esprits, à leur gré et selon toute l'étendue de leurs souhaits, nageront en l'Océan, et voleront en l'air de la Divinité, et se réjouiront éternellement de voir que cet air est tant infini, cet Océan si vaste, qu'il ne peut être mesuré par leurs ailes; et que jouissant, sans réserve ni exception quelconque de tout cet abîme infini de la Divinité, ils ne peuvent néanmoins jamais égaler leur jouissance à cette infinité, laquelle demeure toujours infiniment infinie au-dessus de leur capacité.

Et sur ce sujet les esprits bienheureux sont ravis de deux admirations: l'une pour l'infinie beauté qu'ils contemplent, et l'autre pour l'abîme de l'infinité qui reste à voir en cette même beauté. O Dieu! que ce qu'ils voient est admirable! mais, ô Dieu! que ce qu'ils ne voient pas l'est beaucoup plus! Et toutefois, Théotime, la très sainte beauté qu'ils voient étant infinie, elle les rend parfaitement satisfaits et assouvis; et se contentant d'en jouir, selon le rang qu'ils tiennent au ciel, à cause de la très aimable providence divine qui en a ainsi ordonné, ils convertissent la connaissance qu'ils ont de ne posséder pas, ni ne pouvoir posséder totalement leur objet, en une simple complaisance d'admiration, par laquelle ils ont une joie souveraine de voir que la beauté qu'ils aiment est tellement infinie, qu'elle ne peut être totalement connue que par elle-même. Car en cela consiste la divinité de cette beauté infinie, ou la beauté de cette infinie divinité.

**1886**

**Rev. Nathaniel West, D.D.**

**Daniel's Revelation—Sublime Events of the Future—Destiny of Israel's Righteous Dead—Splendor of the Coming Age—Millennial Glory Succeeded by "The New Heaven and the New Earth."**

**The Home Work Of D. L. Moody**

Chapter XI - God's Sleeping Saints Of The Old Testament.

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Rev. Nathaniel West, D.D., on Daniel's Revelation—Sublime Events of the Future—Destiny of Israel's Righteous Dead—Splendor of the Coming Age—Millennial Glory Succeeded by "The New Heaven and the New Earth."

A More literal version of the passage to which I wish to direct attention—Daniel xii. 1-3—is the following:

And, at that time, shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: And, at that time, thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book; and many shall awake (or be separated out) from among the sleeping ones of the earth dust; these (who awake at that time) shall be unto life everlasting, but those (who do not awake at that time) shall be unto shame and contempt everlasting: And the teachers (the Maskilein, compare

xt. 33-35) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that have turned the many (see the original) to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.

There is something peculiarly solemn and impressive in these mystic words of the revealing angel to Daniel. They rivet our attention and affect our hearts as only a communication from the unseen world can do, and subdue our spirit into tenderness and awe. The speaker is none other than the angel Gabriel himself, sent on swift wings to stand by the banks of the Tigris, and comfort the mourning, confessing, praying, and prostrate prophet, bereft of his strength, and whose "comeliness was turned into corruption." In the midst of a "deep sleep," into which he was thrown, with his "face on the ground," a hand touches him and sets him "on his knees" again, and "on the palms of his hands." A voice accosts him, saying:

O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright, for unto thee I am now sent I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days; for yet the vision is for many days.

The revealing angel, in form "like the similitude of the sons of men," touches him again to strengthen him, and proceeds to unveil to his soul what is "noted in the Scripture of truth." The words of the angel are associated with scenes of testimony and suffering for the truth on the part of God's ancient faithful people, and scenes of judgment against the transgressors of the holy covenant. The voice that speaks to the prophet is low and soft, and full of comfort and hope.

As we listen to its calm cadence, we are reminded of the holy benediction, in John, that falls from heaven upon the graves of the dead martyrs of Jesus: "I heard a voice, from heaven, saying unto me, write; Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit; that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." The "rest" of the bodies of the righteous, however, is not their final goal. The hope of a glorious resurrection is set before them as an animating motive to confirm their steadfastness and faith, and support them in the hour of trial and death. It was the hope of the Old Testament people of God. In the prophet Isaiah, it was the voice of Him who is "the resurrection and the life" that comforted the sufferers for His name with the thrilling promise, "Thy dead men shall live. My dead body shall arise. Awake! Sing! ye dwellers in the dust!—for the dew of herbs is thy dew, and the earth shall bring forth the dead!" Like the flower over which the scorching sirocco has passed, and buried its body beneath the sand, drying its leaves and destroying its form, but whose stem and calyx revive and re-bloom through the power of descending dew, so shall it be when, in the last day, the Spirit of Life descends to restore the sleeping dust of the saints of God. "Their bones shall flourish like an herb." It is to the same event the revealing angel points the prophet Daniel in the words of the twelfth chapter. And it is to the same event the Holy Spirit directs the vision of John, and associates with the resurrection of the faithful blood-witnesses, a co-regency with Christ, on earth, in the day of millennial glory. They live again, and reign a thousand years, and this is the first resurrection." The vision in John is the companion piece of the angel's prediction in Daniel. The hope of the resurrection, so dear to God's Old Testament saints, is carried through the New Testament, and shines with superior light on the last pages of divine revelation. It is a hope into which we ourselves are grafted, by sharing the grace of Him who is Israel's king and ours.

I need not linger here to refute that unbelieving criticism, of our day, which restrains the interpretation of these solemn words, in Daniel, to Maccabean or Neronian times, or degrades them to a merely figurative import. They do not refer to the transient era of Maccabean independence, nor to the favor that came to the Church in the days of Constantine, nor to the Reformation of the sixteenth century, nor to the regeneration of the soul, nor to its ascension to heaven, nor to the times of Charlemagne, nor to any political or ecclesiastical victory in this present age. Such violence to the plain letter of the Scripture is its own refutation. The eyes of the revealing angel who speaks to Daniel, like those of the angel who speaks to John, are directed far beyond Maccabean times, the days of Nero, Constantine, Charlemagne, the Reformation, and our own period. They reach to Israel's final outcome," in the latter days," when Daniel, awaked from his "rest," shall stand in his lot," at the end of the days"; in other words, to the close of the present age.

Two great events stand out in bold relief in the foreground of the angel's observation. He looks forward to the "great tribulation" connected with Israel's final fortunes in the great crisis to come, the bisecting epoch that divides our present age from that of millennial glory, and fastens his eyes upon them. These events are: (1) the deliverance of the surviving remnant of Israel from the power of the last Antichrist; and (2) the resurrection of Israel's righteous dead, foremost among whom are Israel's faithful martyrs. Daniel's "people" are not the Christian Church, nor are "the children of thy people," believing Gentiles, as certain commentators would foolishly have it. It is the literal believing Israel whose living remnant is delivered, and whose faithful dead are raised; even that same reproached and outcast race to whom the Lord's mercy comes" in the latter days," when "the veil that is spread over all nations is destroyed," and "death is swallowed up of victory," and the Lord "takes away the rebuke of His people from off all the earth," and the "Jew" is no longer a proverb and a byword, and Jerusalem no longer is trodden down under foot of the Gentiles, but is a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of her God.

Of the second of the two great classes just named, viz., Israel's faithful dead, the revealing angel gives a complete description—one that has touched the heart of Jew and Gentile in all ages. Of this description I now speak.

(1). He describes them from their register. Their names are found "written in the Book." This they have in common with those who are "delivered"—" at that time." They are the righteous alone, for none of the wicked are found "written in the Book." The registered dead are the holy dead, one class alone; the heirs of the kingdom. It is said of every one, "not found written in the Book," that he wakes not till "a thousand years after" the righteous (Rev. xx. 5-15). By the phrase "written in the Book" is meant the eternal predestination unto life of the righteous, by the sovereign will of God. "Chosen, faithful, and true," they are heirs by divine right to eternal glory, having been "written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xvii. 8). The remaining unraised company of the sleepers, unregistered, sleep on in their sins and their graves, destined to eternal shame and contempt. They have no part in the "first resurrection" (Rev. xx. 5). In the words of the Lord Himself to Isaiah: "Dead, they shall not live; deceased, they shall not rise"—at that time (Isa. xxvi. 14). "The upright shall have the dominion over them in the morning," while "their beauty shall consume in the grave, from their dwelling" (Ps. xltix. 14). Nor is this all. The deeds of the righteous survivors are for a memorial before God, in His book of remembrance, and because of which "They shall be mine," saith God, "in the day when I shall make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Mal. iii. 16, 17). Not otherwise is it with the righteous dead. Their deeds also are in remembrance before God. Their "record" is on high; God's journal of their testimony; heaven's minutes of their life's proceedings; a book of chronicles and monuments; the recorded acts and sufferings of patriarchs and kings, of judges and priests, of wise men and prophets in all ages; a full itinerary of their warfare and their death; a history and martyrology of God's dear saints. Bright upon the roll of immortality their names are written with a pen of love; not one name omitted, not one syllable misspelled, not one letter changed. Their sins are all blotted out. Their good deeds abide as a sweet-smelling savor unto God, the measure and the rule of their reward. God's memory does not fail Him. The holy dead are registered upon it, and graven in it; more lustrous there than on the breastplate gems of Aaron and his sons.

(2). They are described from their number. They are "many," not all of Israel's dead, but only they who are "written in the Book"; not a few, on the other hand, but "the many," of verse third, who "have been turned to righteousness"—a multitude. To Abraham it was said in covenant: "I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth." "Tell the stars, if thou canst. So shall thy seed be" (Gen. xiii. 16; xv. 5). To Rebekah it was said in the same covenant: "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions" (Gen. xxiv. 60). A remnant at most at any one time, yet, in the outcome, a multitude that no man can number; the elect out of all the tribes, sealed with the seal of the living God, and gathered out of all the nations and kindreds and tongues where they are scattered. Like the springing wheat from the grain that is sown, or the drops of the dew from the morning's womb, so shall Israel's faithful dead be in the resurrection of the just. Not only Adam and Eve, Abel and Enoch, Noah and Shem, all the gray forefathers of the world's dawn will be there, but still more, the three great forefathers

of the Hebrew race, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel, and their twelve-tribed believing seed, down to the latest generations. Moses and Joshua; Samson, Gideon, and Barak; the leaders and judges of the people, will appear in that grand review. Samuel and the prophets who sang of the glory that should one day come to Israel's king, will be there to swell the triumph of the saints. The righteous monarchs from David to young Josiah and the princes of the exiles returned from Chaldean captivity, will augment the number. From the plains of Mesopotamia and the brick kilns of Egypt, from the shores of the Red Sea to the banks of the Jordan, from the battlefields of Beth-horon and Esdraelon, the faithful dead will rise to meet their expected reward. And Daniel will "stand in his lot" at the end of the days. When that solemn command is given to the harvest-reapers, "Gather My saints together, them that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice," every angel seraph, and prince, and every legion, following the sound of the archangel's trump, will go through the land of Israel, and thence to the four ends of the earth, to reap and to bind their sheaves. They will visit the Holy City and the valley of Jehosaphat, where lie the tombs of the kings, and the fields that skirted the Emmaus road where lie the graves of the judges; thence on to the caves of Hebron and the rock chambers of Judea, and to every spot inside and outside the land, to Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, the isles of the sea, and to every country and nation wherever a saint of God lies sleeping, to start him from his long slumber and wake him to glory. "They shall come from the East and the West, the North and the South, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God" (Luke xiii. 28, 29). The band of slaughtered innocents will be there, the first martyrs of Jesus; John the Baptist will be there; Stephen, Paul, Peter, the beloved John, all the apostles, and all of their race who have believed in the Messiah they preached; Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the other five Marys who were written unto life, the women of Samaria, the Galilean women last at the cross and first at the tomb, the dying thief and the centurion that stood at the cross, all will be there, and in front of all the martyrs of the last times. Multitudes! multitudes! of Israel's host, thick and bright as the beads of morning dew! ' Jacob's heavens shall drop down dew when the souls of the righteous descend from above, and their bodies revived, ascend from their graves; and the land shall become "the land of the living" and not of the dead. How vast the number! "Many shall awake."

(3). They are described from their condition. They are "sleepers of the earth-dust," and in Isaiah xxvi. 19, the "dwellers of the dust." The dead are viewed in their whole personality, body and soul, and the description of them as "sleeping," is taken from the repose, of their material part in the grave. Sleep is the image of death. As to the souls of the righteous, they are "in the hands of God, and dwell near the throne of His glory." Soul-sleep is nowhere taught in the Bible. Their bodies rest in the grave, waiting the hour when the spirit's energy passes over to the material part of the believer, and along with this, earth's glorification begins (Rom. viii. 19-22). It belongs to the blessedness of the believer, that his body still remains united to God in covenant and in fact. It is dust already redeemed. His sleep, unlike that of the wicked, is a blessed sleep. As he sinks to his rest in the grave, and wraps the dark robe of death around him, he can calmly say his evening prayer with David, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for Thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety" (Ps. iv. 8). "My flesh also shall rest in hope; for Thou wilt not abandon me to the grave" (Ps. xvi. 9). And sure of his rising in the morning, he can say as his eyelids close, "I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness" (Ps. xvii. 15). Like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in their whole personality, so he lives "unto God," even when dead, for the believer "never dies" (John xi. 26; Luke xx. 38). Full of comfort are the angel's words, "Many shall awake from among the sleepers in the earth dust"—many of "Thy people." They are the words of one of the "Holy Watchers" who stands guard, unseen, over the graves of the just. The blessed condition of "the dead who die in the Lord" is that, as to their bodies, they "enter into peace, and rest in their beds," and as to their souls, "each one walks in its uprightness" before God (Isa. lvii. 2). "There the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest" (Job iii. 17).

(4). They are described from their reward. And this is two-fold. (1) A reward of life; (2) a reward of glory; and both everlasting. "These," who awake at that time, "shall be unto life everlasting." That is their destiny. There is no more separation now of soul or body. They were, indeed, possessors of life everlasting, prior to their death, and by virtue of their faith, but the life was a hidden life—a life in mystery and not in maturity; an inward spark, not an out-bursting flame; a first-fruit, not the fullness of unfading fruition in glory. The "Spirit of life" dwelt in their mortal bodies, still mortal. Their souls were "quickenened." On earth, and in



heaven, they "reign in life by one," yet only in imperfection. But, now, it is fullness of life for body and soul together, because the completion of life, begun here and now, matures at the resurrection from the dead. Of that full immortality and incorruption, the veiled Spirit of God, dwelling in the believer as in a temple, is the prophecy and pledge. The "life everlasting" to which the "many" shall awake, is the everlasting life of the body and soul together.

But more. The reward is a reward of glory, and special glory to all who turn many to righteousness.

The teachers shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that have turned many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever.

What a motive to work! The "life" is everlasting, and the "splendor," the Zohar, is forever and ever! The teachers were the Maskilein, the approved instructors of the people, sent of God, "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide their feet in the way of peace" (Luke i. 17-79). They were men like the prophets of old; men like Ezra and the Baptist, who denounced sin and enforced righteousness; men like Paul, and Peter, and John; and later like Irenaeus and Justin; Tertullian and Augustine; Luther, and Calvin, and Knox; Cranmer, and Latimer, and Ridley; Whitfield and Wesley; and thousands more in our own times. Ecclesiastical orders and titles are nothing here. The reward is not to a titled clergy as such, but to "teachers" of the law and the promise. It is not to fruitless preachers, but to "turners of many to righteousness." There is a glory in the kingdom for all, no matter how varied or numerous they are. Jachin and Boaz are not all. God's temple rests on many pillars. God's garden has many flowers. God's music has many notes. God's sky has many stars. And, just as one differs from another, "so also is the resurrection" (1 Cor. xv. 42). A glory belongs to Christ, the central sun, none of us may claim as our own. Another glory belongs to the Church, the moon, that none of us may inherit, a borrowed splendor that covers the whole company of saints as one. But there is glory that belongs to the individual "glitterers" of the firmament, different in degree, and it is ours, so to turn many to righteousness, as that neither Alcione's sheen, nor the stars that burn in Orion's belt, shall surpass our brightness, in the resurrection of the just. And what a miracle of splendor that will be, when sun, moon, and stars, all shine in the firmament, at the same time! We shall, each, have our own peculiar glory while yet lost in the "Greater Light" who rules that golden clay, for "the righteous shall shine forth, as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. xiii. 43). The splendor of Christ will augment, not quench, our own. The clear gleam of the saints will be both physical and spiritual—nothing less than the glory of Christ Himself. And this is the reward they shall have forever, for their brief moment of work and suffering here.

(5). Once more: they are described from their character. This we have in the context, in chapter xi. 32, 33, to which the "many" here refers. In times of trial they count not their lives dear to them. Martyrdom for them has no terrors. "They fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity and spoil," and yet they "do exploits" for God (xi. 32, 33). Such the prophets. Such the Maccabean heroes whose valor and faith Paul had commended; the martyred mother and her seven sons—a story that should magnetize the world into life—the dauntless host that "resisted unto blood, striving against sin"; God's unflinching braves who were stoned and sawn asunder," the "tempted," the "wanderers about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, and of whom the world was not worthy," the troglodyte saints of God, who "wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth," and "obtained a good report through faith"; men and women alike "tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Hebrews xi. 35-39). Such were not only the martyrs of the law, but also those of the Gospel, who were alike made "a gazing stock, both by reproaches and afflictions, and were companions of them that were so used"—elect souls who "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had, in heaven, a better and an enduring substance" (Heb. x. 33, 34). Pioneers, they were, of the suffering saints who found their only home on earth, in Roman catacombs, or Alpine solitudes, or in the cells of Spanish inquisition! Ease and popularity could not buy them. False brethren could not intimidate them. Calamity could not dishearten them. A trimming and time-serving policy could not attract them. Wealth, respectability, and power could not overawe them. Honied flattery could not seduce them. The institutional morality, the customary ethics of society, a cunning

prudence and desire of personal influence and social self-entrenchment, the neutrality so odious to God, had no charms for them. They were no "middle men." Deceived, betrayed, maligned, forsaken by friends, their worst foes those of their "own household," they still chose to "suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, having respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Heb. xi. 26). And they shall "shine"! Asleep in the dusty earth, they shall one day awake from their graves at the trumpet's call, and soaring upward, shall gleam as they go, flashing like the welkin's glance, and beaming as the stars, forever and ever. This, their Zohar, their eternal splendor in the world to come!

(6). Finally, they are described from their future time. The time is given us, not only in the organic connection of the whole prophecy of Daniel, but in the immediate text and context, also. The resurrection here spoken of, occurs, it is said, in verse first, "at that time." The specification is as precise and definite as the angel's words could make it, and what "that time" is, we are at no loss to understand. It is the time (1) when he, of whom the "vile person" (xi. 21), viz., Antiochus Epiphanes, is a type, shall hereafter, as did Antiochus before, invade the holy land, and, "planting his tent in the glorious holy mountain," shall suddenly "come to his end, and none shall help him" (ix. 41-45)—in other words, when the last oppressor of the Jewish people shall be miraculously destroyed. It is the time (2) when Michael, the tutelary angel prince of Israel, shall stand up, once again, for the Jewish people, as he had done before (x. 13), to deliver them from trouble; the same Michael who "contended for the body of Moses" (Jude 9), and is represented in John's vision, as fighting Satan, when Israel is converted to the "Lamb," and Satan's accusation is forever hushed (Rev. xi. 7-11). It is the time (3) when the last "great tribulation" waxes to its height, unparalleled in history.

Then "at that time," both the deliverance and the resurrection shall take place. Here five distinct events contemporate, viz.: (a) The standing up of Michael, (b) the great tribulation, (c) the deliverance of the living remnant, (d) the resurrection of the many from among the sleepers, and (e) the reward of everlasting life and glory in the kingdom (xii. 1-3). It is the time, furthermore, when the monarchy colossus (ii. 31-45) falls; for the last persecutor of "the children" of Daniel's people is the "little horn" that shall rise out of the ten horns (or toes) of the fourth or Roman Empire, in its present divided condition, or European states system, and of which the "little horn" that rose out of one of the four horns of the third or Greek Empire, is the type. It is the time when the colossus is struck on the toes, or in the horns, of the fourth empire by the "stone" (ii. 45), and when the "little horn" springing there-from is destroyed also (vii. 7-27).

And this time is expressly declared to be when "the Son of Man comes in the clouds of heaven" (vii. 3), an expression our Lord referred to His second coming (Matt. xxvi. 64). It is, therefore, the time when our Lord's present sojourn in heaven has come to an end (Acts iii. 19-21); the time of the "harvest," or "end of this age" (Matt. xiii. 37-43); the time of the end of Gentile supremacy over Israel, or end of the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke xxi. 24); the time of the last Antichrist's destruction (Isa. xi. 4; 2 Thess. ii. 3-8); the time when the surviving remnant of Israel is converted (Rom. xi. 25-27; Rev. xii. 1-11); the time when the warrior-bridegroom-king comes from an opened heaven (Rev. xix. 11-21), to destroy the "beast"; the time when a separation is made between the righteous and the wicked (Matt. xxv. 31-46); and when the kingdom comes in its glory on earth; and the greatness of it "under the whole heaven" is given to the saints (Dan. ii. 44; vii. 27); the time of the vintage and harvest, when the Son of Man sits in the cloud, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle (Rev. xiv. 14-20); the time when the last seal is opened, last trumpet blown, and last vial poured, and Satan is bound, and the "first resurrection" takes place, and millennial glory is introduced (Rev. xx. 1-6); the time when, the "kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ" (Rev. xi. 15-19); the time of Israel's final victory, and of the glory of the saved nations (Rev. vii. 117; xiv. 1-5; xv. 1-4), consequent on Babylon's fall (Rev. xviii. 2; xx. 3; xxi. 24); the time when the returning "Nobleman" destroys his enemies who would not have him to reign over them, and sets up His kingdom in power and glory (Luke xix. 12-27). In short, it is "the end of this age," where all these prophetic lines and events converge into one great day, "the day of the Lord" that comes as a thief in the night. It is the time covered by the "seven-sealed scroll" of the Apocalypse, and for the interpretation of which, Israel is the key. Then, "at that time," in "the latter days" of this age, shall the resurrection of Israel's faithful dead take place, amid terrors and glories such as the world has never seen, nor ever will behold again. Then, too, all

"they that are Christ's, at His coming" (i Cor. xv. 23), shall wake at the sound of His voice (1 Thess. iv. 13-17).

And now, what shall I say in conclusion? The book of Daniel is simply a philosophy of history in its great design. It was meant to be that. It has little to do with the doctrines of grace. It has all to do with the outward fortunes of Israel and the world-empires, and the outward development of the visible kingdom of God. The "New Testament Church" is not found in it once. It touches only on the beginning and close of the New Testament times. It busies itself, wholly, with Israel and the times of the Gentiles, or nations. Its one great object is to sketch a sacred calendar, covering in outline the whole range of four successive Gentile empires (the fourth of which still exists, though broken into various kingdoms and kings) from the first fall of Jerusalem, and blotting out of the visible kingdom of God on earth, down to the "finishing of the mystery of God" with respect to Gentile, Jew, and the Church of God. Its one purpose is to lead us rapidly over the whole period of Israel's national ruin, rejection, dispersion, and expectation, on to the time when Gentile power shall no longer have any succession, but the sovereignty hitherto wielded shall be transferred, through judgment, to Israel's King and His saints. Then the deliverance of Israel's remnant will occur, and all Israel's faithful dead will be raised, and "they that are Christ's" from among the Gentiles, and the wicked be swept from the earth. Then, seated with Christ, the "saints of the high places shall take the kingdom forever, even forever and ever" (Dan. vii. 27). Then, in their own land made glorious—the first-fruits of a still future final cosmical change—they shall sing together. "In that day, this song shall be sung in the land of Judah; we have a strong city. Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks" (Isa. xxvi. 1). Apply it to the "Church" if you will. "Application is not interpretation." Make it belong, in a sense, to the first advent. It belongs in its truest sense to the second. "At that time," says Delitzsch, "the confessors of Jehovah shall be waked from their graves, and form, with the faithful living, a glorious Church. Here is predicted the first resurrection." So the pious Weber, a gifted and life-long student of the Hebrew faith, has said: "The Jewish Christian Church shall again revive, as at first. From the dispersion shall the living, and from their graves shall the dead, be brought back to enjoy, together, in the Holy Land, the promised glory of the Messianic age." And Fuller—with whom Prof. Volck, of Dorpat, one of the deepest and ablest exegetes of the world, agrees—comments thus in his work on Daniel: "Not merely those who survive the great tribulation shall be delivered, but also many from those who sleep in the earth shall awake in order to enjoy this redemption." In like manner Dr. S. P. Tregelles, the only scholar ever pensioned by the British Government: "It is at the coming of the Lord Jesus that Israel is delivered. It is then, also, that the first resurrection takes place." So many others, of equally high repute as thorough scholars and deep investigators of the Word of God.

How glorious Israel's now waste and desolate land will be "in that day," and "at that time"! "The whole territory, so mountainous, rough, and uneven, now, "shall "become a plain" in the midst of which the mountain of the Lord's house shall rise exalted in beauty and glory above all surrounding hills. Canaan shall become like the Arabia that stretches from Lebanon to the Dead Sea. The borders of the Holy Land shall be enlarged, its valleys exalted, its mountains brought low, its deserts made as the Garden of Eden, and the Holy City rebuilt and adorned, with a temple of glory unseen before; Jerusalem shall be "a new thing in the earth," a "diadem of glory in the hand of her God." Salvation and praise will be the one music from her walls and her gates. A glorified land, city, people, and nation, the metropolitan point and splendor of a new age shall Palestine and Jerusalem be in the day of the deliverance of Israel's remnant, and resurrection of Israel's faithful dead—a fore-light of that further future re-gensis when not only a part, but "the whole creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God,"—and a "new heaven and a new earth" shall appear (Rom. viii. 21; Rev. xxi. 1; Isa. xl. 4, lxi. 3, lx. 1-22, lxii. 4-12, lxv. 17-25; Jer. xxxi. 38-40; Ezek. xxxvi. 35; xl.-xlviii.; Joel iii. 17-20; Zech. xiv. 8-11). Wide and glorious shall be the whole land, and great the numbers of Israel. "O Lord, Thou increasest the nation, Thou glorifiest Thyself, Thou enlargest all the borders of the land"! (Isa. xxvi. 15), a passage horribly mangled in King James' version, but on which in the original, with others, Justin rested the statement that, at the time of Israel's deliverance and resurrection, Jerusalem shall be "rebuilt, broadened, and adorned, as the prophets Ezekiel, Isaiah, and others declare" (Dial., Cap. 80).

What a scene for contemplation in the wonderful ongoing of the kingdom of God on earth! How glorious the day when the name of Jerusalem shall be written "Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is there!" and "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Ezek. xlviii. 35; Hab. ii. 14). O days of trouble, and warfare, and sin, days of tears, and sorrow, and death, run on and expire! "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

And, now, O anxious believer in Jesus, waiting, watching, looking for and loving His appearing, "Go thou thy way till the end shall be!" If the bridegroom tarries "thou shall rest," but—resting or toiling till He comes—"thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (Dan. xii. 13).

**1888**

**President Charles W. Penrose (1832—1925), Latter-day Saint First Presidency  
Justice Tempered with Mercy; Loss Sustained by Disobedient; Doom of the Sons of Perdition;  
Celestial, Terrestrial and Telestial Glories; Redemption & Glorification of Earth; Salvation of  
Whole Race**

**"Mormon" Doctrine, Plain and Simple: or Leaves From the Tree of Life**

### **The Twelfth Leaf**

Christ's Work Continued After His Death—The Perfect Science of Human Redemption—What was Lost in the Fall—What is to be Regained in the Restoration—Justice Tempered with Mercy— Loss Sustained by the Disobedient—Doom of the Sons of Perdition—The Celestial, Terrestrial and Telestial Glories—Redemption and Glorification of the Earth—Salvation of the Whole Race—The Finished Work of Christ—Universal Dominion of the Father

THE mission of Christ was to save that which was lost. It was not completed when He hung upon the cross. His dying exclamation, "It is finished!" referred to His sufferings for sin, the ordeals of mortality, his labors in the flesh. As we have seen, he continued his work of salvation when out of the body, by preaching to the dead. After his resurrection He met, on several occasions, with his disciples, and instructed them in the plan of redemption and sent them forth to all nations, that the work he had commenced on earth might be continued. He ministered to other nations, uttered his voice to other sheep which were not of the fold in Palestine, that the lost tribes of Israel and all who could not be reached by His Jewish Apostles might hear the glad tidings of salvation. This, though not fully revealed in the Bible, is made clear in the Book of Mormon. After his ascension, to fulfil His own promise, he went to prepare a place for His faithful disciples, that when they left the earth they might be able to abide with Him.

But all this was only a small part of the perfect scheme of redemption. That which was lost in Adam is to be regained in Christ. Through the commission of crime, death came into the world. Satan gained dominion. The earth trembled under the curse. Eden bloomed no more upon its face. The tree of life was removed. Thorns and briars and noxious weeds came up in the place of the flowers and fruits of paradise. Deity was hidden from the sight of man. Sorrow and pain and toil and travail became the heritage of mortals. Enmity arose between man and beast. Venom entered the serpent's fangs, and rage the hearts of brute and fowl and aqueous creature. Strife dwelt in the very elements and death brooded over the face of the smitten globe. What, then, was lost? The immortality of man; the blessed tree of life; communion with Jehovah; the companionship of angels; the purity of paradise; man's dominion over inferior creatures; freedom from Satanic influence; exemption from toil and pain; earth's affinity with perfected realms on high.

Until all this has been restored Christ's work must continue. The earth must be cleansed from its corruptions. The elements must melt with fervent heat, and be purified from evil. Satan and his hosts must be banished and bound. Eden must blossom again as at first. The lion and the lamb must lie down together. The fig tree and the myrtle must flourish where the rank weeds grow. The whole race of Adam must be raised from the

dead. The veil between earth and heaven must be removed. The knowledge and glory of God must cover the earth as the waters cover the deep, and the spirit of life and peace and light and joy must be poured out upon all flesh, until the whole creation vibrates with pleasure and responds with praise.

The ushering in of the great Millennial day, a glimpse of which has been seen by all the holy prophets since the world began, with the sweet rest of earth and its inhabitants, is not, however, the completion of Christ's glorious work. His kingdom must not only be established from pole to pole and from shore to shore, but His saving power must penetrate to every lost soul of our race in the regions of the damned. A just judgment will be meted out to all. They who reject the Gospel must suffer the penalty. Those who are found worthy of many stripes must receive their portion. The wicked will be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God. Each condemned person will pay the uttermost farthing for his sins. Justice, tempered, not warped or thwarted, by Mercy, will mete out to all their right desert, "every man according to his works." The punishment is always existent, therefore it is eternal punishment. But each one who suffers receives only his just portion thereof. Shall the murderer and the Sabbath-breaker, the adulterer and the thief, the drunkard and the profane, all merit the same doom? Would human courts proclaim such judgment? Shall man have more equity than God? When stern Justice has claimed its own and filled its purpose, shall there be no place for sweet Mercy?

While there is one soul of this race, willing and able to accept and obey the laws of redemption, no matter where or in what condition it may be found, Christ's work will be incomplete until that being is brought up from death and hell, and placed in a position of progress, upward and onward, in such glory as is possible for its enjoyment and the service of the great God. The punishment inflicted will be adequate to the wrongs performed. In one sense the sinner will always suffer its effects. When the debt is paid and justice is satisfied; when obedience is learned through the lessons of sad experience; when the grateful and subdued soul comes forth from the everlasting punishment, thoroughly willing to comply with the laws once rejected; there will be an abiding sense of loss. The fulness of celestial glory in the presence and society of God and the Lamb are beyond the reach of that saved but not perfected soul, forever. The power of increase, wherein is dominion and exaltation, and crowns of immeasurable glory, is not for the class of beings who have been thrust down to hell and endured the wrath of God for the period allotted by eternal judgment.

But Jesus the anointed, with his army of Saviors bearing the Priesthood after the order of Melchisedec, will seek and save that which is lost until everything savable is redeemed. Only those beings who have learned the law, received of the light of truth, tasted the sweets of the divine spirit, basked in the sunbeams of the heavenly glory, made covenant to serve the King of Kings and received power to advance to the pinnacle of exaltation, and then have turned away from the right, chosen evil rather than god, driven away the power and promptings of the spirit of light and truth, sought to become a law unto themselves, imbrued their hands in the blood of innocence or, drinking in of the influence of that Evil One, consented to and endorsed the slaying of the world's Redeemer, thus sinning against the Holy Ghost and becoming servants of Satan and Sons of Perdition, will be in their nature and status unredeemable, and therefore will remain "filthy still" and thus be unfit for a kingdom of any degree of glory. These will go away with the Devil and his angels into the outer darkness, beyond the spheres where flows the river of salvation and where blooms the tree of life. For them alone of Adam's race there is no repentance, for them alone is the second death, for them alone is the blackness of darkness forever.

When the work of Christ and his associate Kings and Priests unto God is finished, the Saints of all the ages will be crowned with glory and receive their reward. They will be made rulers over many things. In the order of eternity they will stand in the heavenly family organization, and all things will be theirs. Of their increase there will be no end. They will hold the key to all heights and depths. They will have power over all the elements, spiritual and corporeal. The incorruptible and fadeless riches will be theirs. They will mingle with the highest. They will gaze upon the face of the Eternal God and dwell in the presence of the sinless Son. Pain and sorrow and trial and death will henceforth be only known in memory, to form the contrast needful to make their joy complete. Eternity with all its boundless opportunities and unutterable bliss and intelligence

and majesty will be before them without a barrier in the way, secure for them as to the Almighty Father himself. This is the celestial glory.

Those who were not numbered with the Saints of God in the flesh, but who received the gospel in the spirit; the good and honorable who were led astray by the designing; the class not fitted for the crowning glory of the celestial world nor worthy of the doom of the wicked, will also receive their portion. They will not attain to the gifts of increase and dominion and the fulness of the highest, but will enter into their rest, which shall be glorious. And though they reach not to the Father's fulness, they will receive the visits of the Son and of his associates in the celestial world, and enjoy rich blessings unspeakable in their greatness and perpetuity. They inherit the terrestrial glory.

Those who were cast down to the depths for their sins, who rejected the gospel of Jesus, who persecuted the Saints, who reveled in iniquity, who committed all manner of transgressions except the unpardonable crime, will also come forth in the Lord's time, through the blood of the Lamb and the ministry of his disciples and their own repentance and willing acceptance of divine law, and enter into various degrees of glory and power and progress and light, according to their different capacities and adaptabilities. They cannot go up into the society of the Father nor receive of the presence of the Son, but will have the ministrations of messengers from the terrestrial world, and have joy beyond all expectation and the conception of uninspired mortal minds. They will all bow the knee to Christ and serve God the Father, and have an eternity of usefulness and happiness in harmony with the higher powers. They receive the celestial glory.

Thus the inhabitants of Earth with the few exceptions that are beyond the power of redemption will eventually be saved. And the globe on which they passed their probation, having kept the law of its being, will come into remembrance before its Maker. It will die like its products. But it will be quickened again and resurrected in the celestial glory. It has been born of the water, it will also be born of the Spirit. Purified by fire from all the corruptions that once defiled it, developed into its perfections as one of the family of worlds fitted for the Creator's presence, all its latent light awakened into scintillating action, it will move up into its place among the orbs governed by celestial time, and shining "like a sea of glass mingled with fire," every tint and color of the heavenly bow radiating from its surface, the ransomed of the Lord will dwell upon it; the highest beings of the ancient orbs will visit it; the garden of God will again adorn it; the heavenly government will prevail in every part; Jesus will reign as its King; the river of life will flow out from the regal throne; the tree of life, whose leaves were for the healing of the nations, will flourish upon the banks of the heavenly stream, and its golden fruit will be free for the white-robed throng, that they may eat and live forever. This perfected Earth and its saved inhabitants will then be presented to the Eternal Father as the finished work of Christ, and all things will be subject unto the Great Patriarch, Architect, Creator, Ruler, the Almighty, to whom be obedience and reverence and praise in all the countless worlds that shine as jewels in His universal crown!

**1889**

**James M. King**

**Lord Christ Spoke Of Temple As Father's House; In It Were Many Mansions Or Apartments: One For Leper, Who Was Healed. To Purify Himself; Another For Nazarite, Term Of Whose Vow Had Expired, To Be Shaven And Cleansed; Another For Treasures And Musical Instruments Of Levites**

**Homiletic review: an international magazine of religion, theology ..., Volume 17**

**Father's House By James M. King, D D. (Methodist), New York.**

**My Father's house.—John xiv: 2.**

You are familiar with the context in which these words appear. The Saviour says, "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."

Some scholars declare that "the Father's house" refers to the universe of His creation—all his dominion—considering that the many mansions constitute the various regions in which His unfallen and intelligent creatures dwell. But the Lord Christ spoke of the Temple as the Father's house. In it were many mansions or apartments: one for the leper, who was healed, to purify himself; another for the Nazarite, the term of whose vow had expired, to be shaven and cleansed; another for the treasures and musical instruments of the Levites. And it is in this, I think, you will find the type which our Lord employs in the expression, "in my Father's house are many mansions."

The Temple was the home of the nation. Every one had an interest in it. But the various classes had their separate and peculiar apartments in this one common home. And the Lord hints that we shall not visit the presence of God as Gentiles did the Temple, but as Jews. We shall dwell in the courts of His house. The idea of the text is intensely that of home. We all belong to the Father's family. It matters not whether we ignore the family relationship or not. It matters not even though we may have taken our portion of the substance and gone and expended it upon riotous living. We nevertheless belong to the Father's family. Sinfulness and disobedience do not destroy the fact of the parentage of the human race, any more than they destroy the fact of the human parentage—the relationship we sustain to our earthly parents.

I want to meditate a little while to-night with you upon what the Father's house or heavenly home is, by what human homes are.

Home, in the first place, is the place of unfettered joy. The boy at school must be restrained, and must be disciplined if he is ever to amount to any thing in this world. But home, to him, means freedom from tasks and routine. The man becomes a boy again, when he is at home. One of the most beautiful pictures drawn by the hand of that artist Oliver Wendell Holmes, given us in "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," represents a man who is somewhat along in years—in middle age, perhaps—in the midst of home joys, and, looking upon the innocence of the childhood about him and the youth near him, he cries out:

O for one year of youthful joy  
I give back my twentieth spring.

I'd rather laugh, a bright-haired boy,  
Than reign, a gray-haired king.

How about that wife, that in your youth  
you wedded, and to whom,  
by ties of affection you were joined?  
Oh, I wouldn't lose my wife.

The angel took a sapphire pen.  
And wrote. In rainbow dew,

The man would be a boy again.  
And be a husband, too.

But how about the children that are about you?  
Oh, I can't lose the children.

The angel took a sapphire pen.  
And wrote, in rainbow dew,

The man would be a boy again,  
And be a father, too.

Home makes every man who is worthy the name of man conscious of a return to boyhood again. Home is the place of pleasurable work. There is work in this world that is not very pleasurable. The man who leaves the work-shop or the counting-house jaded and worn out, thinking that he would like to rest, comes home lighthearted with his toil, but in the midst of surroundings that make toil a rest to him.

Home is the place of unridiculed tenderness; and that means a great deal. There is a great deal of punishment that comes to man in this world by ridicule; but never any of it, certainly, ought to be in the home. It is a place of unridiculed tenderness. The endearments of home are enjoyed without fear of the cynical sneer or the bantering laugh. It is the place where a man who has worn for self-defense, and honestly, too, a mask during the daytime, lest others might pierce his heart, can throw off his mask and be himself again. Don't you trust a man who is never tender in his home. Such a man has in him the essential elements of dishonesty. I want to find, before I will trust a man even in large human relationships, that he is capable of making bare his heart somewhere.

Home is the place of free intercourse. Now letter-writing is no small boon in this world; but after all, they are but the bare thoughts that are there uttered. It needs the countenance of the speaker, the expression of the eye; it needs the presence of the speaker, in order that free, effective communication may take place. Jesus Christ has written a good many letters to you and me. I hope the time will come when you and I will be able to interpret them by the expression of His face. You take that letter that comes to you from mother or loved one, when you are away from home, or when they are away, and you read and interpret it in the light of the face that you know looked on it when the letter was written. Oh for the time to come, when you and I shall be able to interpret these wondrous letters of the Man of Nazareth, the brother of our humanity, in the light of his eyes upon us!

Home is the dwelling-place of loved ones. There my best friends, my kindred dwell. Let us learn what the Father's house, or heaven is, from what homes ought to be. There ought to be uninterrupted peace in the home; no jealousies, no bitterness. The worst thing in this world is a family quarrel; the next worst thing is a church quarrel; because, in connection with both, the tenderest ties and the highest possibilities of happiness are sundered and rudely torn apart. Oh, who can conceive, in connection with an ideal home, jealousies between children and jealousies between parents, and between children and parents? Who can conceive of any pure blessing entering into a home where jealousy has entered? Certainly, that kind of a home is not a type of heaven.

But home ought to be a place of implicit obedience. The Scriptures say, "His servants shall serve him, also his children." I do not mean by that, severity, although very frequently the sternest severity is the tenderest mercy. There can be no happiness where there is no harmony. There can be no harmony where there is no law. There can be no law, producing harmony, where there is no obedience. But love is to be the constraining motive of every action in the home. "Duty" is a word for earth: "Privilege" is its synonym in home and heaven. It is better for a man to obey from a sense of duty what he knows to be obligation in this world, than not to obey at all. It is better for a man who is carnally disposed or wickedly disposed to be absolutely restrained by the strong hand of justice in law; but there is not much liberty where there is such obedience, and where there is such a motive in that obedience as that. I conceive that in heaven and in perfect homes—approaching, at least, perfection—which are the types of the Father's house, the home in heaven, there is no such word as "duty" ever used, but "privilege." Paul, you remember, said that the soul that had in it the catalogue of virtues to which he made reference, righteousness, peace, temperance, charity, long-



suffering, was above law, simply because it obeys the law. "Privilege" is the synonym for "duty," in the home that is the type of heaven.

But another characteristic of what home ought to be is charity; the actions of a brother, or of a member of the same family circle, never misjudged. If there is a place in the world where a man ought to be estimated absolutely by what he is worth, without misjudgment, it is in the home circle. Gentleness and kindness ought to characterize the home circle that is to be the type of heaven. One of the most beautiful passages in all the inspired word is that which says, "Thy gentleness hath made me great." Why, it is a passage that you may meditate upon and revolve in your mind, and you will never strike the deepest depths of it. The gentleness of God making man great'. Such power has in it omnipotence.

When that great modern apostle of temperance, perhaps the greatest now living, who has perhaps led more men than any other man who ever lived, from inebriety to Christian safety, excepting only John B. Gough, Francis Murphy, when he lay a criminal, in the cell up in Maine, with the law not yet enforced in its sentence upon him; degraded by the power of drink; when missionary after missionary and minister after minister went to his side to plead with him and see if they could not get at something that was good in him—no, it was all covered over with the power and the habit of sin, which had come to be deep guilt upon his nature. But one day a kindly man took a child of Francis Murphy into the cell of the prison where he was, and she stooped over, with the tears dropping upon his breast, and said to him, "Papa, we are homesick at our house without you," and what there was left of manhood and hope and divinity underneath all this overcovering debris was reached, and Francis Murphy, not long after his liberation and restoration, telling the incident, said, "Man is lost beyond the possibility of redemption, if the divinity of his nature does not listen when some child says 'Home' in his ear." The gentleness of the child life, that had never come to be hard, was the messenger of God to get at the soul that had been thus covered up.

Another element of home, as it ought to be, is security. As little children who believe in the omnipotence of a father's arm, and in the equal omnipotence of a mother's love, shall we rest happy, happy forever. A beautiful simile is used by one whose name I cannot give, giving a picture of the home without the mother's power in it: "Go into a home—pictures on the walls, elegant and expensive furniture; but there is no carpet on the floor and no fire on the hearth. That is home without a mother's warm love. But when the mother enters, the floor is covered, and the tender and elastic return at the touch of the foot makes conscious of tenderness, and the glowing warmth of the hearth fire makes us feel that this is a type of the Father's home."

Have you ever been home-sick? Do you know what it means to be homesick? I do. No person can describe it to you if you have not been homesick, and if you have been no one needs to describe it to you—an experience that has in it, perhaps, more of the elements of torture than any other individual experience. You know that the Swiss soldiers are great mercenaries. They lend themselves for hire to fight for other nationalities, more than any other people on the face of the earth. And yet accurate statistics say that in certain campaigns in which these Swiss soldiers had been fighting as mercenaries, more of them died, actually, from homesickness than from the shock of battle. It is recorded that if the hand, in the midst of the festivities of the camp, strikes up the national air of the Swiss, the mercenary, away from home, falls into a fit of despondency for which there is no cure except a discharge from the army and telling him to go home.

It is to me simply appalling to reflect that the sinner, dying impenitent, must be homeless forever. It is not my purpose, and it is seldom my practice, to attempt to picture what are the penalties of final impenitence in this world. But it is enough for me to know, to make me seek to avoid it, and to escape from it, that the soul that has not come to the Father's house and been adopted into the Father's family through mercy and merit in Jesus Christ, is simply to be homeless forever, stripped of every comfort, deprived of every ray of affection. Heirship in Christ can alone prepare for the eternal home. Ho is the door of the Father's house. "I am the way," He declares, "and no man cometh unto the Father but by me." It is recorded in the 28th verse of the 14th Chapter of John, that "then the disciples went away again to their own home." The word appears very prominently in the New Testament Scriptures. It is a Christian word. Dryden says that home is the sacred

refuge of our life. The derivation of the word is principally or primarily Saxon, and that embodies in it a world of instruction. It is that language that contains the thought most prevalent and most extended, concerning the redemption of the race by Christ Jesus. It is the Saxon civilization that is the Christian civilization, and in its very essence it has words communicating thoughts that are not found in other languages. To be at home on any subject is to be conversant or familiar with it.

We have been using home as a type of heaven. Do you know that homes are not known in countries where Christ is not known? Do you know that in Mohammedanism the very heart and life, that constitutes the central thought, the Bre-place, the heart affection of every home circle, womanhood, maternity, is yet the plaything and the gratifier of passion? So that it has come to be true that the measure of the civilization of any people finds its exact measurement in the character of the homes of the people. When Napoleon I. was asked what were the two greatest needs of modern France, his first response in order was, "Mothers." That simply meant homes.

Dr. Johnson says that to be at home is the ultimate result of all ambition, the end to which every enterprise and labor tends, and of which every desire prompts the prosecution. It is indeed at home that every man must be known by those who would make a just estimate of his virtue or his falsity: for smiles and embroidery are alike occasional, and the mind is often dressed for show, in dainty honor and in fictitious benevolence; but there is no sham, no deception, no possible cheating concerning personal character, in the Father's home. So, when these things are found in the homes of earth, as a type they are banished.

Christ said, "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also." How clearly that states the simple fact that heaven, the home of the follower of Christ, is where Christ's personal presence is. It is the presence of the Master that makes the heaven of which He is the centre. "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also." Is not that true of the homes of earth? Was that little child far from right, who came from a very common and very neglected home, so far as the external evidences of care were concerned, and, when asked by a teacher, "Where is your home, my child?" responded, "Where mother is." So shall heaven be where Christ is.

Pardon the personal reference. I am myself a son of an itinerant minister, as well as an itinerant minister personally. The mother of the home, with us, moved the family twenty times during the ministerial career of my father. It was literally true that home, with us, was where mother was. And it is literally true to-day that it matters not how long may have been the time of abode in any locality, it is the character of the home that makes it the type of the skies.

A husband, the record says, had lived sixty years with a faithful wife. He was a man of exceeding wealth, and he erected a magnificent mausoleum in which to deposit the mortal remains of the wife that left him after three score years of united home life; and after much deliberation for determining what should be the brief epitaph that should tell the whole story upon that virtuous, noble woman's tomb, that had cost its scores upon scores of thousands of dollars, he simply wrote her name, finally, and the sculptor graved this on the tomb: "She always made home happy;" and that was enough. The heart and life that could do that ' needed not that they should say, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." It needed not that the burial service should be read over such mortality, out of which such a spirit had gone. One sentence told the whole story.

Have you ever yearned to return home, when you have been away? "I long to see home," the sailor says, tossed upon the storm-agitated deep. "I am going home," says the weary workman, oppressed with the toil and worn by its friction. "I must hurry home," says the mother, thinking of the child in the cradle that awaits her coming. "Oh, how I long to get home," says the schoolboy, who is fretted and worried with his tasks. "Don't stop me: I am going home," says the bright and beautiful girl, . h i: goin- away from the things that constituted the grace of childhood. "Almost home," says the dying Christian; and in connection with it comes the utterance from the skies: "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you." Oh, how that makes me think, sometimes, that Christ, seeing the narrow scope of our vision, thought

that humanity would some time say, "Why, there have been millions and millions of people that have lived in this world. Is there room for them all?" "In my Father's house are many mansions. ' If there were only a few mansions, I would have told you. But there are many. "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also."

God grant that the personal presence of Him who uttered this hope of our race maybe in the midst of every family circle represented here to-night. Yea, more than that; make His home in every heart. And by and by, all this debate as to the occupations, as to the character, as to the locality of the heaven which is the Father's home, shall be dissipated in the twinkling of an eye, when, being where He is, we look upon His face and interpret His promises in the light of His smile.

**1897**

**St. Therese of Lisieux (1873—1897), French Catholic Saint**

**In Heaven God Will Give His Chosen Their Fitting Glory, Last Will Have No Reason To Envy First**

**Story of a Soul**

Chaper 2, page 35

You know all my intimate thoughts and cleared up all my doubts. I once told you how astonished I was that God does not give equal glory in heaven to all His chosen. I was afraid they were not all equally happy. You made me bring Daddy's big tumbler, and put it by the side of my tiny thimble. You filled them both with water and asked me which was the fuller. I told you they were both full to the brim and that it was impossible to put more water in them than they could hold. And so, Mother darling, you made me understand that in heaven God will give His chosen their fitting glory and that the last will have no reason to envy the first. By such means, you made me understand the most sublime mysteries and gave my soul its essential food.

.....

Seeing my great thirst for knowledge, God was pleased, when I was fourteen, to add to the "fine flour," "honey" and "oil" in abundance.

This "honey" and "oil" I found in the conferences of Father Arminjon on The End of this World and the Mysteries of the World to Come. While reading this book my soul was flooded with a happiness quite supernatural. I experienced a foretaste of what God has prepared for those who love Him; and, seeing that eternal rewards are so much in excess of the petty sacrifices of this life, I yearned to love Our Lord, to love Him passionately, and to give Him countless proofs of affection while this was still in my power.

**1897**

**St. Therese of Lisieux (1873—1897), French Catholic Saint**

**I Desire To Fulfill Perfectly Thy Holy Will, And To Reach The Degree Of Glory Thou Hast Prepared For Me In Thy Kingdom**

**Prayers of Saint Thérèse**

**An Act of Oblation as a Victim of Divine Love**

This Prayer was found after the death of Sister Teresa of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face in the copy of the Gospels which she carried night close to her heart.

O my God, O Most Blessed Trinity, I desire to love Thee and to make Thee loved – to labor for the glory of Holy Church by saving souls here upon earth and by delivering those suffering in Purgatory. I desire to fulfill perfectly Thy Holy Will, and to reach the degree of glory Thou hast prepared for me in Thy Kingdom. In a word, I wish to be holy, but, knowing how helpless I am, I beseech Thee, my God, to be Thyself my holiness.

**1898**

**Alexander Maclaren (1826—1910), Leader Of English Non-Conformist Baptists**

**In My Father's House Are Many Mansions; If It Were Not So, I Would Have Told You—  
JOHN Xiv. 2.**

**Many Mansions**

SORROW needs simple words for its consolation; and simple words are the best clothing for the largest truths. These eleven poor men were crushed and desolate at the thought of Christ's going; they fancied that if He left them they lost Him. And so, in simple, childlike words, which the weakest could grasp, and in which the most troubled could find peace, He said to them, after having encouraged their trust in Him, "There is plenty of room for you as well as for Me where I am going; and the frankness of our intercourse in the past might make you sure that if I were going to leave you I would have told you all about it. Did I ever hide from you anything that was painful? Did I ever allure you to follow Me by false promises? Should I have kept silence about it if our separation was to be eternal? "So, simply, as a mother might her babe upon her breast, He soothes their sorrow. And yet, in the quiet words, so level to the lowest apprehension, there lie great truths, far deeper than we yet have appreciated, and which will enfold themselves in their majesty and their greatness through eternity. "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you."

I.—Now note, in these words, first, the "Father's house," and its ample room.

There is only one other occasion recorded in which our Lord used this expression, and it occurs in this same Gospel near the beginning; where in the narrative of the first cleansing of the temple we read that He said: "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." The earlier use of the words may help to throw light upon one aspect of this latter employment of it, for there blend in the image the two ideas of what I may call domestic familiarity, and of that great future as being the reality of which the earthly temple was intended to be the dim prophecy and shadow. Its courts, its many chambers, its ample porches with room for thronging worshippers represented in some poor way the wide sweep and space of that higher house; and the sense of Sonship, which drew the Boy to His Father's house in the earliest hours of conscious childhood, speaks here.

Think for a moment of how sweet and familiar the conception of heaven as the Father's house makes it to us. There is something awful, even to the best and holiest souls, in the thought of even the glories beyond. The circumstances of death, which is its portal, our utter unacquaintance with all that lies behind the veil, the terrible silence and distance which falls upon our dearest ones as they are sucked into the cloud, all tend to make us feel that there is much that is solemn and awful even in the thought of eternal future blessedness. But how it is all softened when we say, "My Father's house." Most of us have long since left behind us the sweet security, the sense of the absence of all responsibility, the assurance of defence and provision, which used to be ours when we lived as children in a father's house here. But we may all look forward to the renewal, in far nobler form, of these early days, when the father's house meant the inexpugnable fortress where no evil could befall us, the abundant home where all wants were supplied, and where the shyest and timidest child could feel at ease and secure. It is all coming again, brother! And amidst the august and unimaginable glories of that future the old feeling of being little children, nestling safe in the Father's house, will fill our quiet hearts once more.

And, then, consider how the conception of that future as the Father's house suggests answers to so many of our questions about the relationship of the inmates to one another. Are they to dwell isolated in their several mansions? Is that the way in which children in a home dwell with each other? Surely if He be the Father, and heaven be His house, the relation of the redeemed to one another must have in it more than all the sweet familiarity and unrestrained frankness which subsists in the families of earth. A solitary heaven would be but half a heaven, and would ill correspond with the hopes that inevitably spring from the representation of it as "my Father's house."

But consider, further, that this great and tender name for heaven has its deepest meaning in the conception of it as a spiritual state of which the essential elements are the loving manifestation and presence of God as Father, the perfect consciousness of sonship, the happy union of all the children in one great family, and the derivation of all their blessedness from their elder Brother.

The earthly temple, to which there is some allusion in this great metaphor, was the place in which the Divine glory was manifested to seeking souls, though in symbol, yet also in reality, and the representation of our text blends the two ideas of the free, frank intercourse of the home and of the magnificent revelations of the holy of holies. Under either aspect of the phrase, whether we think of "my Father's house" as temple or as home, it sets before us, as the main blessedness and glory of heaven, the vision of the Father, the consciousness of sonship, and the complete union with Him. There are many subsidiary and more outward blessednesses and glories which shine dimly through the haze of metaphors and negations, by which alone a state of which we have no experience can be revealed to us; but these are secondary. The heaven of heaven is the possession of God the Father through the Son in the expanding spirits of His sons. The sovereign and filial position which Jesus Christ in His manhood occupies in that higher house, and which He shares with all those who by Him have received the adoption of sons, is the very heart and nerve of this great metaphor.

But I think we must go a step further than that, and recognise that in the image there is inherent the teaching that that glorious future is not merely a state, but also a place. Local associations are not to be divorced from the words; and although we can say but little about such a matter, yet everything in the teaching of Scripture points to the thought that howsoever true it may be that the essence of heaven is condition, yet that also heaven has a local habitation, and is a place in the great universe of God. Jesus Christ has at this moment a human body, glorified. That body, as Scripture teaches us, is somewhere, and where He is there shall also His servant be. In the context He goes on to tell us that "He goes to prepare a place for us," and though I would not insist upon the literal interpretation of such words, yet distinctly the drift of the representation is in the direction of localising, though not of materialising, the abode of the blessed. So I think we can say, not merely that what He is that shall also His servants be, but that where He is there shall also His servants be. And from the representation of my text, though we cannot fathom all its depths, we can at least grasp this, which gives solidity and reality to our contemplations of the future, that heaven is a place, full of all sweet security and homelike repose, where God is made known in every heart and to every consciousness as a loving Father, and of which all the inhabitants are knit together in the frankest fraternal intercourse, conscious of the Father's love, and rejoicing in the abundant provisions of His royal house. And then there is a second thought to be suggested from these words, and that is of the ample room in this great house. The original purpose of the words of my text, as I have already reminded you, was simply to soothe the fears of a handful of disciples.

There was room where Christ went for eleven poor men. Yes, room enough for them! but Christ's prescient eye looked down the ages, and saw all the unborn millions that would yet be drawn to Him uplifted on the cross, and some glow of satisfaction flitted across His sorrow, as He saw from afar the result of the impending travail of His soul in the multitudes by whom God's heavenly house should yet be filled. "Many mansions!" The thought widens out far beyond our grasp. Perhaps that upper room, like most of the roof-chambers in Jewish houses, was open to the skies, and whilst He spoke, the innumerable lights that blaze in that clear heaven shone down upon them, and He may have pointed to these. The better Abraham perhaps looked forth, like His prototype, on the starry heavens, and saw in the vision of the future those who through

Him should receive the adoption of sons and dwell for ever in the house of the Lord, "so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable."

Ah, brethren! if we could only widen our measurement of the walls of the New Jerusalem to the measurement of that "golden rod which the man, that is, the angel," as John says, applied to it, we should understand how much bigger it is than any of these poor sects and communities of ours here on earth. If we would lay to heart, as we ought to do, the deep meaning of that indefinite "many" in my text, it would rebuke our narrowness. There will be a great many occupants of the mansions in heaven that Christian men here on earth—the most Catholic of them—will be very much surprised to see there, and thousands will find their entrance there that never found their entrance into any communities of so-called Christians here on earth.

That one word "many" should deepen our confidence in the triumphs of Christ's Cross, and it may be used to heighten our own confidence as to our own poor selves. A chamber in the great temple waits for each of us, and the question is, Shall we occupy it, or shall we not? The old rabbis had a tradition which, like a great many of their apparently foolish sayings, covers in picturesque guise a very deep truth. They said that, however many the throngs of worshippers who came up to Jerusalem at the passover, the streets of the city and the courts of the sanctuary were never crowded. And so it is with that great city. There is room for all. There are throngs, but no crowds. Each finds a place in the ample sweep of the Father's house, like some of the great palaces that barbaric Eastern kings used to build, in whose courts armies might encamp, and the chambers of which were counted by the thousand. And surely in all that ample accommodation, you and I may find some corner where we, if we will, may lodge for evermore.

I do not dwell upon subsidiary ideas that may be drawn from the expressions. "Mansions" means places of permanent abode, and suggests the two thoughts, so sweet to travellers and toilers in this fleeting, labouring life, of unchangeableness and of repose. Some have supposed that the variety in the attainments of the redeemed, which is reasonable and Scriptural, might be deduced from our text, but that does not seem to be relevant to our Lord's purpose.

One other suggestion may be made without enlarging upon it. There is only another occasion in this Gospel in which the word here translated "mansions" is employed, and it is this: "We will come and make our abode with him." Our mansion is in God; God's dwelling-place is in us. So ask yourselves, Have you a share there in that heavenly home? When prodigal children go away from the father's house, sometimes a heart-broken parent will keep the boy's room just as it used to be when he was young and pure, and will hope and weary through long days for him to come back and occupy it again. God is keeping a room for you in His house; do you see that you fill it.

II.—In the next place, note here the sufficiency of Christ's revelation for our needs.

"If it were not so I would have told you." He sets Himself forward in very august fashion as being the revealer and the opener of that house for us. There is a singular tone about all our Lord's few references to the future—a tone of decisiveness; not as if He were speaking, as a man might do, that which he had thought out, or which had come to him, but as if He was speaking of what He had Himself beheld. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." He stands like one on a mountain top, looking down into the valleys beyond, and telling His comrades in the plain behind Him what He sees. He speaks of that unseen world always as One who had been in it, and who was reporting experiences, and not giving forth opinions. His knowledge was the knowledge of One who dwelt with the Father, and left the house in order to find and bring back His wandering brethren. It was "His own calm home, His habitation from eternity"; and therefore He could tell us with decisiveness, with simplicity, with assurance, all which we need to know about the geography of that unknown land—the plan of that, by us unvisited, house. Very remarkable, therefore, is it that with this tone there should be such reticence in Christ's references to the future. The text implies the rationale of such reticence. "If it were not so I would have told you." I tell you all that you need, though I tell you a great deal less than you sometimes want.

The gaps in our knowledge of the future, seeing that we have such a Revealer as we have in Christ, are remarkable. But my text suggest this to us—we have as much as we need. / know, and many of you know, by bitter experience, how many questions, the answers to which would seem to us to be such a lightening of our burdens, our desolated and troubled hearts suggest about that future, and how vainly we ply heaven with questions and interrogate the unreplying Oracle. But we know as much as we need. We know that God is there. We know that it is the Father's house. We know that Christ is in it. We know that the dwellers there are a family. We know that sweet security and ample provision are there; and, for the rest, if we needed to have heard it, He would have told us.

My knowledge of that life is small,  
The eye of faith is dim;  
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,  
And I shall be with Him.

Let the gaps remain. The gaps are part of the revelation, and we know enough for faith and hope. May we not widen the application of that thought to other matters than to our bounded and fragmentary conceptions of a future life? In times like the present, of doubt and unrest, it is a great piece of Christian wisdom to recognize the limitations of our knowledge and the sufficiency of the fragments that we have. What do we get a revelation for? To solve theological puzzles and dogmatic difficulties? to innate us with the pride of gmsi-omniscience? or to present to us God in Christ for faith, for love, for obedience, for imitation? Surely the latter, and for such purposes we have enough.

So let us recognize that our knowledge is very partial. A great stretch of wall is blank, and there is not a window in it. If there had been need for one, it would have been struck out. He has been pleased to leave many things obscure, not arbitrarily, to try our faith—for the implication of the words before us is that the relation between Him and us binds Him to the utmost possible frankness, and that all which we need and He can tell us He does tell—but for high reasons, and because of the very conditions of our present environment, which forbid the more complete and all-round knowledge.

So let us recognize our limitations. We know in part, and we are wise if we affirm in part. Hold by the Central Light, which is Jesus Christ. "Many things did Jesus which are not written in this book." And many gaps and deficiencies from a human point of view exist in the contexture of revelation. "But these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ," for which enough has been told us, "and that, believing, ye may have life in His name." If that purpose be accomplished in us, God will not have spoken, nor we have heard, in vain. Let us hold by the Central Light, and then the circumference of darkness will gradually retreat, and a wider sphere of illumination be ours, until the day when we enter our mansion in the Father's house, and then "in Thy Light shall we see light"; and we shall "know even as we are known."

Let your elder Brother lead you back, dear friend, to the Father's bosom, and be sure that if you trust Him and listen to Him, you will know enough on earth to turn earth into a foretaste of heaven, and will find at last your place in the Father's house, beside the Brother who has prepared it for you.

**1902**

**Contributor "A.G."**

**Eschatology**

**Theological Quarterly, Evangelical Lutheran Church**

Yet, while we shall all be heirs of salvation, and though our bliss shall be perfect, and our glory great, in eternal life, we shall also differ from each other in various ways. In the world to come Moses will still be Moses, and Elias will be Elias, and in HIS flesh Job shall see God. Many from the east and west shall sit

down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, every one of them, as each of the patriarchs, in his personal identity. There will be no propagation in heaven; for in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Life in the future world will be a continuation of the same life, though under different conditions, in the present world. And as men pass from this world into the world to come, their works do follow them, not precede them, to prepare or purchase a place for them in heaven; for Christ has fully accomplished this, and we must not purchase or earn, but inherit the kingdom prepared for us. But the works of every heir of salvation, which he has done in this life, shall follow him to the life beyond. Not his evil works; for they are cast into the depth of the sea, blotted out, never to be remembered. But of his good works, not one shall be forgotten, not even the cup of cold water given to one of Christ's little ones in the name of a disciple. And it shall not only be mentioned unto him, but he shall in no wise lose his reward. Christ will make good his promise. Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life. Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works shall be. Here we sow; there we shall reap as we shall have sown. He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Thus there shall be degrees of glory in the kingdom of glory. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also in the resurrection of the dead. Yet the greater glory of the one shall not be a cause of envy, but a source of joy to the other. Neither shall they whose crown shall shine with brighter gems exalt themselves; but every one shall say, The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. The four and twenty elders shall fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. The song of the glorified elect shall be as the new song which St. John was permitted to hear: Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wert slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests. . . . Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing! Thus shall the eternal glory of the righteous redound to the eternal glory of Him to whose cross and crown of thorns we shall owe our bliss and our crowns of glory, and whom, with immortal tongues, we shall for ever praise, our Savior and our God.

**1902**

**Pastor D.L. Moody (1837 - 1899), American Evangelist and Publisher**

**Heaven: Its Riches**

**Chapter in book entitled "Heaven"**

**Heaven: Its Riches**

Jerusalem, my Home,  
Where shines the royal throne;  
Each king casts down his golden crown  
Before the Lamb thereon.  
Thence flows the crystal river,  
And flowing on forever,  
With leaves and fruits on either hand,  
The Tree of Life shall stand.  
In blood-washed robes, all white and fair,  
The Lamb shall lead His chosen there,  
While clouds of incense fill the air--  
Jerusalem, my Home!

Jerusalem, my Home!



Where saints in glory reign,  
Thy haven safe, O when shall I,  
Poor, storm-tossed pilgrim, gain?  
At distance dark and dreary,  
With sin and sorrow weary,  
For thee I toil, for thee I pray,  
For thee I long away.  
And lo, mine eyes shall see thee, too;  
Oh, rend in twain, thou veil of blue,  
And let the Golden City through--  
    Jerusalem, my Home!  
--HOPKINS. [80]

## **Chapter V.**

### **Its Riches.**

Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.  
Matt vi, 20.

No man thinks himself rich until he has all he wants. Very few people are satisfied with earthly riches. If they want any thing at all that they cannot get, that is a kind of poverty. Sometimes the richer the man the greater the poverty. Somebody has said that getting riches brings care; keeping them brings trouble; abusing them brings guilt; and losing them brings sorrow. It is a great mistake to make so much of riches as we do. But there are some riches that we cannot praise too much: that never pass away. They are the treasures laid up in Heaven for those who truly belong to God.

No matter how rich or elevated we may be here, there is always something that we want. The greatest chance the rich have over the poor is the one they enjoy the least--that of making themselves happy. Worldly riches never make any one truly happy. We all know, too, that they often take wings and fly away. It is said of Midas that whatever he touched turned into gold, but with his long ears he was not much the better for it. There is a great deal of truth in some [81] of these old fables., Money, like time, ought not to be wasted, but I pity that man who has more of either than he knows how to use. There is no truer saying than that man by doing good with his money, stamps, as it were, the image of God upon it, and makes it pass current for the merchandise of heaven; but all the wealth of the universe would not buy a man's way there. Salvation must be taken as a gift for the asking. There is no man so poor in this world that he may not be a heavenly millionaire.

### **GOLD A BAD LIFE-PRESERVER.**

How many are worshipping gold to-day! Where war has slain its thousands, gain has slain its millions. Its history in all ages has been the history of slavery and oppression. At this moment what an empire it has. The mine with its drudges, the manufactory with its misery, the plantation with its toil, the market and exchange with their haggard and care-worn faces--these are but specimens of its menial servants. Titles and honors are its rewards, and thrones are at its disposal. Among its counsellors are kings, and many of the great and mighty of the earth are its subjects. This spirit of gain tries even to turn the globe itself into gold.

It is related that Tarpeia, the daughter of the Governor of the fortress situated on the Capitoline Hill in Rome, was captivated with the golden bracelets of the Sabine soldiers, and agreed to let them into the fortress if they would give her what they wore upon their left arms. The contract was made; the Sabines kept their promise. Tattius, their commander, was the first to deliver his bracelet and shield. The coveted [82] treasures were

thrown upon the traitress by each of the soldiers, till she sank beneath their weight and expired. Thus does the weight of gold carry many a man down.

When the steamship "Central America" went down, several hundred miners were on board, returning to their early homes and friends. They had made their fortunes, and expected much happiness in enjoying them. In the first of the horror gold lost its attraction to them. The miners took off their treasure-belts and threw them aside. Carpet bags full of shining gold dust were emptied on the floor of the cabin. One of them poured out one hundred thousand dollars' worth in the cabin, and bade any one take it who would. Greed was overmastered, and the gold found no takers. Dear friends, it is well enough to have gold, but sometimes it is a bad life-preserver. Sometimes it is a mighty weight that crushes us down to hell.

The Rev. John Newton one day called to visit a family that had suffered the loss of all they possessed by fire. He found the pious mistress, and saluted her with:

"I give you joy, madam."

Surprised, and ready to be offended, she exclaimed:

"What! Joy that all my property is consumed?"

"O no," he answered, "but joy that you have so much property that fire cannot touch."

This allusion to her real treasures checked her grief and brought reconciliation. As we read in Proverbs 15, 6: "In the house of the righteous is much treasure; but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble." I have never seen a dying saint who was rich in heavenly [83] treasures who had any regret; I have never heard such a one say he had lived too much for God and heaven.

### **Getting Water-Logged.**

A friend of mine says he was at the River Mersey, in Liverpool, a few years ago, and he saw a vessel which had to be towed with a great deal of care into the harbor; it was clear down to the water's edge and he wondered why it did not sink. Pretty soon there came another vessel, without any help at all; it did not need any tug to tow it in, but it steamed right up the Mersey past the other vessels; and he made inquiry, and he found the vessel that had to be towed in was what they call water-logged--that is, it was loaded with lumber and material of that kind; and having sprung a leak had partially sunk, and it was very hard work to get into the harbor. Now, I believe there are a great many professed Christians, a great many, perhaps, who are really Christians, who have become water-logged. They have too many earthly treasures, and it takes nearly the whole church--the whole spiritual power of the church to look after these worldly Christians, to keep them from going back entirely into the world. Why, if the whole church were, as John Wesley said, "hard at it, and always at it," what a power there would be, and how soon we would reach the world and the masses; but we are not reaching the world, because the church itself has become conformed to the world and worldly-minded, and because so many are wondering why they do not grow in grace while they have more of the earth in their thoughts than God. [84]

Ministers would not have to urge people to live for heaven if their treasures were up there; they could not help it; their hearts would be there, and if their hearts were there their minds would be up there, and their lives would tend toward heaven. They could not help living for heaven if their treasures were there.

A little girl one day said to her mother: "Mamma, my Sunday-school teacher tells me that this world is only a place in which God lets us live a while, that we may prepare for a better world. But, mother, I do not see anybody preparing. I see you preparing to go into the country, and Aunt Eliza is preparing to come here; but I do not see anyone preparing to go there; why don't they try to get ready?"

A certain gentleman in the South, before the war, had a pious slave, and when the master died they told him he had gone to heaven.

The old slave shook his head, "I's 'fraid massa no gone there," he said.

"But why, Ben?" he was asked.

"Cos, when Massa go North, or go a journey to the Springs, he talk about it a long time, and get ready. I never hear him talk about going to heaven; never see him get ready to go there!"

So there are a good many who do not get ready. Christ teaches in the Sermon on the Mount to--

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."  
[85]

#### TREASURES OF THE HEART.

It does not take long to tell where a man's treasure is. In fifteen minutes' conversation with most men you can tell whether their treasures are on the earth or in heaven. Talk to a patriot about the country, and you will see his eye light up; you will find he has his heart there. Talk to some business men, and tell them where they can make a thousand dollars, and see their interest; their hearts are there. You talk to fashionable people who are living just for fashion, of its affairs, and you will see their eyes kindle; they are interested at once; their hearts are there. Talk to a politician about politics, and you see how suddenly he becomes interested. But talk to a child of God, who is laying up treasures in heaven, about heaven and about his future home, and see what enthusiasm. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Now, it is just as much a command for a man to "lay up treasure in heaven" as it is that he should not steal. Some people think all the commandments are in those ten that were given on Sinai, but when Jesus Christ was here, He gave us many other commandments. There is another commandment in this Sermon on the Mount: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you;" and here is a command that we are to lay up treasure in heaven and not on earth. The reason there are so many broken hearts in this land, the reason there are so many disappointed people, is because they have been laying up their treasures down here.

The worthlessness of gold, for which so many are striving, is illustrated by a story that Dr. Arnot used [86] to tell. A ship bearing a company of emigrants has been driven from her course and wrecked on a desert island, far from the reach of man. There is no way of escape; but they have a good stock of food. The ocean surrounds them, but they have plenty of seeds, a fine soil, and a genial sun, so there is no danger. Before the plans are laid, an exploring party discovers a gold mine. There the whole party go to dig. They labor day after day and month after month. They get great heaps of gold. But spring is past, and not a field has been cleared, not a grain of seed put into the ground. The summer comes and their wealth increases; but their stock of food grows small. In the fall they find that their heaps of gold are worthless. Famine stares them in the face. They rush to the woods, they fell trees, dig up the roots, till the ground, sow the seed. It is too late! Winter has come and their seed rots in the ground. They die of want in the midst of their treasures.

This earth is the little isle; eternity the ocean round it; on this shore we have been cast. There is a living seed; but the mines of gold attract us. We spend spring and summer there; winter overtakes us in our toil; we are without the Bread of Life, and we are lost. Let us then who are Christians, value all the more the home which holds the treasures that no one can take away. Dr. Muhlenberg, a Lutheran clergyman, has written beautifully:

"Who would live alway, away from his God,  
Away from yon heaven, that blissful abode;  
Where the rivers of pleasure flow o'er the bright plains,  
And the harps of gold pour out their glorious strains; [87]  
And the saints of all ages in harmony meet  
Their Savior, and brethren transported, to greet;  
While the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,  
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul?  
That heavenly music, what is it I hear?  
The notes of the harpers ring sweet on my ear.  
To see soft unfolding those portals of gold--  
The King, all arrayed in His beauty, behold!  
Oh give me, oh give me, the wings of a dove,  
Let me hasten my flight to those mansions above!  
Ay, 'tis now that my soul on swift pinions would soar,  
And in ecstasy bid earth adieu evermore."

#### A BLACK-BOARD LESSON.

When I was in San Francisco, I went into a Sabbath-school the first Sunday I was there. It was a rainy day, and there were so few present that the Superintendent thought of dismissing them, but instead, he afterward invited me to speak to the whole school as one class. The lesson was that passage from the Sermon on the Mount: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal."

I invited a young man to the blackboard, and we proceeded to compare a few things that some people have on earth, and a few things that other people have in heaven.

"Now," said I, "name some earthly treasure."

They all shouted "Gold."

"Well, that is so," I said, "I suppose that is your greatest treasure out here in California. Now let us go on; what is another?"

A second boy shouted, "Lands."

"Well," I said, "we will put down Lands." [88]

"What else do the people out here in California think a good deal of and have their hearts set on?"

They said "Houses."

"Put that down; what else?"

"Pleasure."

"Put that down."

"Honor--fame."

"Put them down."

"Business."

"Yes," I said; "a great many people have their hearts buried in their business--put that down." As if a little afraid, one of them said "dress," and the whole school smiled.

"Put that down," I said. Why, I believe there are some people in the world who think more of dress than any other thing. They just live for dress. I heard not long ago from very good authority, of a young lady who was dying of consumption. She had been living in the world and for the world, and it seemed as if the world had taken full possession of her. She thought she would die Thursday night, and Thursday she wanted them to crimp her hair, so that she would look beautiful in her coffin. But she didn't die Thursday night. She lingered through Friday, and Friday she didn't want them to take her hair down, but to keep it up until she passed away. And the friends said she looked very beautiful in the coffin! Just what people wear--the idea of people having their hearts set upon things of that kind!"

"And what else, now?" Well, they were a little ashamed to say it, but one said:

"Rum." [89]

"Yes," I said, "put that down. There is many a man thinks more of the rum-bottle than he does of the Kingdom of God. He will give up his wife, he will give up his home and his mother, character and reputation forever for the rum-bottle. Many a man by his life is crying Out, 'Give me rum, and I will give you heaven, and all its glories. I will sell my wife and children. I will make them beggars and paupers. I will degrade and disgrace them for the rum-bottle. That is my treasure.'"

"'Oh, thou rum bottle! I worship thee,' is the cry of many--they turn their backs on heaven with all its glories for rum. Some of them thought, when that little boy said 'rum,' that he made a mistake, that it was not a treasure, but it is a treasure to thousands." Another one said:

"Fast horses."

Said I, "Put it down. There is many a man who thinks a good deal of fast horses, and he wants to go out and take a fast horse and drive Sunday, and spend his Sabbath in this way." And after we finished, and thought of everything we could, I said: "Suppose we just take down some of these heavenly treasures."

"And," said I, "What is there now that the Lord wants us to set our hearts and affections on?" And they all said:

"JESUS."

"That is good; we will put Him down first at the head of the list. Now what else?" And they said:

"Angels."

"Put them down. We will have their society when we go to heaven. That is a treasure up there, really. What else?" [90]

"The friends who have died in Christ, who have fallen asleep in Christ."

"Put them down. Death has taken them from us now, but we will be with them by and by. What else?"

"Crowns."

"Yes, we are going to have a crown, a crown of glory, a crown of righteousness, a crown that fadeth not away. What else?"

"The tree of life."

"Yes," I said, "the tree of life. We shall have a right to it. We can go to that tree and pluck its fruit, eat, and live forever. What else?"

"The river of life."

"Yes, we shall walk upon the banks of that clean river."

"Harps," one said.

Another one said "palms."

"Yes," I said, "put them down. Those are treasures that we will have there."

"Purity."

"Yes, there will be none but the pure there. White robes, without spot or wrinkle on our garments. A great many find many flaws in our characters down here, but by and by Christ will present us before the Father without spot and without wrinkle, and we shall stand there complete in Him," I said. "Can you think of anything else?" And one of them said:

"A new song."

"Yes, we shall have a new song. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb. I don't know just who wrote it or how, but it will be a glorious song. I suppose the singing we have here on earth will be nothing [91] compared with the songs of that upper world. Do you know the principal thing we are told we are going to do in heaven is singing, and that is why men ought to sing down here. We ought to begin to sing here so that it will not come strange when we get to heaven. I pity the professed Christian who has not a song in his heart--who never 'feels like singing.' It seems to me if we are truly children of God, we will want to sing about it. And so, when we get there, we cannot help shouting out the loud hallelujahs of heaven."

Then I said: "Is there anything else?" Well, they went on. I cannot give you all, because we had to have two columns put down of the heavenly treasures. We stood there a little while and drew the contrast between the earthly and the heavenly treasures. We looked at them a little while, and when we came to put them all down beside Christ, the earthly treasures looked small, after all. What would all this world full of gold be compared with Jesus Christ? You who have Christ, would you like to part with Him for gold? Would you like to give Him up for all the honor the earth can bestow on you for a few months or a few years? Think of Christ! Think of the treasures of heaven. And then think of these earthly treasures that we have our hearts set upon, and that so many of us are living for.

God blessed that lesson upon the blackboard in a marvelous way, for the man who had been writing down the treasures on the board happened to be an unconverted Sunday-school teacher, and had gone out there to California to make money; his heart was set upon gold, and he was living for that instead of for God. That was the idol of his heart, and do you know God [92] convicted him at that blackboard, and the first convert that God gave me on the Pacific coast was that man, and he was the last man who shook hands with me when I left San Francisco. He saw how empty the earthly treasures were, and how grand and glorious the riches of

heaven. Oh, if God would but open your eyes--and I think if you are honest and ask Him to do it He will--He will show you how empty this world is in comparison with what He has in store.

There are a great many people who are wondering why they do not mount up on wings, as it were, and why they do not make some progress in the divine life; why they do not grow more in grace. I think one reason may be they have too many earthly treasures. We need not be rich to have our hearts set on riches.

We need not go in the world more than other people to have our hearts there. I believe the Prodigal was in the far country long before he put his feet there. When his heart reached there he was there. There is many a man who does not mingle so much in the world as others do, but his heart is there, and he would be there if he could, and God looks at the heart.

Now, what we need to do is to obey the voice of the Master, and instead of laying up treasures on earth, lay them up in heaven. If we do that, bear in mind, we shall never be disappointed.

It is clear that idolaters are not going to enter the kingdom of God. I may make an idol of my business; I may make an idol of the wife of my bosom; I may make idols of my children. I do not think you need go to heathen countries to find men guilty of idolatry. I think you will find a great many right here who have [93] idols in their hearts. Let us pray that the spirit of God may banish those idols from our hearts, that we may not be guilty of idolatry; that we may worship God in spirit and in truth. Anything that comes between me and God is an idol--anything, I don't care what it is; business is all right in its place, and there is no danger of my loving my family too much if I love God more; but God must have the first place; and if He has not then the idol is set up.

### **All Eternity For Rest.**

Not the least of the riches of heaven will be the satisfaction of those wants of the soul, which are so much felt down here but are never found--such as infinite knowledge, perfect peace and satisfying love. Like a beautiful likeness that has been marred, daubed all over with streaks of black, and is then restored to its original beauty, so the soul is restored to its full beauty of color when it is washed with the blood of Jesus Christ. The senseless image on the canvas cannot be compared, however, in any other way with the living, rational soul.

Could we but see some of our friends who have gone on before us we would very likely feel like falling down before them. The Apostle John had seen so many strange things, yet, when one of the bright angels stood before him to reveal some of the secrets of heaven, fell down to worship him. He says in the last chapter of Revelation:

"And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, see thou do it not; for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book. Worship God." [94]

Among the wants which we have on earth is the thirst for knowledge. Much as sin has weakened man's mental faculties, it has not taken away any of his desire for knowledge. But with all his efforts, with all that he thinks he knows about astronomy, chemistry and geology, and the rest of the sciences, his knowledge of the secrets of nature is yet limited.

There are very many things we do not know. Thousands of astronomers have lived and died, and the ages of the world have rolled on, and it was only the other day, as it were, that they' found out that the planet Mars had two moons. Perhaps in ages to come some one will find out that they are not moons at all. This is what most of our human knowledge amounts to.

There is not one of our college professors, and many of them have gone nearly everywhere in the world, but is anxious to learn more and more, to find out new things, to make new discoveries. If we were as familiar with all the stars of the firmament as we are with our own earth, still we would not be satisfied.

Not until we are like God can we comprehend the infinite. Even the imperfect glimpses of God that we get by faith, only intensify our desire for more. For now, as Paul says in 1st Corinthians xiii, 12:

"Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

The word Paul used, properly translated, is "mirror." Now we see God, as it were, in a looking-glass--but then face to face.

Suppose we knew nothing of the sun except what we saw of its light reflected from the moon? Would we not wonder about its immense distance, about its [95] dazzling splendor, about its life-giving power? Now all that we see, the sun, the moon, the stars, the ocean, the earth, the flowers, and above all, man, are a grand mirror in which the perfection of God is imperfectly reflected.

Another want that we have is rest. We get tired of toiling. Yet there is no real rest on earth. We find in the 4th chapter of Hebrews, beginning with the 9th verse:

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His. Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

Now, while we all want rest, I think a great many people make a mistake when they think the church is a place of rest; and when they unite with the church they have a false idea about their position in it. There are a great many who come in to rest. The text tells us: "There remaineth a rest for the people of God," but it does not tell us that the church is a place of rest; we have all eternity to rest in. We are to rest by and by; but we are to work here, and when our work is finished, the Lord will call us home to enjoy that rest. There is no use in talking about rest down here in the enemy's country. We cannot rest in this world, where God's Son has been crucified and cast out. I think that a great many people are going to lose their reward just because they have come into the church with the idea that they are to rest there, as if the church was working for the reward, instead of each one building over against his own house, each one using all his influence toward the building up of Christ's kingdom.

In Revelation xiv, 13, we read: [96]

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

Now, death may rob us of money. Death may rob us of position. Death may rob us of our friends; but there is one thing death can never do, and that is rob us of the work that we do for God. That will live on forever. "Their works do follow them." How much are we doing? Anything that we do outside of ourselves, and not with a mean and selfish motive, that is going to live. We have the privilege of setting in motion streams of activity that will flow on when we are dead and gone.

It is the privilege of everyone to live more in the future than they do in the present, so that their lives will tell in fifty or a hundred years more than they do now.

John Wesley's influence is a thousand-fold greater to-day than it was when he was living. He still lives. He lives in the lives of thousands and hundreds of thousands of his spiritual descendants.



Martin Luther lives more truly to-day than he did three centuries ago, when he awakened Germany. He only lived one life, and that for a little while. But now, look at the hundreds and thousands and millions of lives that he is living. There are between fifty and sixty millions of people who profess to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, as taught by Martin Luther, who bear his name. He is dead in the sight of the world, but his "works do follow him." He still lives.

The voice of John the Baptist is ringing through the world to-day, although nearly nineteen hundred [97] years have passed away since Herodias asked for his death. Herod thought when he beheaded him that he was hushing his voice, but it is ringing throughout the earth to-day. John the Baptist lives, because he lived for God; but he has entered into his rest, and "his works do follow him."

And if they up yonder can see what is going on upon the earth, how much joy they must have to think that they have set these streams in motion, and that this work is going on--being carried on after them.

If a man lives a mean, selfish life, he goes down to the grave, and his name and everything concerning him goes down in the grave with him. If he is ambitious to leave a record behind him, with a selfish motive, his name rots with his body. But if a man gets outside of himself and begins to work for God, his name will live forever. Why, you may go to Scotland to-day, and you will find the influence of John Knox over every mountain in Scotland. It seems as if you could almost feel the breath of that man's prayer in Scotland to-day. His influence still lives. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. They rest from their labors and their works do follow them." Blessed rest in store; we will rest by and by; but we should not waste time talking about rest while we are here. . . .

If I am to wipe a tear from the cheek of that fatherless boy, I must do it down here. It is not said in Scripture that we shall have the privilege of doing that hereafter. If I am going to help up some fallen man who has been overtaken by sin, I must do it here. We are not going to have the privilege of being co-workers with God in the future--but that is our privilege [98] to-day. We may not have it to-morrow. It may be taken from us to-morrow; but we can enter into the vineyard and do something to-day before the sun goes down. We can do something now before we go to glory.

Another want that we feel here is Love. Heaven is the only place where the conditions of love can be fulfilled. There love is essentially mutual. Everybody loves everybody else. In this world of wickedness and sin it seems impossible for people to be all on a perfect equality. When we meet people who are bright and beautiful and good, we have no difficulty in loving them. All the people of heaven will be like that. There will be no fear of misplaced confidences there. There we shall never be deceived by those we love. When a suspicion of doubt fastens upon any one who loves, their happiness from that moment is at an end. There will be no suspicion there.

Beyond these chilling winds and gloomy skies,  
Beyond death's cloudy portal,  
There is a land where beauty never dies—  
Where love becomes immortal. [99]

**By Timothy Poland.**

Ye ken, dear bairn, that we maun part,  
When death, cauld death, shall bid us start;  
But when he'll send his fearfu' dart  
    We canna say,  
So we'll mak' ready for his dart  
    Maist onie day.

We'll keep a' right and guid wi'in,  
Our wark will then be free frae sin.  
Upright we'll walk through thick and thin,  
    Straight on our way.  
Deal just wi' a', the prize we'll win  
    Maist onie day.

Ye ken there's Ane, wha's just and wise,  
Has said that a' His bairns should rise,  
An' soar aboon the lofty skies,  
    And there shall stay.  
Being well prepared we'll gain the prize  
    Maist onie day.

When He wha made a' things just right,  
Shall call us hence to realms of light,  
Be it morn or noon, or e'en or night,  
    We will obey.  
We'll be prepared to tak' our flight  
    Maist onie day.

Our lamps we'll fill brimfu' o' oil,  
Thet's guid and pure, that wadna spoil,  
And keep them burning a' the while,  
    To light our way.  
Our wark bein' done we'll quit the soil,  
    Maist onie day. [100]

**1913**

**Charles George Herbermann (1840 - 1916), Catholic Scholar and Publisher**  
**Individual Eschatology**  
**The Catholic Encyclopedia**

**The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church, Volume 5**

(1) Death, which consists in the separation of soul and body, is presented under many aspects in Catholic teaching, but chiefly (a) as being actually and historically, in the present order of supernatural Providence, the consequence and penalty of Adam's sin (Gen., ii, 17; Rom., v, 12, etc.); (b) as being the end of man's period of probation, the event which decides his eternal destiny (II Cor., v, 10; John, ix, 4; Luke, xii, 40; xvi, 19 sqq.; etc.), though it does not exclude an intermediate state of purification for the imperfect who die in God's grace; and (c) as being universal, though as to its absolute universality (for those living at the end of the world) there is some room for doubt because of I Thess., iv, 14 sqq.; I Cor., xv, 51; II Tim., iv, 1.

(2) That a particular judgment of each soul takes place at death is implied in many passages of the N. T. (Luke, xvi, 22 sqq.; xxiii, 43; Acts, i, 25; etc.), and in the teaching of the Council of Florence (Denzinger, Enchiridion, no. 588) regarding the speedy entry of each soul into heaven, purgatory, or hell. (See Judgment, Particular.)

(3) Heaven is the abode of the blessed, where (after the resurrection with glorified bodies) they enjoy, in the company of Christ and the angels, the immediate vision of God face to face, being supernaturally elevated by the light of glory so as to be capable of such a vision. There are infinite degrees of glory corresponding to

degrees of merit, but all are unspeakably happy in the eternal possession of God. Only the perfectly pure and holy can enter heaven; but for those who have attained that state, either at death or after a course of purification in purgatory, entry into heaven is not deferred, as has sometimes been erroneously held, till after the General Judgment.

(4) Purgatory is the intermediate state of unknown duration in which those who die imperfect, but not in unrepented mortal sin, undergo a course of penal purification, to qualify for admission into heaven. They share in the communion of saints (q. v.) and are benefited by our prayers and good works (see Dead, Prayers TOR The). The denial of purgatory by the Reformers introduced a dismal blank in their eschatology and, after the manner of extremes, has led to extreme reactions. (See Purgatory.)

(5) Hell, in Catholic teaching, designates the place or state of men (and angels) who, because of sin, are excluded for ever from the Beatific Vision. In this wide sense it applies to the state of those who die with only original sin on their souls (Council of Florence, Denzinger, no. 588), although this is not a state of misery or of subjective punishment of any kind, but merely implies the objective privation of supernatural bliss, which is compatible with a condition of perfect natural happiness. But in the narrower sense in which the name is ordinarily used, hell is the state of those who are punished eternally for unrepented personal mortal sin. Beyond affirming the existence of such a state, with varying degrees of punishment corresponding to degrees of guilt and its eternal or unending duration, Catholic doctrine does not go. It is a terrible and mysterious truth, but it is clearly and emphatically taught by Christ and the Apostles. Rationalists may deny the eternity of hell in spite of the authority of Christ, and professing Christians, who are unwilling to admit it, may try to explain away Christ's words; but it remains as the Divinely revealed solution of the problem of moral evil. (See Hell.) Rival solutions have been sought for in some form of the theory of restitution or, less commonly, in the theory of annihilation or conditional immortality. The restitutionist view, which in its Origenist form was condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 543, and later at the Fifth General Council (see ApocaTastasis), is the cardinal dogma of modern Universalism (q. v.), and is favoured more or less by liberal Protestants and Anglicans. Based on an exaggerated optimism for which present experience offers no guarantee, this view assumes the all-conquering efficacy of the ministry of grace in a life of probation after death, and looks forward to the ultimate conversion of all sinners and the voluntary disappearance of moral evil from the universe. Annihilationists, on the other hand, failing to find either in reason or Revelation any grounds for such optimism, and considering immortality itself to be a grace and not the natural attribute of the soul, believe that the finally impenitent will be annihilated or cease to exist—that God will thus ultimately be compelled to confess the failure of His purpose and power.

**1918**

**President Joseph F. Smith, Latter-day Saint Prophet**

**Vision of the Redemption of the Dead**

**Doctrine and Covenants**

On the third of October, in the year nineteen hundred and eighteen, I sat in my room pondering over the Scriptures and reflecting upon the great atoning sacrifice that was made by the Son of God for the redemption of the world, and the great and wonderful love made manifest by the Father and the Son in the coming of the Redeemer into the world, that through his Atonement and by obedience to the principles of the gospel, mankind might be saved.

While I was thus engaged, my mind reverted to the writings of the Apostle Peter to the primitive saints scattered abroad throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and other parts of Asia where the gospel had been preached after the crucifixion of the Lord. I opened the Bible and read the third and fourth chapters of the first epistle of Peter, and as I read I was greatly impressed, more than I had ever been before, with the following passages:

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." (I Peter 3:18-20)

For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." (I Peter 4:6)

As I pondered over these things which are written, the eyes of my understanding were opened, and the Spirit of the Lord rested upon me, and I saw the hosts of the dead, both small and great. And there were gathered together in one place an innumerable company of the spirits of the just, who had been faithful in the testimony of Jesus while they lived in mortality, and who had offered sacrifice in the similitude of the great sacrifice of the Son of God, and had suffered tribulation in their Redeemer's name. All these had departed the mortal life, firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection, through the grace of God the Father and his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

I beheld that they were filled with joy and gladness, and were rejoicing together because the day of their deliverance was at hand. They were assembled awaiting the advent of the Son of God into the spirit world, to declare their redemption from the bands of death. Their sleeping dust was to be restored unto its perfect frame, bone to his bone, and the sinews and the flesh upon them, the spirit and the body to be united never again to be divided, that they might receive a fulness of joy.

While this vast multitude waited and conversed, rejoicing in the hour of their deliverance from the chains of death, the Son of God appeared, declaring liberty to the captives who had been faithful, and there he preached to them the everlasting gospel, the doctrine of the resurrection and the redemption of mankind from the fall, and from individual sins on conditions of repentance.

But unto the wicked he did not go, and among the ungodly and tho unrepentant who had defiled themselves while in the flesh, his voice was not raised, neither did the rebellious who rejected the testimonies and the warnings of the ancient prophets behold his presence, nor look upon his face. Where these were, darkness reigned, but among the righteous there was peace, and the saints rejoiced in their redemption, and bowed the knee and acknowledged the Son of God as their Redeemer and Deliverer from death and the chains of hell.

Their countenances shone and the radiance from the presence of the Lord rested upon them and they sang praises unto his holy Name.

I marveled, for I understood that the Savior spent about three years in his ministry among the Jews and those of the house of Israel, endeavoring to teach them the everlasting gospel and call them unto repentance; and yet, notwithstanding his mighty works and miracles and proclamation of the truth in great power and authority, there were but few who hearkened to his voice and rejoiced in his presence and received salvation at his hands. But his ministry among those who were dead was limited to the brief time intervening between the crucifixion and his resurrection; and I wondered at the words of Peter wherein he said that the Son of God preached unto the spirits in prison who sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, and how it was possible for him to preach to those spirits and perform the necessary labor among them in so short a time.

And as I wondered, my eyes were opened, and my understanding quickened, and I perceived that the Lord went not in person among the wicked and the disobedient who had rejected the truth, to teach them; but behold, from among the righteous he organized his forces and appointed messengers, clothed with power and authority, and commissioned them to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the spirits of men. And thus was the gospel preached to the dead. And the chosen messengers went forth to declare the acceptable day of the Lord, and proclaim liberty to the captives who were bound; even unto all who would repent of their sins and receive the gospel. Thus was the gospel preached to those who had died in their sins, without a knowledge of the truth, or in transgression, having rejected the prophets. These were taught faith in God, repentance from sin, vicarious baptism for the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, and all other principles of the gospel that were necessary for them to know in order to qualify themselves that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

And so it was made known among the dead, both small and great, the unrighteous as well as the faithful, that redemption had been wrought through the sacrifice of the Son of God upon the cross. Thus was it made known that our Redeemer spent his time during his sojourn in the world of spirits, instructing and preparing the faithful spirits of the prophets who had testified of him in the flesh, that they might carry the message of redemption unto all the dead unto whom he could not go personally because of their rebellion and transgression, that they through the ministration of his servants might also hear his words.

Among the great and mighty ones who were assembled in this vast congregation of the righteous, were Father Adam, the Ancient of Days and father of all, and our glorious Mother Eve, with many of her faithful daughters who had lived through the ages and worshiped the true and living God. Abel, the first martyr, was there, and his brother Seth, one of the mighty ones, who was in the express image of his father Adam. Noah, who gave warning of the flood; Shem, the great High Priest; Abraham, the father of the faithful; Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, the great law-giver of Israel; Isaiah, who declared by prophecy that the Redeemer was anointed to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound, were also there.

Moreover, Ezekiel, who was shown in vision the great valley of dry bones which were to be clothed upon with flesh to come forth again in the resurrection of the dead, living souls; Daniel, who foresaw and foretold the establishment of the kingdom of God in the latter days, never again to be destroyed nor given to other people; Elias, who was with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration; Malachi, the prophet who testified of the coming of Elijah -- of whom also Moroni spake to the Prophet Joseph Smith -- declaring that he should come before the ushering in of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, were also there. The prophet Elijah was to plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to their fathers, foreshadowing the great work to be done in the temples of the Lord in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, for the redemption of the dead and the sealing of the children to their parents, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse and utterly wasted at his coming.

All these and many more, even the prophets who dwelt among the Nephites and testified of the coming of the Son of God, mingled in the vast assembly and waited for their deliverance, for the dead had looked upon the long absence of their spirits from their bodies as a bondage. These the Lord taught, and gave them power to come forth, after his resurrection from the dead, to enter into his Father's kingdom, there to be crowned with immortality and eternal life, and continue thenceforth their labors as had been promised by the Lord, and be partakers of all blessings which were held in reserve for them that love him.

The Prophet Joseph Smith, and my father, Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and other choice spirits who were reserved to come forth in the fulness of times to take part in laying the foundations of the great Latter-day work, including the building of the temples and the performance of ordinances therein for the redemption of the dead, were also in the spirit world. I observed that they were also among the noble and great ones who were chosen in the beginning to be rulers in the Church of God.

Even before they were born, they, with many others, received their first lessons in the world of spirits, and were prepared to come forth in the due time of the Lord to labor in his vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men.

I beheld that the faithful elders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in the preaching of the gospel of repentance and redemption, through the sacrifice of the Only Begotten Son of God, among those who are in darkness and under the bondage of sin in the great world of the spirits of the dead. The dead who repent will be redeemed, through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God, and after they have paid the penalty of their transgressions, and are washed clean, shall receive a reward according to their works, for they are heirs of salvation.

Thus was the vision of the redemption of the dead revealed to me, and I bear record, and I know that this record is true, through the blessing of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, even so. Amen. -- Joseph F. Smith.

**1918**

**Joseph Casimir Sasia, S.J. (1843 – 1928), Jesuit Catholic Scholar**

**Chapter 18 - The Various Degrees of Merit**

**The Future Life: According to the Authority of Divine Revelation, the Dictates of Sound Reason**

**Chapter 18 - The Various Degrees of Merit**

368. Divine grace, by making us adoptive children of God, confers on our actions a value, which, considered in themselves, they do not possess, and renders them meritorious of eternal glory. Merit always involves some kind of claim to a recompense. When a recompense is due through strict justice, whence arises an equitable right on the part of the claimant, we have what is termed condign merit — *meritum de condigno*. When retribution may be claimed simply as something befitting, or as a kind of grateful return, there is then the merit of congruity — *meritum de congruo*. For an act to be meritorious of heavenly glory it is required that it should be morally good, free, and supernatural; that is, elicited through motives inspired by divine faith. On the part of God the promise of a reward is always supposed. Eternal life is indeed the inheritance of adopted sons, but it is also the reward of the good deeds, which the just performed under the influence of and by the aid of divine grace.

369. As we proved above, though man cannot be said to possess a strict claim or right to divine recompense, for whatever he has is God's gift; yet, on account of God's explicit promises, he is entitled to a reward for his good deeds. In the present order of providence he is destined for heavenly beatitude, and it shall be bestowed on him as a recompense for his merits, if he fulfils the imposed condition, i. e., compliance with God's holy will. In human things a kind of just proportion or equity must be observed between the merit, or the work done, and its reward. Can we say the same of the supernatural bliss bestowed by Almighty God on His loyal, faithful servants? No, by no means. There is no proportion, no comparison whatever between even the most heroic actions of men, and the heavenly reward, a happiness perfect in its object, boundless in its extent and eternal in its duration. "Well done, good and faithful servant," says Christ in His Gospel, "because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of the Lord." This most cheering truth is thus proclaimed by St. Paul: "I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us." A similar sentiment is expressed by the same Apostle in his second Epistle to the Corinthians (iv. 18), which we had occasion to quote when speaking of heavenly happiness.

370. In this connection I will here reproduce a thoughtful remark of Father Tapparelli, S.J., the distinguished author of the classical "Essay on Natural Right." In his first dissertation (n. 133), he writes: "Here some one might ask me, 'How can man acquire any merit before God, whom he cannot at all benefit, and from whom

he receives all that he possesses?' This is my answer: It is plain that man cannot acquire, in regard to God, any merit of strict justice, as between himself and God there exists no equality whatsoever, but only some respects or relations of proportion, as St. Thomas states. But, if we take into account God's decree creating man for natural happiness, on condition that he should tread on the appointed path, he acquires, by so doing, a kind of right to the attainment of the end proposed to him. For what kind of path would that be which did not lead to the proposed goal? On the other hand, though the good intentions and actions of man can afford no intrinsic advantage to God, yet they contribute to the increase of His extrinsic glory, to promote which man was created; and in this way he lends his share to the moral order of the universe, of which God is the Supreme Ruler; and in this sense man may be said to be in some manner advantageous to God and thereby merit a recompense for his virtuous deeds." In the present order of providence, owing to man's elevation to the supernatural state, we find that there exists a just proportion between human virtuous actions and the divine reward. For as adopted children of God we merit the beatific vision and the degree of beatitude corresponding to our co-operation with divine grace. It is the dignity of adoption acquired through the merits of Christ that imparts to our acts a supernatural value and makes them proportioned to the supernatural recompense. Hence the bestowal of heavenly beatitude is designated in Holy Scripture as a reward, as the inheritance of worthy sons, as a crown for lawful combats, and as the recompense or hire due to diligent laborers. We should, however, never forget the wise reflection of St. Augustine, who says that Almighty God by bestowing on the just the eternal reward only crowns His own gifts.

The following not only heretical but also supremely absurd proposition of Baius was deservedly condemned by Pius V in his Bull *Ex Omnibus Afflictionibus* issued October 1, A. D. 1567: N. 14. "The good works of the just will not receive in the last Judgment Day a reward greater than they deserved to receive according to the just judgment of God."

371. It is certain that what constitutes the essential happiness of heaven; namely, the beatific vision, the "happy-making" sight, is substantially the same for all the blessed; but at the same time, we must remember that the enjoyment of such happiness contains different degrees of intensity proportionate to the merits acquired by each individual during his lifetime upon earth. Hence the holier in heaven will receive more delight through the faculties of the soul and the glorified senses, after the resurrection, than those that have practised virtue in an inferior degree. Therefore each of the blessed shall possess that degree of happiness, which is proportionate to the supernatural perfection attained by the virtue and holiness of his life. All the just are to rise in glory, but each one according to the degree of his perfection and supernatural merit. St. Paul illustrates this truth by a fitting comparison: "Star differeth from star in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead." There will then be a kind of gradation in the personal beauty, grace, and splendor allotted to the saints.

372. Here we may ask: "Shall those different degrees of glory cause envy in those that possess an inferior degree of heavenly happiness?" We answer that this cannot be. There is no envy in heaven, the abode of perfect bliss, tranquility, and peace. Everyone there is completely satisfied with his own degree of glory, which he knows to be proportionate to his merits. Nay, he even rejoices at the higher degree of glory granted to others who merited it by the higher degree of holiness which they attained in their probation on earth.

**1920**

**Henry Barclay Swete (1835 – 1917), English Biblical Scholar**

**Like Temple. Many Such Chambers In World To Which Lord Going; Heavenly Temple Not Only For Divine Majesty, But Vast Palace Gives Shelter & Rest To As Many As Lord Willed; In Its Chambers, In Close Proximity To Presence-Chamber Of God, Many Will Find Rest & Refreshment**  
**The last discourse and prayer of our Lord: a study of St. John XIV-XVII.**

**The Last Discourse, Part 1: St. John XVI**

The Lord comes at once to the great subject of His discourse: the grief of the disciples at His departure, and the comfort He has to offer them. Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me (xiv. i).

Jesus can speak of heart-trouble from His own recent experience. He had "troubled Himself" at the sight of the mourners who grieved for the loss of Lazarus; x not many days ago His soul had been troubled by the near approach of the end; 2 this very evening His spirit had been disturbed by the treachery of Judas.3 He knew that the human spirit can be tossed by sudden storms of grief or fear, like a sea tossed by winds.4 And He knew also the only remedy for such agitation."Father," He had cried in His own trouble,"save me from this hour: Father, glorify thy name."1 He bids His disciples follow His example, and in their distress"believe in God."2 But in their case, with their consciousness of sin and distance from God, more was needed; and He adds, "believe also in me ":3 ' in me also place your trust: in me whom you have followed these three years, with whom you have been in closest intercourse, and whom you have never known to fail you; in me who am man as you are, and yet can claim from you the same confidence that I myself as man repose in God.'

These first words have restored to the hearts of the Eleven a measure of the Lord's own1 calm. He can now unfold to them something more of the meaning and consequences of His departure, the bare mention of which had caused their trouble. In my Father's house are many abodes; had it not been so, I would have told you, for I am going to make ready a place for you (xiv. 2). "I am going,"4 He repeats, though He now uses a word which speaks

of His departure as a journey rather than as a permanent withdrawal from the world. ' I go my way, but whither? and why? My destination is my Father's house; and my purpose is to prepare for your journey thither.'

The words recall to us the first saying of the Lord's childhood,1 and the first saying of His ministry at Jerusalem.2 The Temple at Jerusalem was His Father's House on earth, until the unbelief of the Jews left it desolate. Our Lord was now on His way to that true House of God, of which the man-made sanctuary was but a figure. He could not describe it to them, for"eye never saw nor ear heard, nor did ever enter the heart of man all that God prepared for those that love him." 3 But there was one feature of the earthly Temple which might help them to realize their place in the heavenly. The Father's earthly house was not merely a sanctuary with its surrounding courts for worshippers; attached to it were chambers, some for the storing of things necessary for Divine service, some for the convenience of the priests or of the Sanhedrin It is perhaps in reference to those chambers that the Lord speaks of the"many mansions" in the house not made with hands."Mansions"has come into our Authorized and Revised versions through Tyndale from the Vulgate and Old Latin, where the word bears its proper meaning, ' places where a traveller halts and rests upon his journey.' 1 Many such chambers, such resting places, were to be found in the world to which the Lord was going. Let not the disciples think of the heavenly temple as a sanctuary where none could dwell but the Divine Majesty, but rather as a vast palace which could give shelter and rest to as many as the Lord willed. In its chambers, in close proximity to the Presence-Chamber of God, many, when their time for the great journey has come, will find rest and refreshment. Perhaps there is also latent in the word the thought that the future life is for the blessed a progress in which they"go from strength to strength," 2 as men in a long journey go from halting place to halting place, until the end is reached.

The resting places are many, and, it is implied, sufficient for all; ' had it not been so,' the Lord adds, ' I would have told you,3 for to make them ready for you is the purpose of my journey.'" As His own way had been prepared,1 so the way of His disciples must be made ready by His entrance into the heavenly world. He is Himself the Forerunner 2 of the universal Church: the Church cannot enter until He has entered first; the mansions of His Father's house, though many, will stand empty, or without human occupants, unless He goes before to prepare a place for them.

Augustine 3 asks how this can be if, as we read in another Gospel, the Kingdom is prepared for us from the beginning of the world. The two views are, as he points out, complementary to each other; our place in the



Father's house has been prepared in ages past by Divine predestination, and is now being prepared by the work of the Son. The latter preparation is conducted in the hearts and lives of men, but it depends on our Lord's life in heaven. The Lord's promise may be turned into the prayer, "Lord, prepare what Thou preparest, for Thou preparest us for Thyself." 4

For aH this we must trust Christ's word. Had there been no place for His disciples in His Father's house, no fellowship with Himself hereafter, no life hidden with Christ in God, He would have told them. He would not have suffered them to forsake all for His sake if He had had no bright hope to offer, no rest in store for them at their journey's end.

But there is more than this. His purpose to go and prepare for them assures them that He will return. And if I should^ go and make ready a place for you, I come again, and I will take you to be with myself (xiv. 3). What would it avail to prepare the place if He did not come back, and Himself fetch them to fill it? How else would they find their way thither? Or how, if the way could be found, would they venture into the heavenly sanctuary, the very house and dwelling-place of God? A return, then, was involved in the very object of His journey: "if I go and prepare, I come again." The present tense "I come" is used rather than the future, for the Return is regarded not as a distant event, but as one ever imminent and at hand. The Lord says not, I will come, but "I come"; and so He speaks always both in the fourth Gospel<sup>2</sup> and in the Apocalypse:<sup>8</sup> the future is used only in Acts, where angels say "He shall come." 1 To Jesus Himself the Return is ever present; it is continually realizing itself in many ways; at any moment it may be realized by the world; 2 meanwhile He would have the Church think of it in terms of the present rather than of the future. Further, He would have His disciples connect His coming with the fulfilment of the purpose which He went to accomplish. He comes to take to Himself<sup>3</sup> those for whom He has prepared a place.

As He had taken three of their number with Him to the Mount of the Transfiguration;<sup>4</sup> as that very night He would take the same three with Him to the Garden of the Agony;<sup>5</sup> so at His return He will take with Him not these three only but all the Eleven,<sup>6</sup> all the faithful, to the Father's House, to the many mansions prepared for them, that they may be with Him there, to see the glory which is the fruit of the Agony, and to see it not for a short hour, but for ever. The Father's House is the home of the Son, and those who are there are with the Incarnate Son, as He is with the Father.<sup>7</sup> This is indeed the end for which the mansions have been made ready, as the next words shew: that where I am, ye also may be (xiv. 3 b). The realized presence of Christ, and immediate communion with Him is the promise of the Return; it will restore, under new and permanent conditions, the direct intercourse of the Lord with His disciples which His departure interrupted. So little cause is there for hearts that love and trust Him to be disquieted by His withdrawal from them for a time. The purpose of the separation is to arrange an endless reunion.

## II.

From the purpose of the journey the Lord passes to the way. And where I go, ye know the way (xiv. 4). He does not say, as an inferior text makes Him say, "Ye know where I go." 1 Even now, after all that He had said, the Eleven did not grasp His destination. Where and what was the Father's House? The words suggested a temple fairer and greater than Herod's building, the archetype of the earthly fabric, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; but how should mortal men, who had not ascended into heaven,<sup>2</sup> know what it was or where, or what it held in store? But the way they knew,<sup>3</sup> or at least the direction which it took, for they had seen the Master following it day by day. They knew whither His face ever turned, whither the steps of His most holy life carried Him. His whole life had been a journey to His Father's House; there remained now only the last stage to complete it. Living with Him in daily closest fellowship they could not but know the way so far as it lay through the world; only the end and 'that which lay beyond it were hidden from their eyes.

Yet to the Eleven the saying was a hard one, and they could not hear it.<sup>1</sup> It did not illuminate; it even added to their perplexity. Their loyalty and trust were strained to the utmost by an appeal such as this, to which

their consciousness made no response, against which their reason rebelled. Know the way? how could they when they did not know whither it led? One of them could no longer hold his peace. Thomas saith to him, Lord, we know not where thou goest; how know we the way? (xiv. 5). The destination must be determined, before the road that leads to it can be even approximately ascertained.<sup>2</sup>

If we had only the Synoptic Gospels, St Thomas would be to us little more than a name; the fourth Gospel lifts him out of obscurity by recording three sayings which reveal his character. It was Thomas who foresaw that the Master would meet His death at Jerusalem, and proposed to his fellow-disciples to "go and die with Him." <sup>3</sup> It was Thomas who refused any evidence of the Resurrection short of that of his own senses.<sup>1</sup> It was Thomas who now ventured to break into the Lord's discourse with a question which carried intellectual eagerness to the verge of unbelief. This blend of sincere devotion with the agnostic spirit is a paradox to which our own age supplies many parallels. For such enquirers, as for Thomas, the Lord has an answer, but not one which will immediately solve their difficulties.

Jesus saith to him, I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; none cometh to the Father except through me (xiv. 6). ' You know the Way, since you know Me. I that speak, I who have been with you these three years, who am with you here and now, am myself the Way to the Father, and the only Way.'<sup>2</sup>

The conception is not easy; simple as are the words, the sense eludes the comprehension of a reader who contents himself with their surface meaning. We can think with less effort of our Lord as the Guide or the Example of life.<sup>3</sup> The Way is more; it is that without which Guide and Example would avail little, the primary condition of approach.

A "way of God" is not unknown to the Old Testament. "The meek," says the Psalmist, "will he teach his way"; "x" "teach me thy way," he or another psalmist prays.<sup>2</sup> The Way of God is the "way of righteousness," the "way of life"; the opposite of man's own way, which is that "of death." <sup>3</sup> All this was familiar to Israel before the Incarnation. But no prophet, no righteous man in Israel had dared to say, ' I am the way; in me all God's purpose is revealed, and all His will is fulfilled. Not only have I in all things followed the Way of God; I am myself that Way; in me it finds perfect expression, and in me alone.'

But there is more than this in our Lord's claim to be the Way. The Way of God is also in Him the Way to God. Across the infinite gulf which parts the human from the Divine, the creature from the Creator, the sinner from the Holy One, Jesus has thrown a permanent Way in His own Incarnate Life and Death. By that Way He Himself passed into the Presence of God; by the same will pass all who come to God through Him. He goes to the Father in right of His Sonship, His sinless obedience, His fulfilment of all righteousness; His disciples go in virtue of their union with Him; He is their Way, as He was His own.

" I am the Truth," the Lord adds, "and the Life "; two new conceptions which seem to break the sequence of the thought, for the next words, "No man cometh to the Father except through me," arise directly out of "I am the Way." But "the Truth" and "the Life" "are in fact but other aspects of" the Way," bringing out its meaning more clearly, and so preparing for that which follows, as we shall presently see.

Truth is one of St John's characteristic words,<sup>1</sup> and it is more than once associated by this Gospel with our Lord. "The Word . . . dwelt among us ... full of grace and truth." "If ye abide in my word ... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." "To this end have I been born and to this end I am come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth; every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." Pilate retorted, "What is truth?" little knowing that the Very Truth stood before him in the person of Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

Truth, as St John conceives it, is the opposite both of falsehood and of that which is shadowy and unsubstantial. Both find their negation in Christ.

He is the Truth itself which cannot lie; 1 His words, His actions, His very Self are absolute verity. He is also the Truth as opposed to the unrealities of life. The world is full of things that perish in the using; our way through it is strewn with unfulfilled promises and disappointed hopes. Even the Law had but a "shadow of good things to come"; in the Gospel only we have "the very image of the things." 2 The Gospel is "the word of truth," 3 inasmuch as it reveals God in Christ; the Christian life, so far as it is true to its conception, is a "walking in the truth"; 4 it realizes the actualities of the spiritual world, and lays hold on eternal life, the only "life which is life indeed." 5 It does this, because it is life in Christ who is the Truth, or rather it is Christ, the Truth, living in us.

For Christ, as He is the Truth, so is He also the Life. Life is another Johannine word, 6 and closely connected with this Evangelist's doctrine of the person of Christ. "In him was life." "As the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son to have life in himself." The life of the Word was communicated to the Creation, and more especially to man, who partakes of the rational nature of the Creator; "the life was the light of man." 1 The Incarnation of the Word brought fresh and fuller supplies of the Divine life to a humanity to which sin had brought death. "I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly." "I am the Resurrection and the life." 2 The new life, which is the fruit of the Incarnation, comes through seeing the Son and believing on Him; through eating His flesh and drinking His blood. His very words are spirit and life; they are the words of eternal life; His person is this life itself. 3

Let us try to correlate the three titles which our Lord claims. "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life." In the Latin versions a happy alliteration suggests the close connexion which exists between the three: "Ego sum Via et Veritas et Vita." He is the Way which leads through the Truth to the Life. Or, reversing the order, as we may, He is the Life which is the Truth, and being the Life and the Truth He is also the Way. The three cannot be separated in our experience. As we live the life, we know the truth, and advance on the way; as we follow the way, we learn the truth and are filled with the life.

He who is the Life and the Truth is also the Way to the Father. To bring us to God was the purpose of the Incarnation, the Passion, the Resurrection and Ascension; 1 through the incarnate, crucified, risen, ascended Christ "we have our access." 2 Through the veil of the incarnate life "a new and living way" leads us to the Divine Presence. The way is open to all, and there is no other. For our Lord's great offer has a negative side which must not be overlooked. It comes into sight frequently in this Gospel: "Except a man be born from above he cannot enter"; "no man can come to me except the Father which sent me draw him"; "except ye eat and drink ... ye have not life in yourselves." 3 And now: "none cometh to the Father except through me." From one point of view the Gospel is exclusive; its very comprehensiveness, its Divine sufficiency, forbids an alternative. It is another question how inclusive the One Way may be. Many, it may be, have travelled over it and reached the end with little knowledge of Christ or none; saints of generations before He came, saints who never heard His name, and yet in some measure partook of the truth and the life. It is enough to know that all who have reached the Father's house have come through Him, 4 and that all who come through Him attain at last.

**1922**

**Melvin J. Ballard, Latter-day Saint Apostle  
The Three Degrees of Glory  
Address, Ogden Tabernacle**

**Sept. 22, 1922**

This is an inspiring sight, my dear brethren and sisters, a convincing testimony of your interest in this great and important feature of the latter-day work, Genealogy, the salvation for the living and the dead, for I have remarked before that in no quarter of the Church is there greater interest and activity shown in this particular work than here in these Ogden Stakes. I commend you for what you have accomplished, and, as I said in

another place in this city a few months ago, surely there is nothing that will so quickly bring you a house of God, a temple of the Lord, in your community as your intense activity in this particular work.

I rejoice with you to live in this wonderful day, the most glorious and splendid that has ever dawned in the history of man. I am exceedingly happy to be here tonight in your presence to rejoice with you on this ninety-ninth anniversary of the appearance of the Angel Moroni to the Prophet Joseph Smith, for it was just ninety-nine years ago tonight that Moroni spent the entire night unfolding to the Prophet the greatness of this latter-day dispensation and explaining to him for the first time, in this dispensation at least, the meaning of the promise that Elijah, the Prophet, should come again to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers lest the whole earth should be smitten with a curse. I know of no more fitting way to celebrate that wonderful event in this dispensation than to be here and discussing this subject. I rejoice because to us has been given the most splendid revelations God has ever given to man, and this is not discrediting anything of the past. It is full of glory, full of inspiration and grandeur, full of majesty and of truth!

The greatest revelation the Lord, Jesus Christ, has ever given to man in the history of His Church, so far as record is made, was given to the Prophet Joseph Smith on the 16th of April, 1832, known as the 76th section of the book of Doctrine & Covenants, commonly called for years and still known as "The Vision." I say, this to my mind is the climax of all wonderful revelations that have come from the Lord from the days of Father Adam until the present moment.

Men have been groping in darkness on some subjects, even in Gospel dispensations of the past. They have not known the fullness of God's plan and purpose for the salvation of His sons and daughters, but surely this is a glorious time, for this is the dispensation of the fullness of times and all that men have ever had in all former dispensations has been given at once in this dispensation, and much that was not had in other dispensations. Oh! how wonderful it is to live now, when we are not in doubt concerning not only ourselves, but the whole scheme and plan of salvation, not only for the living, but for the dead.

Men have been speculating as to God's justice and provisions for the salvation of His children. There have been those in the past and some still remain who teach that if by the smallest margin one escapes or misses to meet the conditions of the Gospel as they interpret it they lose eternal salvation and are eternally damned to hell; and on the other hand, there are those who believe that certain individuals are marked and designated, predestined, to come into this life to be saved no matter what they did, and others to be eternally lost. There are those who are so narrow as to believe that if in this life men have not found the Way, the Light and Truth there is no hope for them beyond the grave. I rejoice to live, I say, when the fullness of truth has been given and when the answer has been made clearly and definitely in the word of the Lord to all queries on this subject.

I have sometimes had this question propounded to me by ministers and members of other denominations: "What matters it so long as men and women are good men, good husbands, good wives, good citizens, believers in the Bible, worshippers of God and followers of Jesus Christ according to their own conception what matters which road they take?" It is immaterial whether they are Baptist, Presbyterian, Mormon, Catholic, or what. Any road leads to the same goal, just as there are many roads leading to Ogden, and whichever road you take you ultimately get to Ogden. That is their theory.

I have said that it makes little difference in one respect whether a man has a faith and persuasion or not, or what his faith or persuasion may be. It is not this persuasion that will bring him salvation; it is his works, his faith and his devotion and his ability to comply with the terms and conditions God has provided for man's salvation, but every man that does good is drawing toward God no matter what his faith is. That is true, therefore, whichever road he travels, according to the amount of good he does, he is advancing toward the great goal, toward God and toward salvation in His kingdom.

I recognize the fact that no man will get all the way to the end of the road and gain a fullness of salvation in the Celestial Kingdom of God unless he complies with all the terms and all the conditions of salvation in the Celestial Kingdom of God unless he said,

Straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

I discover in my reading of ancient and modern scriptures that the great majority of our Father's children will only go a part of the way toward that great goal and end because they will not comply with all the terms and conditions. They will get one-third of the way, we will say, and find themselves in the Telestial Kingdom. Another group will go a little farther on the right road but they won't comply with all the terms and conditions and will not reach the end of that journey. They may go, perhaps, two-thirds of the way to the Terrestrial Glory. And few there be who will comply and find the way by which they may make the entire journey, complying with all the terms, all the conditions and ultimately reaching the end of the road, entering into the Celestial Kingdom of God; they shall obtain Celestial Glory.

That sounds reasonable, does it not? It is true. Now without speculating, and I do not wish to speculate or theorize, but confining ourselves in our discussion or consideration of this question exclusively to the word of the Lord as it has been given us, I will begin by reading a portion of the 76th section, commencing with the 50th verse:

And again, we bear record, for we saw and heard, and this is the testimony of the gospel of Christ, concerning them who come forth in the resurrection of the just.

I begin with the few that find the way and reach the end. I begin with those because I think I am talking to a body of men and women who are not concerned and anxious to know terms or conditions by which you may get into the Terrestrial or Telestial Glory.

Your minds and hearts are set upon knowing what you must do to obtain the greatest thing, the best thing, the Lord has offered. I want to talk about that more than anything else because I do not discover many of you who would be satisfied with second-hand things, and you are not contented or happy by having second best or third best. So we will begin by reading a description of the terms and conditions that we must comply with to get the best, to bring before you as the Lord has given it to us the blessings, benefits and advantages of attaining to the Celestial Glory. I think it will be worth every sacrifice required and a hundred times more if need be. Personally, I would give it to attain that which God has offered to men and women who enter into the Celestial Glory.

Continuing with the 51st verse:

They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given.

I now say to all the world that no man, no woman, ever shall see the Celestial Kingdom of God who is not baptized of the water and of the spirit. The Lord has specified it. He made it so binding and complete when after announcing the law he complied with every term himself, though perfect, so that no man who imagines himself to be perfect her can excuse himself or herself from obedience to the law of baptism. It is the door, the gate to Celestial Glory.

That by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power.

And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth -upon all those who are just and true.

I would like to pause and emphasize that passage, because, while we receive at the hands of the priesthood which has the right to seal on earth and it shall be sealed in Heaven, this revelation clearly states it must be sealed by the holy spirit of promise.

A man and woman may by fraud and deception obtain admittance to the house of the Lord and may receive the pronouncement of the holy priesthood, giving to them, so far as lies in their power, these blessings. We may deceive men but we cannot deceive the Holy Ghost, and our blessings will not be binding upon us unless they are also sealed by the Holy spirit of promise, the Holy Ghost, one who reads the thoughts and hearts of men and gives his sealing approval to the blessings pronounced upon the heads of men and women. Then it is binding, efficacious and full of force.

I thank the Lord that there is this provision, so that even though men are able to deceive their brethren, they are not able to deceive the Holy Ghost and thus come into possession of their blessings unless they prove in word, in thought, and in deed their worthiness and righteousness.

Reading again from the 53rd verse:

And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.

They are they who are the church of the first born.

They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things.

Is there anything that you have ever dreamed of or thought of, that you wanted, that you longed for? Into the hands of those who attain this glory shall all things be given.

What a world of meaning! You can ponder over that all the rest of your lives and every thought and aspiration of the human heart in righteousness that is possible for men to conceive will be but a fraction of that which is comprehended in this statement, that 'unto them shall be given all things,' because it is not possible for mortals to think of -a thousandth part of what that means.

Reading again:

They are they who are Priests and Kings, who have received of his fullness, and of his glory.

And are Priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchisedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son:

Wherefore, as it is written, they are Gods, even the sons of God.

We have frequently said that perhaps the grandest thought that has ever been brought forth to the children of men is the Mormon Truism, namely: "As man is God once was, and as God is man may become." The foundation of that truism is in this revelation and these words we have just read. Let me read them again:

Wherefore, as it is written, they are Gods, even the sons of God.

Now, I would like to say a word or two about that Mormon Truism, namely: "As man is God once was, and as God is man may become.

Note that it is not to the effect that man will become, but man may become, and I wish to say that few men will become what God is. And yet, all men may become what He is if they will pay the price.

Now, I wish to say to you that the only possible candidates to become what God is are those who attain Celestial Glory, and those who fail in that will never, worlds without end, be possible candidates to become what God is. Then I wish to say to you that there are three degrees of glory in the Celestial Kingdom and only those who attain the highest degree of Celestial Glory will be candidates to become what God is, and graduate.

So you see, it is within the reach of every man and woman who lives, but only attainable by those who pay the price, who stand the test, who prove themselves, who comply with the terms and conditions that make their calling and election sure.

I wish now just a moment to diverge and turn to the 131st section of the book of Doctrine & Covenants. It is very brief and is upon the point I am just discussing. It is a revelation which was given May 16th and May 17th, 1843.

In the Celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees:

And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this Order of the Priesthood;  
(meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage);

And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.

He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase.

Those who are denied endless increase cannot be what God is, because that is what, in connection with other things, makes him God. The eternity of the marriage covenant ought to be understood by Later-day Saints clearly to be the sealing of at least one woman to one man for time and for all eternity.

Then do not get confused on that point and imagine that it necessarily means more than one woman. It may be, certainly, but it does mean at least that one man and one woman are sealed together by the power of the holy priesthood and by the sealing approval of the Holy Ghost for time and for all eternity, and then that they keep their covenants, before they will be candidates for the highest degree of Celestial Glory, and unto them only of all these groups of our Father's children is the promise made of endless or eternal increase.

What do we mean by endless or eternal increase? We mean that through the righteousness and faithfulness of men and women all those who keep the commandments of God will come forth with Celestial bodies, fitted and prepared to enter into their great, high and eternal glory in the Celestial Kingdom of God; and unto them, through their preparation, there will come children, who will be spirit children. I don't think that is very difficult to comprehend and understand. The nature of the offspring is determined by the nature of the substance that flows in the veins of the being. When blood flows in the veins of the being, the offspring will be what blood produces, which is tangible flesh and bone, but when that which flows in the veins is spirit matter, a substance which is more refined and pure and glorious than blood, the offspring of such beings will be spirit children. By that I mean they will be in the image of the parents. They will have a spirit body in the image of that parent and have a spark of the eternal or divine that always did exist, but not in that exact form.

Unto such parentage will this glorious privilege come, for it is written in our scriptures that "the glory of God is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." So, it will be the glory of men and women that will make their glory like unto His. When the power of endless increase shall come to them, and their offspring, growing and multiplying through ages that shall come, they will be in due time, as we have been,

provided with an earth like this, wherein they too may obtain earthly bodies and pass through all the experiences through which we have passed, and then we shall hold our relationship to them, the fullness and completeness of which has not been revealed to us, but we shall stand in our relationship to them as God, our Eternal Father, does to us, and thereby is this the most glorious and wonderful privilege that ever will come to any of the sons and daughters of God.

Now, I wish to return to the 76th section and commence reading with the 59th verse:

Wherefore all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's and Christ is God's.

And they shall overcome all things.

Here is a significant statement. I have said that in addition to one's baptism, to which I called attention, of the water and of the spirit, which is essential for admission to the kingdom of God, in the language of Peter and in the words of the fourth section of the Doctrine & Covenants, we are to add to our faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility and diligence. If these things be not in us, we are blind and cannot see far, but if they are in us they will make us so that we will be able to make our calling and election sure.

A man may receive the priesthood and all its privileges and blessings, but until he learns to overcome the flesh, his temper, his tongue, his disposition to indulge in the things God has forbidden, he cannot come into the Celestial Kingdom of God until he overcomes either in this life or in the life to come. But this life is the time in which men are to repent. Do not let any of us imagine that we can go down to the grave not having overcome the corruptions of the flesh and then lose in the grave all our sins and evil tendencies. They will be with us. They will be with the spirit when separated from the body.

I have said it is my judgment that any man or woman can do more to conform to the laws of God in one year in this life than they could in ten years when they are dead. The spirit only can repent and change, and then the battle has to go forward with the flesh afterwards. It is much easier to overcome and serve the Lord when both flesh and spirit are combined as one. This is the time when men are more pliable and susceptible. We will find when we are dead every desire, every feeling will be greatly intensified. When clay is pliable it is much easier to change than when it gets hard and sets.

This life is the time to repent. That is why I presume it will take a thousand years after the first resurrection until the last group will be prepared to come forth. It will take them a thousand years to do what it would have taken, but three score years and ten to accomplish in this life. And, so, we are to labor and have as little to do when we get through with this life as possible.

You remember the vision of the redemption of the dead as given to the Church through the late President Joseph F. Smith. President Smith saw the spirits of the righteous dead after their resurrection and the language is the same as one of the Prophet Joseph's revelations that they, the righteous dead, looked upon the absence of their spirits from their bodies as a bondage.

I grant you that the righteous dead will be at peace, but I tell you that when we go out of this life, leave this body, we will yearn to do a thousand things that we cannot do at all without the body, and how handicapped we will be, and realize then like a man who has suddenly lost both arms and his legs. We will be seriously handicapped, and we will long for the body; we will crave it; we will pray for that early reunion with our bodies.

We will know then what advantage it was to have a body.



Then, every man and woman who is putting off until the next life the task of correcting and overcoming the weakness of the flesh are sentencing themselves to that many years of bondage, for no man or woman will come forth in the resurrection until they have completed their work, until they have overcome, until they have corrected, until they have done as much as they can do.

That is why Jesus said in the resurrection there is neither marriage or giving in marriage, for all such contracts agreements will be provided for those who are worthy of it before men and women come forth in the resurrection of the Lord, and those who are complying in this life with these conditions are shortening their sentences, for every one of us will have a matter of years in that spirit state to complete and finish their salvation. And some may attain, by reason of their righteousness in this life, the right to do post-graduate work, to be admitted into the Celestial Kingdom, but others will lose absolutely the right to that glory, all they can do will not avail after death to bring them into the Celestial Kingdom.

The point I have in mind is that we are sentencing ourselves to long periods of bondage, separating our spirits from our bodies, or we are shortening that period, according to the way in which we overcome and master ourselves.

Sixty-first verse:

Wherefore, let no man glory in man, but rather let him glory in God, who shall subdue all enemies under his feet

These shall dwell in the presence of God and Christ forever and ever.

Oh! what a world of meaning! Do you comprehend it, you who gain Celestial glory, the privilege of dwelling in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever? What did it mean to have in the world, in the ministry, for three brief years the Lord Jesus Christ not the Father, just the Son? It was the most wonderful privilege the world has ever had.

What would you give tonight for the privilege of standing in the presence of the Son for five minutes? You would give all your earthly possessions for that privilege. Then can you comprehend the full meaning and significance of the statement that those who gain Celestial Glory will have the privilege of dwelling in the presence of the Father and the Son forever and forever?

That, in itself, will be reward enough for the struggle to obtain the prize. Yea, it is beyond price and earthly possessions. Even the giving of life itself would be a trifle for the privilege to dwell forever and forever in the presence of the Father and the Son.

Now I want to make an explanation that you may comprehend and understand God's plan, which allows us to dwell in His presence. The Lord has created by and through His Son, Jesus Christ, according to the book of Moses, worlds without number, and numerous are they as the sands upon the seashore. In each one, undoubtedly, dwells a group of his children. Then how can he dwell in the presence of all these several groups at one and the same time? If you will read the 88th section of Doctrine & Covenants, toward the latter part of that section the Lord undertakes to explain it.

The Lord told Joseph Smith how he looks upon these, his kingdoms, worlds without number, and he said, "I know them. I count them." And Moses wondered and wanted to know about them. Did Jesus Christ go to them and was he the Savior of these other worlds?

But the Lord said unto Moses,

Only an account of this earth give I unto you.

There is something else to learn after we leave this earth and I rejoice in the anticipation of further and greater knowledge concerning the things I do not now understand and comprehend. The Lord just touched Joseph's understanding when he said, Behold, these are known unto me. They are like a man having a field, and he sent a group of workers to this part of the field and gave them instructions what to do and told them he would visit them in their hour and in their time. He sent out the second group into another part of the field, and another group, and unto each of them he made the promise that he would visit them in their hour and in their time and season until they all would be made glad by the joy of his countenance. He would visit them from the first to the last and from the last to the first in one eternal round, each in his time, in his hour and in his season.

I presume that is the reason that the promise is made that Christ will dwell with men on this earth for a thousand years and that will be our day, our time and then I presume he will do as suggested in this 88th section; he will visit other places and kingdoms; but while absent from this group we will, nevertheless, be in His presence, in communication with him.

Every man and woman who enters the Celestial Kingdom will find themselves living on this earth, which shall be a Celestial world, and we will identify it as the earth upon which we have lived. To each man and woman who enters that kingdom will find the earth a Urim and Thummim, looking into which one may learn about all conditions and kingdoms that are beneath and the kingdom in which we live, so that all depths are revealed to us.

The revelations referred to inform us that whosoever enters the Celestial Kingdom shall receive a white stone, a Urim and Thummim of greatest purity. Through the gift and power of God will enable the possessor to read the universe and obtain knowledge from all kingdoms, not only the one in which we dwell, so that we will comprehend all heights and all depths. Those who gain Celestial Glory, to them only comes this privilege, and though absent it is possible for the Father and the Son to commune and converse with all who are entitled to enjoy that companionship, the other Comforter, just as the Holy Ghost now has the right and power to operate and converse at once with ten thousand or ten million souls who have complied with baptism and have been brought within the circle in tune that they may receive the communication. Every man and woman will hear at once and dwell in His presence to be constantly instructed.

Well, I ought not to spend any time trying to persuade you that this is possible when you know that in this day the human voice has been magnified a thousand times by the skill of man, so that it is said that by the use of one of these thousand time amplifiers the walking of a fly in a room where such an amplifier is properly in tune would make a noise as almost to deafen a man. The human voice may be increased one hundred thousand times and encircle the globe. If we can do that, and we do it every day, what does God know about it? So much more than we know and comprehend that our advances are just a feeble opening of the great eternal truths of science and knowledge which God has.

I understand now something about that wonderful appearance of the Redeemer to the Nephites. They heard a voice and though it was not a loud voice and came from the clouds, yet it was a keen and penetrating voice so that it entered every heart and made their very frames quake. Now I understand that God knows how. Though absent, he may speak, and all the groups of his children who are entitled to hear Him, hear Him, and in their hour and in their time and sea- son enjoy His personal presence and forever and always his companionship, the companionship of His spirit and His personal ministry through His means of communication with such souls.

I cannot begin this night to tell you what that means to enjoy the blessings and privileges of dwelling in His presence forever and ever. I know how the soul is thrilled; I know the feeling that comes by being in His presence for but a moment. I would give all that I am, all that I hope to be, to have the joy of His presence, to dwell in His love and His affection and to be in favor with the Master of all things forever and ever.

These are they whom he shall bring with him, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven, to reign on the earth over his people.

These are they who shall have part in the first resurrection.

These are they who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just.

These are they who are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly place, the holiest of all.

These are they who have come to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of Enoch, and of the first born.

These are they whose names are written in heaven, where God and Christ are the judge of all.

These are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood.

These are they whose bodies are Celestial.

I wish you to remember that because I am to return to it in a few moments, and just now I wish to say that a Celestial body is quite a different thing than a Terrestrial or Telesstial body.

These are they whose bodies are Celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all, whose glory the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical.

These are the fundamental points, the great privileges, and the terms and conditions that must be complied with.

Now, I wish to turn for a few moments in comparing this and the other glories first to a brief consideration of the great provision made for the second great group of our Father's children, and here is a description of it. Reading from the 71st verse:

And again, we saw the Terrestrial world, and beheld and lo, these are they who are of the Terrestrial,, whose glory differs from that of the church of the first born, who have received the fullness of the Father, even as that of the moon differs from the sun in the firmament.

Behold, these are they who died without law.

I wish to say that we do not know the terms nor the conditions that candidates for Telesstial or Terrestrial Glory may have to comply with. All that we have been given in the principle of the Gospel, including baptism by water, the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, are means to prepare and admit men and women into the Celestial Kingdom. We are not preparing candidates for Terrestrial or Telesstial Glory. That is not the work we are doing. I presume after this life, in the spirit world, among those great hosts of our Father's children who are candidates for this kingdom I am now talking about, we will be given clearly to understand what the principles are they must comply with. We do know, however, that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ. Absolute obedience will be required. It may be they will have to have baptism. Yet I know not; the Lord has not revealed it. I think it is well we are striving exclusively for the Celestial Kingdom, not for the Terrestrial or Telesstial.

Now this is the place provided for those who die without law.

I wish now to call your attention to other revelations which the Lord has given in this dispensation relative to those who have died without law.

You will recall how the Prophet Joseph was greatly concerned over his own Brother Alvin. Alvin Smith was a devout believer in Joseph's vision, but prior to the restoration of the priesthood and the restoration of the doctrine of baptism he died. Joseph was deeply concerned over his death and the Lord gave Joseph Smith a revelation, wherein he said he saw Alvin in the Celestial Kingdom.

Alvin was not really there, it was Alvin's right and privilege to be there, but he could not go there without baptism. The Lord said all who, had they lived, would have received the Gospel of the Son had they heard it, they too will be candidates for the Celestial Glory.

Who are they? How can they be determined?

Some folks get the notion that the problems of life will at once clear up and they will know that this is the gospel of Christ when they die. I have heard people say they believe when they die they will see Peter and that he will clear it all up. I said, "You never will see Peter until you accept the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, living or dead, at the hands of the elders of the Church.

They will meet these men to whom this right and authority has been given, for this generation shall receive it at the hands of those who have been honored with the priesthood of this dispensation. Living or dead, they shall not hear it from anyone else.

So, men won't know any more when they are dead than when they are living, only they will have passed through the change called death. They will not understand the truths of the Gospel only by the same process as they understand and comprehend them here.

So when they hear the Gospel preached they will respond just as our fathers and mothers did, with a glad heart. They will love it and embrace it. It will then be easy to know who they are. They who have died without the knowledge of the truth, they who will receive it with glad hearts, they also will be candidates for Celestial Glory. When you die and go to the spirit world you will labor for years, trying to convert individuals who will be taking their own course. Some of them will repent; some of them will listen. Another group will be rebellious, following their own will and notion, and that group will get smaller and smaller until every knee shall humbly bow and every tongue confess.

It may take us thousands of years to do that. But those who are of the blood of Israel, who, had they been living, would have received the Gospel and are not participators in the blessings, will in a similar manner receive it in the spirit world.

Now I want to go a little further and identify us and our posterity and our ancestors, to be able to tell you why it is that there is a great proportion of our Father's children who die without law and why you and I come into possession of the knowledge of the law.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said you will find these words in the fourth volume of Church History, page 231. This was at the time of the completion of the baptismal font in the Nauvoo Temple. The Prophet said:

The Saints have the privilege of being baptized for those of their own relatives who are dead whom they believe would have embraced the gospel if they had lived, if they had had the privilege of hearing it, and who have received the gospel in the spirit world through the instrumentality of those who have been commissioned to preach to them while in prison.

The limitation given to Latter-day Saints for baptism of their dead was to their immediate relatives who had died whom they believe would have received the gospel. That is all. And no others. Now since we are not prepared to pass judgment on our dead ancestors whom we did not know, the church has gone further and has permitted members of the church to do the work for all their immediate ancestors except they are murderers. There can be no work done for those who have committed murder and shed blood.

We are to do the work for our dead, whether we know they will receive it or not.. There is no doubt but what everyone would like to receive it, but some of them may not be worthy, and a good many will receive it. I believe in my heart that more of our dead ancestors will receive and enjoy the privileges and blessings of the gospel than their living children. That may seem strange to you, but I am afraid that the proportion of the living who are entitled to these privileges and blessings will be fewer than our dead ancestors who are also entitled to the same blessings.

Suppose that some of them will not receive the work that you do for them. Should that hinder you? No, it should not. The Lord said,

It is better to feed ten unworthy than to turn one righteous away.

If there were but a few of our ancestors worthy to have these blessings would we not do the work for the entire group in order to provide for the few?

But I tell you there will be a much larger proportion than this, and they all would like to receive it. A great majority will receive these blessings and will be glad for them and accept them.

Now, my brothers and sisters, I would like you to understand that long before we were born into this earth we were tested and tried in our pre-existence and the fact that today ten thousand children were born, and more than that, in the world, a certain proportion of them went to the Hottentots of the south seas; one thousand went to the Chinese mothers, one thousand to Negro mothers, one thousand to beautiful white Latter-day Saint mothers. Why this difference? You cannot tell me that that entire group of ten thousand or whatever that number might be was just designated, marked, to go there. That they were men and women of equal opportunities. There are no infant spirits born.

They had a being ages before they came into this life. They appear in infant body but they were tested, proven souls. Therefore, I say to you that long before we came into this life all groups and races of men existed as they exist today. Like attracts to like.

Why is it in this Church we do not grant the priesthood to the negroes? It is alleged that the Prophet Joseph said and I have no reason to dispute it that it is because of some act committed by them before they came into this life. It is alleged that they were neutral, standing neither for Christ nor the devil. But, I am convinced it is because of some things they did before they came into this life that they have been denied the privilege. The races of today are very largely reaping the consequence of a previous life.

Why was it the Lord gave Daniel the interpretation of that wonderful dream of Nebuchadnezzar, wherein Daniel was able to tell very clearly, long before they were born, when the various peoples should rise and bear rule upon the earth? And I say to you that there were tested, tried and proven souls before they were born into the world, and the Lord sent with them his choicest blessings and provided a lineage for them. That lineage is the House of Israel, the lineage of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their posterity.

Through this lineage were to come the true and tried souls that had demonstrated their righteousness in the spirit world before they came here. We came through that lineage. Our particular branch is the House of Joseph through his son Ephraim. That is the group from whence shall come the candidates in the main for the Celestial Glory. That is why we are doing the work for that group) and not for others.

Let us not imagine that in this dispensation we shall do the work for the dead Chinese or Hindus. Not at all. I expect it will take one thousand years to complete in our temples the ordinances looking to the salvation of the House of Israel. It will take all Latter-day Saints and all that we can do to take care of our own branch of our own house. While we do the work for our dead ancestors, we will reach a limit after a while. That limit will be after we have reached as far as records are kept. I have said that when any man or woman goes into this work earnestly the Lord will provide ways and means for them to obtain the information.

Our understanding will be opened and sources of knowledge will be made manifest never before dreamed of. Why? Because the dead know a great deal more than we think.

Why is it that sometimes only one of a city or household receives the Gospel? It was made known to me that it is because of the righteous dead who had received the Gospel in the spirit world exercising themselves, and in answer to their prayers elders of the Church were sent to the homes of their posterity that the Gospel might be taught to them and through their righteousness they might be privileged to do the work for their dead kindred. I want to say to you that it is with greater intensity that the hearts of the fathers and mothers in the spirit world are turned to their children than that our hearts are turned to them. And so it is that the Lord will open the way for those who seek information and knowledge.

I recall an incident in my own father's experience. I recall how we looked forward to the completion of the Logan Temple. It was about to be dedicated. My father had labored on that house from its very beginning and my earliest recollection was carrying his dinner each day as he brought the rock down from the quarry. How we looked forward to that great event! I remember how in the meantime father made every effort to obtain all the data and information he could concerning his relatives. It was the theme of his prayer night and morning that the Lord would open the way whereby he could get information concerning his dead.

The day before the dedication while writing recommends to the members of his ward who were to be present at the first service, two elderly gentlemen walked down the streets of Logan, approached my two younger sisters, and, coming to the older one of the two placed in her hands a newspaper and said:

Take this to your father. Give it to no one else. Go quickly with it. Don't lose it.

The child responded and when she met her mother, her mother wanted the paper. The child said, "No, I must give it to father and no one else."

She was admitted into the room and told her story. We looked in vain for these travelers. They were not to be seen. No one else saw them. Then we turned to the paper. The newspaper was printed in my father's old English home five days before the day it was in our hands. We were astonished, for by no earthly means could it have reached us, so that our curiosity increased as we examined it. Then we discovered one page devoted to the writings of a reporter of the paper, who had gone on his vacation, and among other places had visited an old cemetery. The curious inscriptions led him to write what he found on the tombstones, including the verses. He also added the names, date of birth, death, etc., filling nearly an entire page.

It was the old cemetery where the Ballard family had been buried for generations and very many of my father's immediate relatives and other intimate friends.

When the matter was presented to President Merrill of the Logan Temple he said,

You are authorized to do the work for those because you received it through messengers of the Lord.

There is no doubt but that the dead who had received the Gospel in the spirit world had put it into the heart of that reporter to write these things, and thus the way was prepared for my father to obtain the information he

sought, and so with you who are earnest in this work, the way shall be opened and you will be able to gather data far beyond your expectations, even when you have gone as far as you can go. I will tell you what will happen. When you have gone as far as you can go the names of your righteous dead who have embraced the Gospel in the spirit world will be given you through the instrumentality of your dead kindred. But only the names of those who have received the Gospel will be revealed.

Now, I wish to say to you that those who died without law, meaning the pagan nations, for lack of faithfulness, for lack of devotion, in the former 1 life, are obtaining all that they are entitled to. I don't mean to say that all of them will be barred from entrance into the highest glory. Any one of them who repents and complies with the conditions might also obtain Celestial Glory, but the great bulk of them shall only have Terrestrial.

Continuing, and this is full of meaning:

Behold, these are they who died without law,

And also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh,

Who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it.

This revelation clearly informs us that any man or woman, not only those in the days of Noah, who heard the Gospel and rejected it, but in this day any man or woman who has had a good chance to have heard the Gospel, to receive it and embrace it and enjoy its blessings and privileges, who lived during their life in absolute indifference to these things, ignoring it, need not to hope or anticipate that when they are dead the work can be done for them and they gain Celestial Glory. Don't you Latter-day Saints get the notion that a man or woman can live in defiance or total indifference, having had a good chance not a casual chance or opportunity and when they die you can go and do the work for that individual and have them receive every blessing that the faithful ones are entitled to. If that becomes the doctrine of the Church we will be worse than the Catholics, who believe that you can pray a man out of purgatory. But they charge for it and we don't, so we would be more foolish than they.

More than once I have had a mother come to me and ask if it would not be possible to have her daughter sealed to her dead husband. She had lived with him, she had prayed with him and plead with him, but he was totally indifferent, and now since he is dead couldn't the work be done for him and the daughter sealed to him for time and for eternity? If he repents he will come up in the Terrestrial Glory and she does not want to be there. Then why be sealed to him?

Brothers and sisters, I say this to stimulate you to try and make your lives conform to the commandments of the Master, that you may work while the day lasts, for the night cometh when it will not profit a man to work. That applies to those who had a chance to receive the Gospel but rejected it. That was their day, and there comes a night when all the work they may do will be of no avail, as they cannot enter the Celestial Kingdom. I want to say this: It applies also to men and women who neglect going to the House of God, who think, "Oh, well, if I don't do the work wife will fix it up." I tell you they are treading on dangerous ground. They may wake up and find that their day and opportunity has gone. They had the chance. They died without accepting it. They neglected it and may lose it.

I am not judging their case; the Lord will judge every case on its merits. It is a general rule we ought to understand.

These are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men.

These are they who receive of His glory, but not of his fullness.

These are they who receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fullness of the Father;

Wherefore, they are bodies Terrestrial, and not bodies Celestial, and differ in glory as the moon differs from the sun.

These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God.

These are Latter-day Saints, many of them, who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus, though they have entered into these covenants have not kept them. They have broken their pledges and may come forth in the resurrection and find themselves wholly unworthy to be candidates for the Celestial Glory. They will come up in the Terrestrial World. It is for us to make our calling and election sure. We can do it in this life.

Now let me pass to the third and last of these groups, the Telestial.

And again, we saw the glory of the Telestial, which glory is that of the lesser, even as the glory of the stars differs from that of the glory of the moon in the firmament.

These are they who received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus.

These are they who deny the Holy Spirit.

These are they who are thrust down to hell.

These are they who shall not be redeemed from the devil, until the last resurrection, until the Lord, even Christ the Lamb, shall have finished His work.

These are they who receive not of His fullness in the eternal world, but of the Holy Spirit through the ministration of the Terrestrial.

And the Terrestrial through the ministration of the Celestial;

And also the Telestial receive it of the administering of angels who are appointed to minister for them, or who are appointed to be ministering spirits for them, for they shall be heirs of salvation.

And thus we saw in the heavenly vision, the glory of the Telestial, which surpasses all understanding.

And no man knows it except him to whom God has revealed it.

And thus we saw the glory of the Terrestrial, which excels in all things the glory of the Telestial, even in glory, and in power, and might, and in dominion.

And thus we saw the glory of the Celestial, which excels in all things where God, even the Father, reigns upon His throne for- ever and ever;

Before whose throne all things bow in humble reverence and give Him glory forever and ever.



They who dwell in His presence are the church of the first born, and they see as they are seen, and know as they are known, having received of His fullness and of His grace;

And He makes them equal in power, and in might, and in dominion.

And the glory of the Celestial is one, even as the glory of the sun is one.

And the glory of the Terrestrial is one, even as the glory of the moon is one.

And the glory of the Telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one, for as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one from another in glory in the Telestial world;

For these are they who are of Paul, and of Appolos, and of Cephas.

These are they who say they are some of one and some of another some of Christ and some of John, and some of Moses, and some of Elias, and some of Esiais, and some of Isaiah, and some of Enoch;

But received not the gospel, neither the testimony of Jesus, neither the prophets, neither the everlasting covenant.

Last of all, these all are they who will not be gathered with the saints, to be caught up unto the church of the first born, and received into the cloud.

These are they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie.

These are they who suffer the wrath of God on the earth.

These are they who suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.

These are they who are cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of Almighty God, until the fullness of times when Christ shall have subdued all enemies under His feet, and shall have perfected His work,

When He shall deliver up the kingdom, and present it unto the Father spotless, saying I have overcome and have trodden the wine-press alone, even the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God.

Then shall he be crowned with the crown of his glory, to sit on the throne of his power to reign forever and ever.

But behold, and lo, we saw the glory and the inhabitants of the Telestial world, that they were as innumerable as the stars in the firmament of heaven, or as the sand upon the sea shore,

And heard the voice of the Lord saying these all shall bow the knee, and every tongue shall confess to him who sits upon the throne forever and ever;

For they shall be judged according to their works, and every man shall receive according to his own works, his own dominion, in the mansions which are prepared,

And they shall be servants of the Most High, but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end.

Now I wish to answer one or two queries that undoubtedly have arisen in your minds, and in doing so I wish to read some more scripture.

The question is often asked, "Is it possible for one who attains Telestial Glory in time in the eternal world to live so well that he may graduate from the Telestial and pass into the Terrestrial, and then after a season that he may progress from that and be ultimately worthy of the Celestial Glory?"

That is the query that has been asked, I have just read the answer, so far as the Telestial group is concerned. "Where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end. I take it upon the same basis, the same argument likewise applies to the Terrestrial World. Those whose lives have entitled them to Terrestrial Glory can never gain Celestial Glory. One who gains possession of the lowest degree of the Telestial Glory may ultimately arise to the highest degree of that glory, but no provision has been made for promotion from one glory to another. Let us be reasonable about it.

I wish to say in illustrating the subject that if three men were starting out on an endless race, one having an advantage of one mile, the other of two miles, and each one could run as fast as the other, when would the last ever catch up to the first? If you can tell me that, I can tell you when candidates for the Telestial Glory will get into the Celestial Glory. Each will grow, but their development will be prescribed by their environment, and there is a reason for it. When the three men start if each can run as fast as the other the last one never could catch the first one.

Applying this illustration to those who are entitled to the different degrees of glory: He who enters the Celestial Glory has the advantage over all others. He dwells in the presence of the Father and the Son. His teachers are the highest. The others will receive all they learn from the Celestial to the Terrestrial, from the Terrestrial to the Telestial. They get it second hand and third hand, and how can they ever hope to grow as fast as those who drink from the fountain head? Again, those who come forth in the Celestial Glory with Celestial bodies have a body that is more refined. It is different.

The very fibre and texture of the Celestial body is more pure and holy than a Telestial or Terrestrial body, and a Celestial body alone can endure Celestial Glory. I am impressed with this because I recall when a child at school I learned that if an icicle a mile square were dropped into the sun it would melt in an instant, and when I learned how intense the heat of that orb and that our sun is a Celestial world, I did not know whether I wanted to live in a Celestial world or not if it was that hot. But when I come to understand, if I have a body suitable to dwell in eternal burnings then I think I would like it. Fishes can live in the water and have bodies suited to that element but entirely unsuitable to a life outside of the water. When we have a Celestial body it will be suited to the Celestial conditions and a Telestial body could not endure Celestial Glory. It would be torment and affliction to them.

I have not read in the scripture where there will be another resurrection where we can obtain a Celestial body for a Terrestrial body. What we receive in the resurrection will be ours forever and forever.

Let me read to you from the 88th section, commencing with the 17th verse:

And the redemption of the soul is through him who quickeneth all things, in whose bosom it is decreed that the poor and the meek of the earth shall inherit it.

Therefore it must needs be sanctified from all unrighteousness, that it may be prepared for the Celestial Glory. "

This earth, every part of it, will be Celestial; not one-third Telestial and one-third Terrestrial. It will be Celestial and only

Celestial beings shall dwell upon it. I always thought the Lord would require a much larger world than ours for the Telestial bodies to dwell on when I consider the millions of dead who will inherit the Telestial Glory. They may need some planet bigger than this earth.

Let me read again:

Wherefore it shall be sanctified; yea, notwithstanding it shall die, it shall be quickened, and the righteous shall inherit it:

For notwithstanding they die, they also rise again a spiritual body:

They who are of a Celestial spirit shall receive the same body which was a natural body; even ye shall receive your bodies, and your glory shall be that glory by which your bodies are quickened.

Ye who are quickened by a portion of the Celestial glory shall then receive of the same even a fullness;

And they who are quickened by a portion of the Terrestrial glory, shall then receive of the same, even a fullness;

And also they who are quickened by a portion of the Telestial glory shall then receive of the same, even a fullness.

Therefore, I say, my brothers and sisters, the Lord has distinctly settled the question of our status, as established in our resurrection from the dead, If we have earned a Celestial body, we may have Celestial glory. Yet many of the Saints will wake up and find they sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. If I should come forth and find myself in the Telestial world, or in the Terrestrial world, and look up to this earth, when it shall attain its place as a Celestial orb, shining like a sun, when this earth will no longer need the sun to shine upon it by day nor the moon by night, when it shall become the sun of a reflector of light, when it shall become the sun of another group of planets, similar to our solar system, if I should be so unfortunate as to lose my chance of obtaining an inheritance in that place, and be compelled to dwell upon a Telestial orb, I surely will feel the full force of the poet's statement,

Of all the sad words of tongue and pen, the saddest of them all, it might have been.

I might have been there. I was born there. It was my right and privilege to be there, but I lost it through my own blindness, through my own wickedness; I have lost it forever. While I might have joy here, and experience and growth here, yet I have lost eternal companionship with my Heavenly Father.

Let me not only appeal to you to be greatly interested in working out the salvation of your dead, but be also intensely interested, be deeply concerned in the salvation of the living. What mortification, what humiliation would it be for me to stand before my redeemed dead, for whom I have labored in the temples, and have them say to me, "What of your sons or your daughters, your grandsons or granddaughters, those born under the covenants, born in the most glorious dispensation of the fullness of times, yet were so foolish as to lose their right to the enjoyment of Celestial Glory?" How great would be my mortification and humiliation! And yet, there are great numbers of our children and our acquaintances, with whom we are now associated, who are in danger of losing their eternal salvation in the Celestial Kingdom of our God.

While there is life, let us earnestly labor with all our might, mind and strength, that we may bring them to Christ in full possession of all these blessings. And we can do it. Even if we labor all our lives, we shall have great joy if we save but one, for we will be shedding an influence for good over countless thousands who shall be their posterity. But If we have not done our full duty, we shall sorrow intensely because of our

neglect, and we shall stand accused by them for having failed in the performance of our duty. On the other hand, if we have labored with all our might, mind and strength, we shall stand with a clear conscience, blameless. Our status and condition will be like our Heavenly Father's. He sent His only begotten Son to save and redeem mankind, but unless we accept the atonement and act in conformity to the laws and requirements laid down for us, even God cannot save us.

Now, brethren and sisters, let us not be discouraged in our temple work. Let us renew our diligence and determination to do this work, and what we do not understand concerning our sealings, it will be later revealed to us.

You mothers worry about your little children. We now have limited the sealing of husband and wife to thirteen years of age for girls and fifteen for boys. I know because I lost a son six years of age and I saw him a man in the spirit world after his death, and I saw how he had exercised his own freedom of choice and would obtain of his own will and volition a companionship, and in due time to him and all those who are worthy of it, they shall participate in all of the blessings and sealing privileges of the house of the Lord. Do not worry over it. They are safe; they are all right.

Now, then, what of your daughters who have died and have not been sealed to some man? Unless it is made known to you, let their case rest. They will make known to you the agreements and contracts they have mutually entered into. The sealing power shall be forever and ever with this church, and provisions will be made for them. We cannot run faster than the Lord has provided the way. Their blessings and privileges will come to them in due time. In the meantime, they are safe.

Let us be earnest in this work. It will cast an influence over your whole families. It will strengthen your faith. It will add testimony to your faith. Surely there is peace and joy in it. May you find it, and may every one under the sound of my voice this evening, go hence with a firm resolve, such as we have never had before, that we will make our calling and election sure, that at the last day our records may be clear, that there may be no clouds upon our titles, that we may receive our inheritance in the Celestial Glory of our God. If that shall be our reward, our joy will be full, beyond all my power to tell you. May the Lord help us to have a clear conscience and to do every day that which we ought to do. I am more concerned for the living than for the dead, when I realize that when the bridegroom cometh, five, or one-half, of the virgins shall be asleep, without oil in their lamps. That will not be the world; that will be the Latter-day Saints. Will you be asleep, or will there be oil in your lamps, my brethren and sisters? Let us stand in our places and not flatter ourselves by thinking, "I will take care of John and Mary when they are dead."

Let us not procrastinate, but labor unceasingly for the salvation of our kindred, and if we succeed, oh, my brethren and sisters, if we win that prize we shall be compensated beyond all expectations. We shall receive more than we have ever dreamed of joy and happiness and eternal satisfaction, but if we miss it, if we lose it, we, whose right it is to obtain it, I cannot tell you the sting of conscience and remorse, the hell of torment we shall endure endlessly, if we miss it, through our own ignorance and foolishness. May God save us from that affliction that will be ours who are heirs to the blessings and privileges we have spoken of, if we miss it and lose our birthright.

The Lord sanctify these humble remarks and my earnest testimony and desire for your blessings and welfare, for the salvation of the living and the dead, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**1936**

**Fr. Reg. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (1877 – 1964), Catholic Thomist Scholar**

**La charité parfaite et les beatitudes (1er janvier 1936)**

**La Vie Spirituell n° 196**

La perfection chrétienne, selon le témoignage de l'Évangile et des Épîtres, consiste spécialement dans la charité qui nous unit à Dieu. Cette vertu correspond au précepte suprême, celui de l'amour de Dieu; il est dit aussi: « Celui qui demeure dans la charité demeure en Dieu et Dieu en lui. » « Surtout revêtez-vous de la charité, qui est le lien de la perfection. »

Des théologiens se sont demandé si pour la perfection proprement dite, non pas celle des commençants ou des progressants, mais celle qui caractérise la voie unitive, il faut une grande charité, ou si elle peut être obtenue sans un degré élevé de cette vertu.

Quelques auteurs ont prétendu qu'un haut degré de charité n'est pas nécessaire à la perfection proprement dite, parce que, selon le témoignage de saint Thomas, "la charité même à un degré inférieur peut vaincre toutes les tentations ».

La majorité des théologiens répond au contraire que la perfection proprement dite ne s'obtient qu'après un long exercice des vertus acquises et infuses, exercice par lequel leur intensité s'accroît. Le parfait, avant d'arriver à l'état où il se trouve, a dû être un commençant, puis un progressant. Et chez lui, non seulement la charité peut vaincre bien des tentations, mais elle a triomphé de fait de beaucoup, et par là elle a notablement augmenté. On ne conçoit donc pas la perfection chrétienne proprement dite, celle de la voie unitive, sans une haute charité.

Si on lisait le contraire dans les œuvres d'un saint Jean de la Croix, par exemple, on croirait rêver, et l'on penserait qu'il y a eu là une erreur d'impression. Il paraît tout à fait certain que de même que pour l'âge adulte il faut une force physique supérieure à celle de l'enfance (bien que, accidentellement, certains adolescents particulièrement vigoureux soient plus forts que certains adultes), il faut aussi pour l'état des parfaits une charité plus haute que pour celui des commençants (bien que, accidentellement, certains saints à leurs débuts aient une charité plus grande que certains parfaits déjà avancés en âge).

L'enseignement commun des théologiens sur ce point paraît nettement fondé sur la prédication même du Sauveur, là surtout où il a parlé des béatitudes, en saint Matthieu (ch. V). Cette page de l'évangile exprime admirablement toute l'élévation de la perfection chrétienne, à laquelle Jésus nous appelle tous. Le Sermon sur la Montagne est l'abrégé de la doctrine chrétienne, la promulgation solennelle de la Loi nouvelle, donnée pour parfaire la loi mosaïque et en corriger les interprétations abusives; et les huit béatitudes énoncées au début sont l'abrégé de ce sermon. Elles condensent ainsi d'une façon admirable tout ce qui constitue l'idéal de la vie chrétienne et en montrent toute l'élévation.

La première parole de Jésus dans sa prédication est pour promettre le bonheur, et nous indiquer les moyens pour y parvenir. Pourquoi parler tout d'abord du bonheur? Parce que tous les hommes désirent naturellement être heureux; c'est le but qu'ils poursuivent sans cesse, quoi qu'ils veuillent; mais bien souvent ils cherchent le bonheur où il n'est pas, là où ils ne trouveront que misère. Écoutons le Seigneur, qui nous dit où est le bonheur véritable et durable, où est la fin de notre vie, et qui nous donne les moyens pour y parvenir.

La fin est indiquée en chacune des huit béatitudes.; c'est, sous divers noms, la béatitude éternelle, dont les justes dès ici-bas peuvent goûter le prélude; c'est le royaume des cieux, la terre promise, la parfaite consolation, le rassasiement de tous nos désirs légitimes et saints, la suprême miséricorde, la vue de Dieu, notre Père.

Les moyens sont à l'encontre de ce que nous disent les maximes de la sagesse du monde, qui propose un tout autre but.

L'ordre de ces huit béatitudes est admirablement expliqué par saint Augustin et saint Thomas, c'est un ordre ascendant, inverse de celui du Pater qui descend de la considération de la gloire de Dieu à celle de nos besoins personnels et de notre pain quotidien. – Les trois premières béatitudes disent le bonheur qui se trouve

dans la fuite et la délivrance du péché, dans la pauvreté acceptée par amour de Dieu, dans la douceur et dans les larmes de la contrition. – Les deux béatitudes suivantes sont celles de la vie active du chrétien: elles répondent à la soif de la justice et à la miséricorde exercée à l'égard du prochain. – Viennent ensuite celles de la contemplation des mystères de Dieu: la pureté du cœur qui dispose à voir Dieu, et la paix qui dérive de la vraie sagesse. – Enfin la dernière et la plus parfaite des béatitudes est celle qui réunit les précédentes au milieu même de la persécution subie pour la justice, ce sont les dernières épreuves, condition de la sainteté.

Suivons cet ordre ascendant, pour nous faire une juste idée de la perfection chrétienne, en évitant de l'amoindrir. Nous allons voir qu'elle dépasse les limites de l'ascèse, ou de l'exercice des vertus selon notre propre activité ou industrie, et qu'elle comporte l'exercice éminent des dons du Saint-Esprit, dont le mode supra-humain, lorsqu'il devient fréquent et manifeste, caractérise la vie mystique, ou de docilité à l'Esprit-Saint.

Saint Thomas, après saint Augustin, enseigne que les béatitudes sont des actes qui procèdent des dons du Saint-Esprit ou des vertus perfectionnées par les dons.

Enfin, dans la huitième béatitude, la plus parfaite de toutes, Notre-Seigneur montre que tout ce qu'il vient de dire est grandement confirmé par l'épreuve supportée avec amour: Bienheureux ceux qui souffrent persécution pour la justice, car le royaume des cieux est à eux. Il s'agit surtout des dernières épreuves, conditions de la sainteté.

Cette parole surprenante n'avait jamais été entendue. Non seulement elle promet le bonheur futur, mais elle dit qu'on doit s'estimer heureux au milieu même des afflictions et persécutions souffertes pour la justice. Béatitude toute surnaturelle qui n'est pratiquement comprise que par les âmes éclairées de Dieu. Il y a du reste bien des degrés dans cette béatitude, depuis le bon chrétien qui commence à souffrir pour avoir bien fait, obéi, donné le bon exemple, jusqu'au martyr qui meurt pour la foi. Cette béatitude s'applique à ceux qui, convertis à une vie meilleure, ne trouvent qu'opposition dans leur milieu; elle s'applique aussi à l'apôtre dont l'action est entravée par ceux-là mêmes qu'il veut sauver, lorsqu'on ne lui pardonne pas d'avoir dit trop nettement la vérité évangélique. Des pays entiers endurent parfois cette persécution, telle la Vendée sous la Révolution française, à d'autres époques l'Arménie, la Pologne, le Mexique.

Cette béatitude est la plus parfaite parce qu'elle est celle de ceux qui sont le plus marqués à l'effigie de Jésus crucifié pour nous. Rester humble, doux, miséricordieux: au milieu de la persécution, à l'égard même des persécuteurs, et, dans cette tourmente, non seulement conserver la paix, mais la donner aux autres, c'est vraiment la pleine perfection de la vie chrétienne. Elle se réalise surtout dans les dernières épreuves que subissent les âmes parfaites que Dieu purifie en les faisant travailler au salut du prochain. Tous les saints n'ont pas été des martyrs, mais ils ont, à des degrés divers, souffert persécution pour la justice, et ils ont connu quelque chose de ce martyre du cœur qui a fait de Marie la Mère des douleurs.

Jésus insiste sur la récompense promise à ceux qui souffrent ainsi pour la justice: "Heureux serez-vous, lorsqu'on vous insultera, qu'on vous persécutera, et qu'on dira faussement toute sorte de mal contre vous à cause de moi. Réjouissez-vous et soyez dans l'allégresse, car votre récompense est grande dans les cieux. »

De cette parole est née dans l'âme des apôtres le désir du martyre, qui inspirait les sublimes paroles d'un saint André, d'un saint Ignace d'Antioche. C'est elle qui revit en un saint François d'Assise, en un saint Dominique, en un saint Benoît-Joseph Labre. C'est pourquoi ils ont été « le sel de la terre », « la lumière du monde », et leur maison bâtie, non pas sur le sable, mais sur le roc, a pu supporter toutes les tourmentes et n'a pas été renversée.

Et ces béatitudes, qui sont, comme le dit saint Thomas, les actes supérieurs des dons ou des vertus perfectionnées par les dons, dépassent la simple ascèse et sont d'ordre mystique. Ce qui conduit à dire que la pleine perfection de la vie chrétienne est normalement d'ordre mystique, c'est le prélude de la vie du ciel, où

le chrétien sera "parfait comme le Père céleste est parfait », en le voyant comme Il se voit et en l'aimant comme Il s'aime.

Sainte Thérèse écrit: « Il faut, disent certains livres, être indifférent au mal qu'on dit de nous, se réjouir même plus que si l'on en disait du bien, on doit faire peu de cas de l'honneur, être très détaché de ses proches... et quantité d'autres choses du même genre. A mon avis ce sont là de purs dons de Dieu, ces biens sont surnaturels », c'est-à-dire ils dépassent la simple ascèse ou l'exercice des vertus selon notre propre activité ou industrie, ce sont des fruits d'une grande docilité aux inspirations du Saint-Esprit. Elle dit encore: "Si l'on a de l'amour des honneurs et des biens temporels, on aura beau avoir pratiqué pendant bien des années l'oraison, ou, pour mieux dire, la méditation, on n'avancera jamais beaucoup; la parfaite oraison, au contraire, délivre de ces défauts. »

C'est dire que sans la parfaite oraison on n'arrivera pas à la pleine perfection de la vie chrétienne.

C'est ce que dit aussi l'auteur de l'Imitation, 1. III, ch. XXV, sur la véritable paix: « Si vous parvenez à un parfait mépris de vous-même, vous jouirez d'une paix aussi profonde qu'il est possible en cette vie d'exil." Et c'est pourquoi, dans le même livre de l'Imitation, 1. III, ch. XXXI, le disciple demande la grâce supérieure de la contemplation: « J'ai besoin, Seigneur, d'une grâce plus grande, s'il me faut parvenir à cet état où nulle créature ne sera un lien pour moi... Il aspirait à cette liberté, celui qui disait: Qui me donnera des ailes comme à la colombe? et je volerai et me reposerai (Ps. LIV, 7)... Si l'on n'est entièrement dégagé de toute créature, on ne pourra librement appliquer son esprit aux choses divines. Et c'est pourquoi l'on trouve peu de contemplatifs, parce que peu savent se séparer entièrement des créatures périssables. Pour cela il faut une grâce puissante, qui sou-lève l'âme et la ravisse au-dessus d'elle-même. Tant que l'homme n'est pas ainsi élevé en esprit, dégagé des créa-tures et tout uni à Dieu, tout ce qu'il sait et tout ce qu'il a n'est pas d'un grand prix." Ce chapitre de l'Imitation est à proprement parler d'ordre mystique, et il montre, que c'est là seulement que se trouve la vraie perfection de l'amour de Dieu.

Sainte Catherine de Sienne parle de même dans son Dialogue (ch. 44 à 49). Et c'est, nous l'avons vu, l'enseignement même de Notre-Seigneur lorsqu'il nous prêche les béatitudes, telles surtout que les ont comprises saint Augustin[18] et saint Thomas, comme les actes élevés des dons du Saint-Esprit ou des vertus perfectionnés par les dons. C'est là vraiment le plein développement normal de l'organisme spirituel ou de « la grâce des vertus et des dons ».

**1941**

**C. S. Lewis (1898 – 1963), British Catholic Essayist, Theologian, and Apologist**

**The Weight of Glory**

**The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis: Family letters, 1905-1931**

Page 967

Clive Staples Lewis, Walter Hooper - Religion - 2004 - 1072 pages

Certainly Lewis's most profound description of the glories of heaven. He mentions the redeemed as having the glory of the Sun, the moon, and the stars; but in a 1931 Letter to Arthur Greeves, a scholarly friend, he writes: "Meanwhile, as tangible mementoes of your almost excessive hospitality, I have books by Richard Hooker and Jeremy Taylor (1613 - 1667; Anglican Bishop best known for his "Rule and Exercise of Holy Living" (1650) and "Rule and Exercise of Holy Dying" (1651), which Greeves had given Lewis in one volume). I did not thank you nearly enough for them at the time. The Taylor has been to the binders and returned very neatly mended yesterday. I started him after church this morning. He is severe and has little of the joyous side of religion in him; and some of his incentives (e.g. where he reminds you that there will be

different degrees of glory in heaven and would have you aim at getting as high a degree as possible) seem to me unspiritual or at least highly dangerous.”

Preached originally as a sermon in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, on June 8, 1941  
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and by the S.P.C.K., 1942

**Address:**

If you asked twenty good men today what they thought the highest of the virtues, nineteen of them would reply, Unselfishness. But if you asked almost any of the great Christians of old, he would have replied, Love. You see what has happened? A negative term has been substituted for a positive, and this is of more than philological importance. The negative ideal of Unselfishness carries with it the suggestion not primarily of securing good things for others, but of going without them ourselves, as if our abstinence and not their happiness was the important point. I do not think this is the Christian virtue of Love. The New Testament has lots to say about self-denial, but not about self-denial as an end in itself. We are told to deny ourselves and to take up our crosses in order that we may follow Christ; and nearly every description of what we shall ultimately find if we do so contains an appeal to desire. If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith.

Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

We must not be troubled by unbelievers when they say that this promise of reward makes the Christian life a mercenary affair. There are different kinds of reward. There is the reward which has no natural connexion with the things you do to earn it, and is quite foreign to the desires that ought to accompany those things. Money is not the natural reward of love; that is why we call a man mercenary if he marries a woman for the sake of her money. But marriage is the proper reward for a real lover, and he is not mercenary for desiring it. A general who fights well in order to get a peerage is mercenary; a general who fights for victory is not, victory being the proper reward of battle as marriage is the proper reward of love. The proper rewards are not simply tacked on to the activity for which they are given, but are the activity itself in consummation.

There is also a third case, which is more complicated. An enjoyment of Greek poetry is certainly a proper, and not a mercenary, reward for learning Greek; but only those who have reached the stage of enjoying Greek poetry can tell from their own experience that this is so. The school-boy beginning Greek grammar cannot look forward to his adult enjoyment of Sophocles as a lover looks forward to marriage or a general to victory. He has to begin by working for marks, or to escape punishment, or to please his parents, or, at best, in the hope of a future good which he cannot at present imagine or desire. His position, therefore, bears a certain resemblance to that of the mercenary; the reward he is going to get will, in actual fact, be a natural or proper reward, but he will not know that till he has got it. Of course, he gets it gradually; enjoyment creeps in upon the mere drudgery, and nobody could point to a day or an hour when the one ceased and the other began. But it is just in so far as he approaches the reward that he becomes able to desire it for its own sake; indeed, the power of so desiring it is itself a preliminary reward.

The Christian, in relation to heaven, is in much the same position as this schoolboy. Those who have attained everlasting life in the vision of God doubtless know very well that it is no mere bribe, but the very consummation of their earthly discipleship; but we who have not yet attained it cannot know this in the same way, and cannot even begin to know it at all except by continuing to obey and finding the first reward of our obedience in our increasing power to desire the ultimate reward. Just in proportion as the desire grows, our



fear lest it should be a mercenary desire will die away and finally be recognized as an absurdity. But probably this will not, for most of us, happen in a day; poetry replaces grammar, gospel replaces law, longing transforms obedience, as gradually as the tide lifts a grounded ship.

But there is one other important similarity between the schoolboy and ourselves. If he is an imaginative boy he will, quite probably, be revelling in the English poets and romancers suitable to his age some time before he begins to suspect that Greek grammar is going to lead him to more and more enjoyments of this same sort. He may even be neglecting his Greek to read Shelley and Swinburne in secret. In other words, the desire which Greek is really going to gratify already exists in him and is attached to objects which seem to him quite unconnected with Xenophon and the Greek verbs.

Now, if we are made for heaven, the desire for our proper place will be already in us, but not yet attached to the true object, and will even appear as the rival of that object. And this, I think, is just what we find.

No doubt there is one point in which my analogy of the school-boy breaks down. The English poetry which he reads when he ought to be doing Greek exercises may be just as good as the Greek poetry to which the exercises are leading him, so that in fixing on Milton instead of journeying on to Aeschylus his desire is not embracing a false object.

But our case is very different. If a transtemporal, transfinite good is our real destiny, then any other good on which our desire fixes must be in some degree fallacious, must bear at best only a symbolical relation to what will truly satisfy.

In speaking of this desire for our own far-off country, which we find in ourselves even now, I feel a certain shyness. I am almost committing an indecency. I am trying to rip open the inconsolable secret in each one of you; the secret which hurts so much that you take your revenge on it by calling it names like Nostalgia and Romanticism and Adolescence; the secret also which pierces with such sweetness that when, in very intimate conversation, the mention of it becomes imminent, we grow awkward and affect to laugh at ourselves; the secret we cannot hide and cannot tell, though we desire to do both. We cannot tell it because it is a desire for something that has never actually appeared in our experience. We cannot hide it because our experience is constantly suggesting it, and we betray ourselves like lovers at the mention of a name.

Our commonest expedient is to call it beauty and behave as if that had settled the matter. Wordsworth's expedient was to identify it with certain moments in his own past. But all this is a cheat. If Wordsworth had gone back to those moments in the past, he would not have found the thing itself, but only the reminder of it; what he remembered would turn out to be itself a remembering.

The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them; and what came through them was longing. These things—the beauty, the memory of our own past—are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshippers. For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited.

Do you think I am trying to weave a spell? Perhaps I am; but remember your fairy tales. Spells are used for breaking enchantments as well as for inducing them. And you and I have need of the strongest spell that can be found to wake us from the evil enchantment of worldliness which has been laid upon us for nearly a hundred years. Almost our whole education has been directed to silencing this shy, persistent, inner voice; almost all our modern philosophies have been devised to convince us that the good of man is to be found on this earth.

And yet it is a remarkable thing that such philosophies of Progress or Creative Evolution themselves bear reluctant witness to the truth that our real goal is elsewhere. When they want to convince you that earth is your home, notice how they set about it. They begin by trying to persuade you that earth can be made into heaven, thus giving a sop to your sense of exile in earth as it is. Next, they tell you that this fortunate event is still a good way off in the future, thus giving a sop to your knowledge that the fatherland is not here and now. Finally, lest your longing for the transtemporal should awake and spoil the whole affair, they use any rhetoric that comes to hand to keep out of your mind the recollection that even if all the happiness they promised could come to man on earth, yet still each generation would lose it by death, including the last generation of all, and the whole story would be nothing, not even a story, for ever and ever. Hence all the nonsense that Mr. Shaw puts into the final speech of Lilith, and Bergson's remark that the *elan vital* is capable of surmounting all obstacles, perhaps even death—as if we could believe that any social or biological development on this planet will delay the senility of the sun or reverse the second law of thermodynamics.

Do what they will, then, we remain conscious of a desire which no natural happiness will satisfy. But is there any reason to suppose that reality offers any satisfaction to it? "Nor does the being hungry prove that we have bread." But I think it may be urged that this misses the point. A man's physical hunger does not prove that that man will get any bread; he may die of starvation on a raft in the Atlantic. But surely a man's hunger does prove that he comes of a race which repairs its body by eating and inhabits a world where eatable substances exist. In the same way, though I do not believe (I wish I did) that my desire for Paradise proves that I shall enjoy it, I think it a pretty good indication that such a thing exists and that some men will. A man may love a woman and not win her; but it would be very odd if the phenomenon called "falling in love" occurred in a sexless world.

Here, then, is the desire, still wandering and uncertain of its object and still largely unable to see that object in the direction where it really lies. Our sacred books give us some account of the object. It is, of course, a symbolical account. Heaven is, by definition, outside our experience, but all intelligible descriptions must be of things within our experience. The scriptural picture of heaven is therefore just as symbolical as the picture which our desire, unaided, invents for itself; heaven is not really full of jewelry any more than it is really the beauty of Nature, or a fine piece of music. The difference is that the scriptural imagery has authority. It comes to us from writers who were closer to God than we, and it has stood the test of Christian experience down the centuries.

The natural appeal of this authoritative imagery is to me, at first, very small. At first sight it chills, rather than awakes, my desire. And that is just what I ought to expect. If Christianity could tell me no more of the far-off land than my own temperament led me to surmise already, then Christianity would be no higher than myself. If it has more to give me, I must expect it to be less immediately attractive than "my own stuff". Sophocles at first seems dull and cold to the boy who has only reached Shelley. If our religion is something objective, then we must never avert our eyes from those elements in it which seem puzzling or repellent; for it will be precisely the puzzling or the repellent which conceals what we do not yet know and need to know.

The promises of Scripture may very roughly be reduced to five heads. It is promised, firstly, that we shall be with Christ; secondly, that we shall be like Him; thirdly, with an enormous wealth of imagery, that we shall have "glory"; fourthly, that we shall, in some sense, be fed or feasted or entertained; and, finally, that we shall have some sort of official position in the universe ruling cities, judging angels, being pillars of God's temple. The first question I ask about these promises is: "Why any of them except the first?" Can anything be added to the conception of being with Christ? For it must be true, as an old writer says, that he who has God and everything else has no more than he who has God only. I think the answer turns again on the nature of symbols. For though it may escape our notice at first glance, yet it is true than any conception of being with Christ which most of us can now form will be not very much less symbolical than the other promises; for it will smuggle in ideas of proximity in space and loving conversation as we now understand conversation, and it will probably concentrate on the humanity of Christ to the exclusion of His deity. And, in fact, we find that those Christians who attend solely to this first promise always do fill it up with very earthly imagery indeed

in fact, with hymeneal or erotic imagery. I am not for a moment condemning such imagery. I heartily wish I could enter into it more deeply than I do, and pray that I yet shall. But my point is that this also is only a symbol, like the reality in some respects, but unlike it in others, and therefore needs correction from the different symbols in the other promises. The variation of the promises does not mean that anything other than God will be our ultimate bliss; but because God is more than a Person, and lest we should imagine the joy of His presence too exclusively in terms of our present poor experience of personal love, with all its narrowness and strain and monotony, a dozen changing images, correcting and relieving each other, are supplied,

I turn next to the idea of glory. There is no getting away from the fact that this idea is very prominent in the New Testament and in early Christian writings. Salvation is constantly associated with palms, crowns, white robes, thrones, and splendour like the sun and stars. All this makes no immediate appeal to me at all, and in that respect I fancy I am a typical modern.

Glory suggests two ideas to me, of which one seems wicked and the other ridiculous. Either glory means to me fame, or it means luminosity. As for the first, since to be famous means to be better known than other people, the desire for fame appears to me as a competitive passion and therefore of hell rather than heaven. As for the second, who wishes to become a kind of living electric light bulb?

When I began to look into this matter I was shocked to find such different Christians as Milton, Johnson and Thomas Aquinas taking heavenly glory quite frankly in the sense of fame or good report. But not fame conferred by our fellow creatures; fame with God, approval or (I might say) "appreciation" by God. And then, when I had thought it over, I saw that this view was scriptural; nothing can eliminate from the parable the divine accolade, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

With that, a good deal of what I had been thinking all my life fell down like a house of cards. I suddenly remembered that no one can enter heaven except as a child; and nothing is so obvious in a child—*not* in a conceited child, but in a good child—as its great and undisguised pleasure in being praised. Not only in a child, either, but even in a dog or a horse. Apparently what I had mistaken for humility had, all these years, prevented me from understanding what is in fact the humblest, the most childlike, the most creaturely of pleasures—*namely*, the specific pleasure of the inferior: the pleasure of a beast before men, a child before its father, a pupil before his teacher, a creature before its Creator.

I am not forgetting how horribly this most innocent desire is parodied in our human ambitions, or how very quickly, in my own experience, the lawful pleasure of praise from those whom it was my duty to please turns into the deadly poison of self-admiration. But I thought I could detect a moment a very, very short moment before this happened, during which the satisfaction of having pleased those whom I rightly loved and rightly feared was pure. And that is enough to raise our thoughts to what may happen when the redeemed soul, beyond all hope and nearly beyond belief, learns at last that she has pleased Him whom she was created to please. There will be no room for vanity then. She will be free from the miserable illusion that it is her doing. With no taint of what we should now call self-approval, she will most innocently rejoice in the thing that God has made her to be, and the moment which heals her old inferiority complex for ever will also drown her pride deeper than Prospero's book. Perfect humility dispenses with modesty. If God is satisfied with the work, the work may be satisfied with itself; "it is not for her to bandy compliments with her Sovereign".

I can imagine someone saying that he dislikes my idea of heaven as a place where we are patted on the back. But proud misunderstanding is behind that dislike. In the end, that Face which is the delight or the terror of the universe must be turned upon each of us either with one expression or with the other, either conferring glory inexpressible or inflicting shame that can never be cured or disguised.

I read in a periodical the other day that the fundamental thing is how we think of God. By God Himself, it is not! How God thinks of us is not only more important, but infinitely more important. Indeed, how we think of Him is of no importance except in so far as it is related to how He thinks of us. It is written that we shall

"stand before" Him, shall appear, shall be inspected. The promise of glory is the promise, almost incredible and only possible by the work of Christ, that some of us, that any of us who really chooses, shall actually survive that examination, shall find approval, shall please God. To please God—to be a real ingredient in the divine happiness—to be loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son—it seems impossible, a weight or burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain. But so it is.

And now notice what is happening. If I had rejected the authoritative and scriptural image of glory and stuck obstinately to the vague desire which was, at the outset, my only pointer to heaven, I could have seen no connexion at all between that desire and the Christian promise. But now, having followed up what seemed puzzling and repellent in the sacred books, I find, to my great surprise, looking back, that the connexion is perfectly clear. Glory, as Christianity teaches me to hope for it, turns out to satisfy my original desire and indeed to reveal an element in that desire which I had not noticed. By ceasing for a moment to consider my own wants I have begun to learn better what I really wanted. When I attempted, a few minutes ago, to describe our spiritual longings, I was omitting one of their most curious characteristics. We usually notice it just as the moment of vision dies away, as the music ends or as the landscape loses the celestial light. What we feel then has been well described by Keats as "the journey homeward to habitual self". You know what I mean. For a few minutes we have had the illusion of belonging to that world. Now we wake to find that it is no such thing. We have been mere spectators. Beauty has smiled, but not to welcome us; her face was turned in our direction, but not to see us. We have not been accepted, welcomed, or taken into the dance. We may go when we please, we may stay if we can: "Nobody marks us."

A scientist may reply that since most of the things we call beautiful are inanimate, it is not very surprising that they take no notice of us. That, of course, is true. It is not the physical objects that I am speaking of, but that indescribable something of which they become for a moment the messengers. And part of the bitterness which mixes with the sweetness of that message is due to the fact that it so seldom seems to be a message intended for us, but rather something we have overheard. By bitterness I mean pain, not resentment. We should hardly dare to ask that any notice be taken of ourselves. But we pine. The sense that in this universe we are treated as strangers, the longing to be acknowledged, to meet with some response, to bridge some chasm that yawns between us and reality, is part of our inconsolable secret. And surely, from this point of view, the promise of glory, in the sense described, becomes highly relevant to our deep desire. For glory meant good report with God, acceptance by God, response, acknowledgment, and welcome into the heart of things. The door on which we have been knocking all our lives will open at last.

Perhaps it seems rather crude to describe glory as the fact of being "noticed" by God. But this is almost the language of the New Testament. St. Paul promises to those who love God not, as we should expect, that they will know Him, but that they will be known by Him (i Cor. viii. 3). It is a strange promise. Does not God know all things at all times? But it is dreadfully re-echoed in another passage of the New Testament. There we are warned that it may happen to any one of us to appear at last before the face of God and hear only the appalling words: "I never knew you. Depart from Me." In some sense, as dark to the intellect as it is unendurable to the feelings, we can be both banished from the presence of Him who is present everywhere and erased from the knowledge of Him who knows all. We can be left utterly and absolutely Outside, repelled, exiled, estranged, finally and unspeakably ignored. On the other hand, we can be called in, welcomed, received, acknowledged. We walk every day on the razor edge between these two incredible possibilities. Apparently, then, our lifelong nostalgia, our longing to be reunited with something in the universe from which we now feel cut off, to be on the inside of some door which we have always seen from the outside, is no mere neurotic fancy, but the truest index of our real situation. And to be at last summoned inside would be both glory and honour beyond all our merits and also the healing of that old ache.

And this brings me to the other sense of glory—glory as brightness, splendour, luminosity. We are to shine as the sun, we are to be given the Morning Star. I think I begin to see what it means. In one way, of course, God has given us the Morning Star already: you can go and enjoy the gift on many fine mornings if you get

up early enough. What more, you may ask, do we want? Ah, but we want so much more—something the books on aesthetics take little notice of. But the poets and the mythologies know all about it. We do not want merely to see beauty, though, God knows, even that is bounty enough. We want something else which can hardly be put into words—to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it. That is why we have peopled air and earth and water with gods and goddesses and nymphs and elves that, though we cannot, yet these projections can, enjoy in themselves that beauty, grace, and power of which Nature is the image. That is why the poets tell us such lovely falsehoods. They talk as if the west wind could really sweep into a human soul; but it can't. They tell us that "beauty born of murmuring sound" will pass into a human face; but it won't. Or not yet. For if we take the imagery of Scripture seriously, if we believe that God will one day give us the Morning Star and cause us to put on the splendour of the sun, then we may surmise that both the ancient myths and the modern poetry, so false as history, may be very near the truth as prophecy.

At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door. We discern the freshness and purity of morning, but they do not make us fresh and pure. We cannot mingle with the splendours we see.

But all the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumour that it will not always be so. Some day, God willing, we shall get in. When human souls have become as perfect in voluntary obedience as the inanimate creation is in its lifeless obedience, then they will put on its glory, or rather that greater glory of which Nature is only the first sketch. For you must not think that I am putting forward any heathen fancy of being absorbed into Nature. Nature is mortal; we shall outlive her. When all the suns and nebulae have passed away, each one of you will still be alive. Nature is only the image, the symbol; but it is the symbol Scripture invites me to use. We are summoned to pass in through Nature, beyond her, into that splendour which she fitfully reflects.

And in there, in beyond Nature, we shall eat of the tree of life. At present, if we are reborn in Christ, the spirit in us lives directly on God; but the mind, and still more the body, receives life from Him at a thousand removes—through our ancestors, through our food, through the elements. The faint, far-off results of those energies which God's creative rapture implanted in matter when He made the worlds are what we now call physical pleasures; and even thus filtered, they are too much for our present management. What would it be to taste at the fountain-head that stream of which even these lower reaches prove so intoxicating? Yet that, I believe, is what lies before us. The whole man is to drink joy from the fountain of joy. As St. Augustine said, the rapture of the saved soul will "flow over" into the glorified body. In the light of our present specialized and depraved appetites we cannot imagine this *torrens voluptatis*, and I warn everyone most seriously not to try. But it must be mentioned, to drive out thoughts even more misleading thoughts that what is saved is a mere ghost, or that the risen body lives in numb insensibility. The body was made for the Lord, and these dismal fancies are wide of the mark.

Meanwhile the cross comes before the crown, and tomorrow is a Monday morning. A cleft has opened in the pitiless walls of the world, and we are invited to follow our great Captain inside. The following Him is, of course, the essential point.

That being so, it may be asked what practical use there is in the speculations which I have been indulging. I can think of at least one such use. It may be possible for each to think too much of his own potential glory hereafter; it is hardly possible for him to think too often or too deeply about that of his neighbour. The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbour's glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken. It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare.

All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilization—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendours.

This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously—no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption. And our charity must be a real and costly love, with deep feeling for the sins in spite of which we love the sinner; no mere tolerance or indulgence which parodies love as flippancy parodies merriment. Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbour is the holiest object presented to your senses. If he is your Christian neighbour he is holy in almost the same way, for in him also Christ vere latitat the glorifier and the glorified, Glory Himself, is truly hidden.

**1942**

**N. B. Lundwall (1884 – 1969), Latter-day Saint Compiler and Publisher  
The Vision Or The Degrees of Glory: Eternity Sketched in a Vision from God  
Deseret Book**

Being a compilation of rare and invaluable writings by Authorities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, as well as quotations from Eminent Historians, Philosophers, Catholic Fathers and Protestant Leaders on The Doctrine Of Salvation For The Living And The Dead.

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## 1947

**Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (1877 - 1964), Philosopher / Theologian at Vatican  
Degrees Of Pain In Hell; Our Immortal Soul Reunited Forever To That Body, Though In  
Different Degrees Of Merit & Demerit; Degree Of Our Life In Eternity Depends On Degree  
Of Merits At Moment Of Death; Many Mansions In Father's House Corresponding To Varied  
Merits**

### Life Everlasting

Fr Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (1877 - 1964), the 20<sup>th</sup> century's greatest Thomist, taught at the Angelicum in Rome from 1909 to 1960, and served for many years as a consultant to the Holy Office and other Roman Congregations.

### **Part 3: Hell**

#### **Chapter 18. Degrees Of Pain**

The pains of the damned are equal as far as duration is concerned, since they are eternal, but they differ very much in degrees of rigor. God will render to each one according to his works. [299] "It will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment than for that city" (which had refused to receive the apostles). [300] "Woe to thee, Corozain." [301] The wicked servant, who knew the will of his master and has not done it, will receive a greater number of stripes. He who did not know that will, and has done things worthy of chastisement, will receive fewer stripes. [302]

We read in the Apocalypse: "As much as she hath glorified herself and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give ye to her." [303] Already the Book of Wisdom had said: "The mighty shall be mightily tormented." [304]

Further, it is clear that punishment must be proportioned to the gravity of the fault. Faults differ in gravity and in number, hence the sufferings of hell must be unequal in their rigor. [305] The avaricious will not be punished in the same manner as the voluptuous. We may say that the most guilty are at the bottom of hell, though we can but conjecture the place of hell.

Can there be mitigation of the accidental pain due to venial sins, and of that due to the mortal sins, forgiven but not expiated? Many theologians admit this position as probable, because this accidental pain is in itself temporary. Thus St. Thomas says: "It is not improper to say that the pains of hell, so far as they are accidental, may diminish up to the day of the last judgment." [306]

We saw above that, by divine mercy, the damned suffer less than they merit. [307] Nevertheless, the pain of loss, even the smallest, surpasses immensely all the sufferings of this world. Theologians commonly admit this also for the pain of sense, since it is eternal, without consolation, and in a soul which has already the pain of loss.

A very probable position, upheld by many theologians, is that God will not let die in sin those who have committed only one mortal sin, especially if there is a question of a sin of frailty. Final impenitence would thus be restricted to inveterate sinners. As St. Peter says: "God dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that anyone should perish, but that all should return to penance." [308] God moves men to conversion. Hell is the pain of obstinacy. [309]

Here we may dwell on the great promise of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary. We quote Father T. J. Bainvel, S.J., [310] who has made a long study of this question. The promise runs thus: "On Friday, during Holy Communion, our Lord spoke these words to his unworthy slave, if she does not deceive herself; 'I promise thee, in the excessive mercy of My heart, that its omnipotent love will accord to all those who shall receive Communion on nine successive First Fridays the grace of final penance. They shall not die in disfavor with God, nor without the sacraments, since My divine heart is their assured refuge in this last moment.'" [311]

Father Bainvel adds these words: "The promise is absolute, supposing only that the Communions have been made and have been well made. The grace promised is not the grace of perseverance in good throughout life, nor the reception of the last sacraments under every hypothesis, but that perseverance which brings with it penance, and the last sacraments so far as they are necessary." This promise is addressed to sinners more directly than to pious souls. The promise supposes that the grace of making good Communions on nine successive First Fridays is a gift reserved to the elect. If they are in sin, they will repent before they die.

## **Part 5: Heaven**

### **Chapter 28. The Nature Of Eternal Beatitude**

We must consider the beatifying object and the beatified subject. [548]

#### **The Beatifying Object**

St. Thomas defines the object of beatitude as follows: "It is that perfect good which completely satiates the desire of the rational being." [549] He continues thus: "Only the uncreated and infinite good can satisfy fully the desire of a creature which conceives universal good." Whereas truth is formally in the mind, which judges in conformity with external objects, the good which is the object of the will is in the things themselves which are good. The natural or connatural desire of the will reaches forward, then, not to the abstract idea of



good, but to a real and objective good. Hence it cannot find beatitude in any finite and limited good, but only in the sovereign and universal good. [550]

It is impossible for man to find that true happiness, which he desires naturally, in any limited good: pleasures, riches, honor, glory, power, knowledge. Our mind, noticing at once the limits of these goods, conceives a higher good and carries us on to desire that higher good. We must repeat: Our will, illumined by our intelligence, has a depth without measure, a depth which only God can fill.

This truth it is which made St. Augustine say: "Unhappy he who knows all things without knowing Thee, my God: blessed he who knows Thee, even though he be ignorant of all else. If he knows Thee and knows also other things, he is happy, not by knowing them, but by knowing Thee, provided that, knowing Thee, he also glorifies Thee by thanking Thee for Thy gifts." [551]

We must distinguish natural beatitude from supernatural beatitude. Natural beatitude consists in that knowledge and love of God which we can attain by our natural faculties. If man had been created in a state purely natural, by his fidelity to duty he would have merited this beatitude, namely, first, a natural knowledge of God's perfections reflected in His creatures, a knowledge without any mixture of error; secondly, a rational love of God, the Creator, love composed of reverent submission, fidelity, recognition, the love, not indeed of a son, but of a good servant in relation to the best of masters.

But supernatural beatitude, which we are now speaking of, surpasses immeasurably the natural exigencies of every created nature, even the highest angelic natures. This supernatural beatitude consists in sharing the very beatitude of God, that beatitude whereby He rejoices in knowing Himself and loving Himself for all eternity. Notice the expression in the parable of the talents: "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." [552] This means: Take part in My own beatitude. We are called to see God as He sees Himself, to love Him as He loves Himself. Truly, the depth of our will is such that only God, seen face to face, can fill that depth and draw the soul irresistibly. The depth which the soul has by its very nature is augmented by infused hope and charity, which widen, as it were, our heart, increase its capacity to love, and arouse in us aspirations higher than all natural aspirations, even the most intimate and elevated. St. Augustine speaks thus: "God is the goal of our desires, He is the one whom we shall see without end, whom we shall love without weariness, whom we shall glorify forever without fatigue." [553]

### **Subjective Beatitude**

If such is the object of eternal beatitude, what subjective element is it that formally constitutes beatitude? All theologians admit that subjective beatitude consists in a vital union with God through the higher faculties, intelligence and will, that is, in the beatific vision and love which follows it.

St. Thomas [554] asks a question: Does beatitude consist formally in the vision of God or in the love of God? According to him and his disciples, essential beatitude consists formally in the possession of God. Now it is by the beatific vision that the saints in heaven possess God, whereas the beatific love follows this possession, since it presupposes the vision of God, seen face to face. Love, in fact, carries us on to an end that is still absent, in which state we call it desire, or toward an object which we already desire, in which state we call it joy and repose. This joy, therefore, presupposes the possession of God, and this possession is had by the vision without medium. Hence love either precedes this possession or follows it. [555] On the contrary, the intelligence receives the object into itself, becomes the object known, whereas the will remains, we may say, outside the object, which is received into the intelligence. To illustrate, to enjoy a scene we must first contemplate it, to enjoy a symphony of Beethoven we must first hear it. Knowledge takes possession of beauty, and joy follows knowledge.

Essential beatitude, therefore, consists in the immediate vision of God, and is consummated in the love which follows the vision. Love, a characteristic of vision, follows that vision as liberty, morality, sociability follow man's rational nature.

This doctrine is in conformity with many texts of Holy Scripture. "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God." [556] "This is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." [557] "We shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is." [558] "We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face." [559]

The teaching of St. Thomas [560] is in harmony with the relations he establishes between the intelligence and the will. Intelligence is higher than the will, because intelligence has an object that is more absolute and universal, namely, being as truth, whereas the object of the will is the good, which presupposes reality and truth, without which the will would not pursue a real good, but an apparent and illusory good. [561]

Scotus and his followers, on the contrary, since they hold that the will is superior to the intelligence, maintain that essential beatitude consists formally in love, to which vision is subordinated.

To this position, Thomists reply: Scotus is considering beatitude as a concrete whole, without noticing that it has several elements. It is true that beatitude is consummated in love; but we must still ask: What is the nature of this beatitude, what is it formally, what is the principle whence its characteristics derive? Thomists maintain, with right, that the mind is higher than the will, since it directs the will. Formal beatitude, then, is the act of the mind, is the immediate vision of God, as we have seen in the texts of Scripture just cited. Thomists add: Here below indeed it is more perfect to love God than to know Him, because our knowledge is measured by our limited ideas, whereas our love, free and meritorious, goes out toward Him. But in heaven our knowledge will no longer be imperfect: it will be purely intuitive, higher than any created idea. Beatific love will flow necessarily from the vision. This beatific love is not free. It is something higher than liberty. [562]

Suarez, having examined the position of St. Thomas and of Scotus, says that essential beatitude consists formally both in vision and in love.

Thomists reply: If it were thus, the intellect and will would not be related by subordination of one to the other, but would be coordinated, equal each to the other, just as would be two individuals of one and the same species who resemble each other very strikingly. But the truth is not thus. Intelligence and will are two faculties, specifically distinct, and therefore unequal. The will is subordinated to the intelligence which directs it. The will is carried on to a true real good, but only on condition that it follows the right judgment of the intellect, a judgment conformable to reality. We desire only what we know, and we do not rejoice except in a good which we possess. Joy does not constitute the possession, but presupposes the possession. Hence intelligence and will are not equal in the possession of God. They arise in order, one after the other. By vision the soul possesses God. By love it enjoys Him, rests in Him, prefers Him to itself.

St. Augustine speaks as follows, repeating his conversation with his mother at Ostia: "All within us cries out: 'We made not ourselves, but the Eternal One made us.' If, after this word, all things were silent, and He Himself alone would speak to us, no longer through them, but by Himself: if then our soul, lifting itself on the wings of thought up to eternal wisdom, could retain unbroken this sublime contemplation: if all other thoughts of the spirit had ceased and this alone had absorbed the soul, and filled it with joy, the most intimate and the most divine: if eternal life resembled this ravishment in God which we experience for a moment: would this not be the consummation of that word: 'Enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord?'" [563]

In truth, celestial beatitude is the consummation of that transforming union, spoken of by St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross, the consummation of that vision wherein the just soul is deified in its very depths. In heaven this fusion will take place by immediate vision and consequent love. The soul, it is true, remains inferior to God, because only God is existent reality, He who is. Compared with Him, we are always as nothing. God preserves eternally in just souls all that they have by nature and by grace. He is eternally in them, or, to speak still more truly, they are eternally in Him.

## **Chapter 29. THE SUBLIMITY OF THE BEATIFIC VISION**

To have a just idea of this vision, we must see its immediacy, its source, and its object, primary and secondary. [564]

### **This Vision Is Intuitive and Immediate**

According to the definition of Benedict XII, [565] this act of the blessed intellect is a vision, clear, intuitive, immediate, of the divine essence. Without being comprehensive, it still enables us to know God as He is.

By its clarity this vision is distinguished from the obscure knowledge which we have of God, either by reason or by faith. By its intuitive and immediate character it is immeasurably superior to all knowledge that is discursive and analogical, which does not reach God except by using His effects as principle. This intuitive vision is higher than all abstraction, all reasoning, and all analogy. It is immediate intuition of the supreme reality of the living God. Hence it surpasses by far all vision, even the intellectual visions which the great mystics receive here on earth, because these visions remain within the order of faith and do not give intrinsic evidence of the Trinity. The beatific vision, on the contrary, does give this evidence, showing that God, if He were not triune, would not be God.

Hence we are called to see God, not only in the mirror of creatures, however perfect, not only by His highest radiations in the world of angels. We are called to see Him without the medium of any creature, to see Him better than we see those to whom we speak on earth, because God, being spiritual, will be most intimately present in our intelligence, which He fortifies with power to see Him.

Between God and ourselves there will be not even an intermediary idea, [566] because all created ideas, even infused ideas, however elevated, can be only limited participations in the truth, and cannot therefore represent God as He is in Himself: supreme Being, infinite Truth, Wisdom without measure, infinite and luminous source of all knowledge. No created idea could ever represent as He is in Himself Him who is thought itself. Thus the child's cup cannot contain the ocean. [567]

Further, we cannot express our contemplation in one word, even in an interior word, in a mental word, because this word, being created and finite, cannot express the Infinite as He is in Himself. This contemplation without medium absorbs us in some sense in God, leaving us without a word to express it, because only one word can express perfectly the divine essence, namely, the Word begotten from all eternity from the Father. The divine essence itself, sovereignly intelligible, more intimate to us than we ourselves are, will take the place of all created ideas, impressed and expressed. [568] In the order of knowledge we cannot conceive one more intimate than this, even though it be distinguished by different degrees.

Here on earth, when at some sublime spectacle, we cannot find words to describe it, we say that it is ineffable. With far higher reason is this true when we see God face to face.

This vision, though it is intuitive and without medium, is still not comprehensive. God alone can know Himself to the full extent of His knowableness. This limitation involves no contradiction. Here on earth many persons may see the same scene in different degrees, according as their vision is more or less good. Many intellects see one and the same truth more or less profoundly. Each grasps the proposition, subject, verb, and attribute, but more or less perfectly. Thus in heaven all the blessed see God without medium, but with a penetration that varies in proportion to their merits, but none as profoundly as God knows Himself, all that He is, all that He can do, all that He will do. [569]

### **The Light of Glory**

This vision, intuitive and immediate, reaches the object of that uncreated vision whereby God knows Himself. It reaches Him less perfectly than He does Himself, but it reaches Him.

How is this possible? It would be absolutely impossible for any created or creatable intelligence left to its own natural forces, because these forces are proportioned to their own natural object, which is infinitely inferior to the object proper to the divine intellect. Any created intelligence therefore needs a supernatural light to elevate it, to fortify it, that it may be able to see God as He is in Himself. Otherwise it would be before Him as the owl before the sun; it would not see Him. [570]

This light, received in a permanent fashion in the intellects of the blessed, is called the light of glory. The Council of Vienne [571] condemns those who "maintain that the human soul does not have to be elevated by the light of glory in order to see God and to have holy joy in Him."

Thus the beatific vision arises from the intellectual faculty as its radical principle, and secondly from the light of glory as its proximate principle. This light supernaturalizes the vitality of our intelligence, as the infused virtue of charity supernaturalizes the vitality of our will.

The light of glory and infused charity, thus received into our two higher faculties, themselves arise from the consummation of sanctifying grace, which is received, like a divine graft, into the essence of the soul. How well sanctifying grace merits the appellation, participation in the divine nature! Grace is a nature, a radical principle of operations, a principle which, fully developed, makes us able to see God as He sees Himself. In God the divine nature is the principle of operations strictly divine, the principle of His own uncreated vision of Himself. In the just soul in heaven, sanctifying grace is the radical principle of the intuitive vision of the divine essence, a vision which has the same object as the uncreated vision.

### **The Object of the Beatific Vision**

The first and essential object is God Himself. The secondary object is creatures known in God.

The blessed see clearly and intuitively God Himself as He is in Himself, that is, they see His essence, His attributes, and the three divine persons. The Council of Florence says: "They see clearly God Himself, one and three, as He is." [572] Hence the beatific vision surpasses immeasurably, not only the most sublime human philosophy, but even the natural knowledge of the most elevated angels, even of any creatable angel. The blessed see the divine perfections, concentrated and harmonized in their common source, in the divine essence which contains them all, eminently and formally, in a far higher way than white light contains the colors of the rainbow. Thus the blessed see how mercy the most tender, and justice the most inflexible, proceed from one and the same love, infinitely generous and infinitely holy. They see how this same love identifies in itself attributes apparently the most opposed. They see how mercy and justice are united in each and every work of God. They see how uncreated love, even in decisions the most free, is identified with wisdom. They see how this love is identified with sovereign good, loved from all eternity. They see how wisdom is identified with the first truth, always known. They see how all these perfections are one in the essence of Him who is. They contemplate this pre-eminent simplicity, this purity and absolute sanctity, this quintessence of all perfection.

In this intellectual vision, never interrupted, they see also how the infinite fecundity of the divine nature blossoms into three persons. They see the eternal generation of the Word, who is the splendor of the Father, figure of His substance. They see the ineffable spiration of the Holy Spirit, who is the terminus of the mutual love of the Father and the Son, who unites the Father and Son in the most intimate and mutual self-communication. Such is the primary object of the beatific vision.

Here below we can but enumerate the divine perfections, one after the other. We do not see in what intimate manner they are in harmony. We do not see how infinite goodness harmonizes with the permission of evil, even of unspeakable malice. We know indeed that God does not permit evil except for a greater good, but we do not clearly see this greater good. But in heaven everything becomes clear, particularly the value of the trials we ourselves have suffered. We shall see how divine goodness, essentially self-diffusive, becomes the principle of mercy. On the other hand, we shall see how this same infinite goodness, having the right to be

loved above all things, becomes the principle of justice. Here on earth we are like a man who has seen each color of the rainbow, but who has not yet seen white light. In heaven, seeing the uncreated Light, we shall see how the divine perfections, even the most widely different, are harmonized in Him and become one.

The blessed see in God, in the Word, also the holy humanity which the Son assumed for our salvation. They contemplate the hypostatic union, the plenitude of grace, of glory, and of charity in the holy soul of Jesus. They see the infinite value of His theandric acts, of the mystery of the Redemption. They see the radiations of that Redemption: the infinite value of each Mass, the supernatural vitality of the mystical body, of the Church, triumphant, suffering, and militant. They see with admiration what belongs to Christ, as priest for all eternity, as judge of the living and the dead, as universal king of all creatures, as father of the poor.

In this same vision, the saints contemplate the eminent dignity of the Mother of God, her plenitude of grace, her virtues, her gifts, her universal mediation as co-redemptrix.

Further, since beatitude is a perfect state which satisfies all legitimate desires, each saint knows all others who are blessed, particularly those whom he has known and loved on earth. He knows their state, be they on earth or in purgatory. [573] Thus the founder of an order knows all that concerns his religious family, knows the prayers which his sons address to him. Parents know the spiritual needs of their children who are still in this world. A friend, reaching the end of his course, knows how to facilitate the voyage of friends who address themselves to him. St. Cyprian speaks thus: "All our friends who have arrived wait for us. They desire vividly that we participate in their own beatitude, and are full of solicitude in our regard." [574]

The beatific vision is one unique, unbroken act, measured by the one unique instant of an unchangeable eternity. It is an act that cannot be lost. It is the source of the happiness of the elect and, as we shall see later, of their absolute impeccability.

In this supernatural knowledge everything is harmonized. There is no longer danger of being too intent on secondary goods or of losing the chief good. The soul in heaven sees the corporeal world from on high, in perfect subordination to the spiritual world. The events of time are seen in their relation to the plenitude of eternity. God's deeds, natural or supernatural, are seen as radiations of God's action. The line of view is no longer horizontal, stretched out between past and future. It is the vertical view, which judges of everything from on high, in the light of supreme Truth.

This entire beatific world of knowledge leads the blessed soul to love God above all things, immovably, and to love creatures in Him only as manifestations of His infinite goodness.

### **Chapter 30. BEATIFIC JOY**

The saints in heaven, seeing God face to face, love Him above all things, because they see with the most perfect evidence that God is better than all creatures combined. This love will never pass away. Faith will give place to vision; hope will be replaced by possession: but "charity never falleth away. [575]

By charity, already on earth we love God, not only as a good supremely desirable, the object of hope, but because of His infinite goodness in itself, a goodness far higher than any of His gifts. Charity wills He should be known, loved, and glorified; that His imprescriptible rights be recognized, His name be sanctified, His will be done. This is the love of friendship, whereby we will unto God all that belongs to Him, wishing His happiness as He wills our happiness. Thus, even here on earth, we share in God's intimate life, have our life in common with Him, have spiritual communion between Him and ourselves. [576]

This charity will last forever. It would be an error, even a heresy, to think that our love of God in heaven is merely the consummation of our hope, which makes us desire God as our supreme Good. Even here on earth, the act of hope, which can exist in a soul in the state of mortal sin, is notably inferior to the act of charity, and love of God in heaven is nothing but the perfect act of charity, whereby the soul transcends itself, whereby

without cessation it loves God more than itself, whereby it passes out beyond itself, and enters into a state of uninterrupted ecstasy. [577]

This love implies admiration, reverence, recognition. It implies, above all, friendship, with all its simplicity and intimacy. It is love with all its tenderness and all its power, the love of a child that throws itself into the tenderness of its Father, and wills unto that Father all that belongs to Him, just as the Father takes the soul into His own beatitude. God says to us: "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." [578] Christ says: "Come, ye blessed of My Father." [579] We shall not indeed love God as He loves us, but the Holy Spirit will inspire a love worthy of Him.

This transforming union, now in a state of consummation, fuses our life with the intimate life of the Most High. We rejoice that God is God, infinitely holy, just, and merciful. We adore all the decrees of His providence, all manifestations of His glorious goodness. We subordinate ourselves completely to Him, saying to Him: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory." [580] This supreme act of the highest of the theological virtues is the only one that is meant to last eternally. God alone, it is true, can love Himself infinitely, love Himself as far as He is lovable, but each blessed soul will love Him with all its power, with a love that no longer knows obstacles. [581]

### **The Satiety of the Blessed**

This state of satiety is always new and never passes away. St. Augustine writes: "All our life will be one Amen, one Alleluia. Sadden not yourselves by considering this truth in a carnal manner, as if in heaven, just as on earth, we could become weary by repeating the words: Amen, Alleluia. This heavenly Amen, this Alleluia, will not be expressed by sound which passes away, but by the emotions of love, the emotions of the soul embraced by love. "Amen" means "It is true." "Alleluia" means "praise God." God is the immovable truth, who knows neither defect nor progress, neither decline nor growth. He is truth, eternal and stable: truth forever incorruptible.

"We shall sing our Amen forever but with a satiety that is insatiable. With satiety, because we live in perfect abundance, but with an insatiable satiety, because this good, while it satisfies completely, produces also a pleasure ever new. Insatiably satiated by this truth, we shall repeat forever: Amen. Rest and gaze: that is our eternal Sabbath." [582]

Greek philosophers discussed the question whether pleasure in movement is superior to pleasure in repose. Aristotle [583] shows clearly that the highest joy is that which completes achievement, is the terminus of perfect, normal activity, which is no longer in motion toward the end, but possesses the end and rests therein. This truth is realized in the highest way in celestial beatitude.

Heavenly joy has a newness which cannot pass away. The first instant of the beatific vision lasts forever, like eternal morning, eternal spring, eternal youth. It resembles the eternal beatitude of God. God's life is one unique instant of immutable eternity. He cannot grow old. He is not past or future, but eternally present. He contains eminently all successive events, as the summit of a pyramid contains all points at its base, as the view of a man placed on a mountain embraces the entire valley. Simultaneous totality: that is the definition of eternity.

As illustration, we may point to Mozart, who heard instantaneously and completely the melody he set out to compose. Similarly, great minds embrace their entire science with one sole glance.

The beatific vision of the saints is measured by the unique instant of immovable eternity. The joy of that instant will never pass away. Its newness, its freshness, will be eternally present. As the vision will be always new, so likewise the joy which flows from the vision.

We can get some ideas of this truth by the joy we experience when we begin to relish the word of God. This joy, far from passing away, grows ceaselessly. The contrary is seen in sense goods. Avidly desired at first, they give us an ever decreasing joy.

Continuance of friendship, ten years, twenty years, and more, is a sign that this friendship has a divine origin. Divine friendship, relish for God's word, is a lasting joy, which lifts us above embarrassed affairs, domestic needs, and useless pastimes. That which nourishes the soul is divine truth and the supreme goodness revealed therein. Bossuet says: "If this divine truth pleases us when it is expressed by sounds that pass away, how will it ravish us when it speaks in its own proper voice which never passes away! God does not use many words: He speaks one eternal word, His Word, His Verbum, and thereby says everything. In this Word we, too, see everything."

"Taste and see that the Lord is sweet." This sweetness is the prelude of heaven's joy: repose in an action which never ceases, in an unmediated vision which floods the soul with a joy forever new.

St. Thomas, [584] following St. Augustine, speaks thus: "We grow weary of sense goods when we possess them. Not so of spiritual goods. They do not diminish, they cannot be harmed, they give us a joy that is ever new." This joy we sometimes have in prayer. "My Lord and my God, take from me all that impedes me on the road to Thee, give to me all that leads to Thee. Take me from myself and give me to Thee, that I may belong entirely to Thee." God penetrates the depths of our will. God seizes and wounds the soul, that it may possess Him fully.

This doctrine finds admirable expression in *The Imitation of Christ*: "Repose in God, O my soul. He is the eternal repose of the saints. Beloved Jesus, let me find repose in Thee, not in creatures: not in health, in beauty, in honors, in glory. Not in power and dignity. Not in riches, honors, and knowledge. Not in merit and aspiration. Not even in Thy own gifts and rewards. Not even in the transports of spiritual gladness; not in the angels and archangels and the whole host of heaven: not in anything visible or invisible, not in anything which is not Thyself, O my God. All Thou canst give me outside of Thyself, all that Thou dost discover of Thyself to me, is too little. It does not suffice me if I do not see Thee, if I do not possess Thee fully, if I do not rest in Thee alone." Such is the joy of heaven, always new. We speak of heaven as the future life. A better term is "everlasting." [585]

### **Love beyond Liberty**

In heaven charity takes on new modalities. It becomes a love higher than liberty itself, a love we can never lose.

Here on earth our love of God is free because we do not see God face to face. God is seen by us as good under one aspect and severe under another aspect. His commandments can displease that which is still to be found in us of egoism and pride. Hence our love for Him remains free and therefore meritorious.

In the fatherland, on the contrary, we shall see infinite Goodness as He is in Himself. We cannot find in Him the least aspect which can displease, nothing to drive us away, not the least pretext for preferring to Him anything whatsoever. Our eternal act of love will never suffer the least shadow of weariness. Infinite Goodness, seen without medium, fills so perfectly our capacity of love that it attracts us irresistibly more than any ecstasy that can be had on earth, where love is still free and meritorious. In heaven there will be a happy necessity of love. [586]

Here especially we see the measureless depth of the soul, in particular of our will, of our capacity for spiritual love, which God alone, seen face to face, can satisfy. [587]

But this love, though it is not free, is still not forced and compelled. Nor is this something lower than liberty and merit, as are the involuntary acts of our sense nature here below. Rather, it is something higher than

liberty and merit, like that spontaneous love which God has for Himself, that love which is common to all three divine persons. As God necessarily loves His own infinite goodness, so our love, arising from the beatific vision, can never be interrupted or lose aught of its fervor.

In a manuscript written by one who lacked human culture but who was far advanced in the ways of prayer, I recently read these words: "In heaven the soul receives God into itself. Received thus by Him and in Him, it loses in Him its liberty. Entirely drawn to God, it surrenders to joy in God. It possesses God, and is possessed by Him. It knows and feels that this joy is its eternal state." Heaven's joy is an everlasting morning.

### **Impeccability**

The blessed in heaven cannot sin. Their state is a state of sinlessness, not only because God preserves them from sin, as here below He preserves from sin saints who are confirmed in grace, but because one who has the beatific vision cannot turn away from it by sin, cannot feel the least pretext to love Him less for a single moment. [588]

Here on earth no one ceases to will happiness, although he may often search for happiness there where it is not, even perhaps in suicide. The saints in heaven, too, cannot cease to love God, seen face to face, but they cannot be tempted to turn elsewhere. They are indeed free to love this or that finite good, this or that soul, to prefer one soul to another, to pray for it, to follow the commands of God to assist us. But this liberty never deviates toward evil. It resembles the liberty of God Himself, which is at the same time free and impeccable. Again it resembles the human liberty of Christ, who enjoyed the beatific vision from the first instant of His conception. But in Jesus these free acts were still meritorious, because He was still a viator, a traveler, whereas the free acts of the blessed are no longer meritorious, because they have arrived at the terminus of their meritorious voyage. The soul confirmed in grace has no longer need to merit.

### **Beatitude That Cannot Be Lost**

It follows from all we have been saying that the saints in heaven cannot lose their beatitude. Scripture calls this beatitude "eternal life." As the wicked go into eternal punishment, so the just go into eternal life. [589] St. Peter speaks of "a never-fading crown of glory." [590] St. Paul says that this crown is incorruptible. [591] He goes on to say that our afflictions, light and momentary, gain for us an eternal weight of glory. [592] The Creed ends with these words: "I believe in life everlasting"[593]

The expression "eternal life," everlasting life, means much more than future life. Future is only a part of time, which passes, which bears within itself a succession of moments. But eternal life is not measured by time, neither by solar time nor by spiritual time. Eternal life is measured by the unique instant of immovable eternity, an instant which cannot pass, which is like an eternal sunrise.

Theologians say that the eternal life of the blessed is measured by participated eternity. This participated eternity differs, without doubt, from that essential eternity which is proper to God. It differs, because it had a commencement at the moment of entry into heaven. But it will not end, and has not within itself any succession. It is truly the unique instant of immovable eternity. This instant is not dead, but sovereignly alive, because it fuses perfect intelligence and perfect love.

This vision and this love exist at the topmost point of the beatified soul. But, beneath this topmost point, there will be a region less high of intelligence and will, a succession of thoughts, of emotions, of desires, in the form of prayers addressed to God in regard to this or that soul still on earth.

The inamissibility of beatitude follows from the essence of that beatitude. Heavenly bliss, by its very nature, satisfies all aspirations of the just soul. But this satisfaction could not exist if the blessed could say to themselves: "Possibly a time will come when I shall cease to see God." Such cessation of beatitude, after it has been possessed, would be the greatest suffering, and a suffering inflicted without guilt. If we cling so closely to the present life, in spite of all its sadness, how much more will we cling to the life of heaven?



Hence nothing can bring the beatific vision to an end, neither God who has promised it as recompense, nor the soul which has reached it. [594]

The Catechism of the Council of Trent says: "He who is happy, must he not desire ardently to enjoy without end that which makes him happy? And without the assurance of a stable and certain felicity, would he not be the prey of fear?" [595]

The blessed souls live above the reach of our hours and days and years. They live in one unique instant which does not pass. This instant, when we enter heaven, when we receive the light of glory and begin to see God forever, must be prepared for. In this preparation three other instants of life have pre-eminent importance: that of receiving justification by baptism, that of reconciliation with God if we have offended Him gravely, that of a happy death, that is, final perseverance. Beatific love, we know, corresponds to the intensity of our merits. Not in heaven do we learn to love God, but here on earth. The degree of our life in eternity depends on the degree of our merits at the moment of death. There are many mansions in the Father's house, corresponding to varied merits. [596] "He who soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who soweth in blessings shall also reap blessings." [597]

Christian life on earth is eternal life already begun. Sanctifying grace and charity endure eternally. St. John of the Cross speaks thus: "In the evening of our life we shall be judged by our love for God and neighbor."

Eternal joy, beatific love, is ineffable. If here on earth we are enchanted by the reflection of divine perfection in creatures, by the enchantments of the visible world, by the harmony of colors and sounds, by the immensity of the ocean, by the splendor of the starry heavens, and still more by the spiritual splendors revealed in the lives of the saints, what joy shall we feel when we see God, this creative center of life and of love, this infinite plenitude, eternally self-existent, from whom proceeds the life of creation!

Each soul will rejoice, not only in the reward it has received, but also in the reward given to other elect souls, and still more in the glory of God, in the manifestation of His infinite goodness. This joy will be an act of the virtue of charity, the normal consequence of love of God and of creatures for the sake of God.

Such is the essential glory which God has reserved for those who love Him. "The eye hath not seen," says St. Paul, "nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." [598]

Then, too, we shall see the immense distance between goods that are spiritual and goods that are material. The same material good, the same house, the same field, the same territory, cannot belong simultaneously to many persons. Possession by one hinders possession by another. On the contrary, spiritual goods, the same truth, the same virtue, the same God seen face to face, can belong simultaneously to all. Nay, we possess these spiritual goods the more, the more others possess them. Their joy multiplies our joy.

Similarly we shall see clearly that goodness is essentially self-communicative. God the Father communicates His entire nature to His Son and through His Son to the Holy Spirit. The person of the Word communicates itself to the humanity of Jesus, and through this humanity He communicates to us a participation in divine life.

The elect in heaven belong to the family of God. The Blessed Trinity, seen clearly and loved sovereignly, dwells in them as in a living tabernacle, as in a temple of glory, endowed with knowledge and love. The Father engenders in them the Word. The Father and the Son breathe forth the personal love of the Holy Spirit. Charity renders them in a measure similar to the Holy Spirit; vision assimilates them to the Word, who Himself assimilates them to the Father of whom He is the image. They enter therefore in a sense into the cycle of the Blessed Trinity. The Trinity is in them, rather, they are in the Trinity, as the summit of reality, thought, and love. [599]

### **Love of the Saints for Our Lord and His Holy Mother**

Beholding the three divine persons, the saints understand likewise the personal union of the Word with the humanity of Jesus, His plenitude of grace and glory, His charity, the treasures of His heart, the infinite value of His theandric acts, of His merits, the value of His passion, of His least drop of blood, the unmeasured value of each Mass, the fruit of absolution. They also see the glory which overflows from the soul of our Savior upon His body, and they see how He is at the summit of all creation, material and spiritual. In Him they see also Mary co-redemptrix, the infinite dignity of her divine maternity, her position in the hypostatic order, superior to the orders of nature and of grace. They see the greatness of her love at the foot of the cross, her elevation above the angelic hierarchies, the radiation of her universal mediation. This vision of Jesus and Mary belongs to essential beatitude as its most elevated secondary object. [600]

Hence the saints love our Lord as the Savior to whom they owe everything. They see that without Him they could have done nothing in the order of salvation. They see, down to the least detail, all the graces they received from Him: all the effects of their predestination, namely, their vocation, justification, glorification. They live by Him. Each sees in Him the Bridegroom, the Bridegroom of the Church militant, suffering, and triumphant. What love they must have for the mystical body, of which Jesus is the head! What bliss in being loved by God in Jesus Christ, whose members they are!

Such is the vision described in the Apocalypse: "I heard the voice of many angels saying with a loud voice: The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and benediction. The Lamb was slain and has redeemed us . . . in His own blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation." [601] "The heavenly Jerusalem hath no need of sun, nor the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God hath enlightened it and the Lamb is the lamp thereof." "There shall not enter into it anything defiled, . . . but they that are written in the book of life of the Lamb." [602]

Bossuet writes as follows: "Let us here below begin to contemplate the glory of Jesus Christ, to become like unto Him by imitating Him. The day will come when we shall be like unto Him in glory, when we shall be inebriated with His love. Thus will be consummated the work for which Jesus Christ came on earth." [603]

Again [604] he writes: "Jesus says of the elect, 'I am in them.' [605] They are My living members, they are Myself. The eternal Father sees in them nothing but Jesus Christ, loves them by pouring forth on them the love He has for His Son. Let us, then, remain in silence with our Savior. In wonder at the grandeurs given us in Him, can we have any other desire than to render ourselves worthy of His grace?"

Here we find the true meaning of the term, "spiritual gospel." This is written by the Spirit, not with ink on parchment but with grace on our minds and wills. This spiritual gospel is the complement of the one we read in daily Mass. It is being printed day by day, century by century, and will be finished on the last day. It is the spiritual history of the mystical body. God knows it from all eternity. The blessed read it in God. [606]

Mary is loved by all as the worthy Mother of God, mother of divine grace, the powerful virgin, mother of mercy, refuge of sinners, consoler of the afflicted, help of Christians, queen of patriarchs, of prophets, of apostles, of martyrs, of confessors, of virgins, of all the saints. The love of the saints for Jesus and Mary belongs to essential beatitude. It is the highest among the secondary objects of the beatific vision.

### **Love of the Saints for One Another**

Seeing one another in God, the saints love one another. The degree of this love is measured by nearness to God. Each rejoices at the degree of beatitude which others have received. Yet each loves with special affection those to whom he has been united on earth. [607]

What an immense throng! Here we find, not only patriarchs, prophets, the precursor, St. Joseph, [608] the apostles, but the souls of children who died after their baptism. And in this immense assembly we find

harmonized the greatest variety with intimate unity, the highest intensity with the deepest repose. The saints whom we call dead, because they have left the earth, are in reality overflowing with life.

Each of the saints has his personal distinction. Each is himself, with all his natural gifts and supernatural privileges, all of them perfectly developed. St. Paul differs from St. John, St. Augustine from St. Francis of Assisi, St. Theresa from St. Catherine of Siena. Yet they resemble one another since each contemplates one and the same divine truth, each is on fire with one and the same love of God. Hence the masters of the spiritual life tell us: Be supernaturally yourself. That means, eliminate your faults, that the image of the Father and the Son may be formed in you. Let each reproduce that image in his own fashion. Unity in diversity is the definition of beauty. And spiritual beauty is deathless beauty.

Lastly, the blessed love us. They pray, in particular and without ceasing, for those whom they have known here below. So near the source of all good, they heap benefits upon us. They draw from God's treasury the gifts which His goodness wishes to bestow. Further, all the saints in heaven love us, even those whose very existence we know not, because we with them are members of that mystical body of which Jesus is the head.

Hence we, too, must love the saints. This love is a sure and abundant source of spiritual progress. Who can tell the fruits of that intimacy of grace which exists between us and this or that saint in heaven whom we are moved to imitate? In each of them we find our Lord, the supreme model. [609]

This love of the saints for one another belongs to essential beatitude, because they see and love one another in the Word. What joy flows from the contemplation of uncreated good in all its radiation!

We read in *The Imitation*: [610] "Think, My son, on the fruits of your labors, of the end which will come soon, of the recompense and repose there in great joy. They cannot turn their heart to any other object because, filled with eternal truth, they burn with charity which cannot be extinguished. They do not glory in their merits, because they do not attribute to themselves the good they have. They attribute it all to Me, who have given them everything in infinite charity. [611] The more they are elevated in glory, the more they are humble in themselves, and their humility renders them more dear and unites them ever more closely to Me. [612] It is written: 'They fell down before the Lamb .... and adored Him that liveth forever and ever.' [613] O ye humble souls, rejoice! Ye poor, leap with gladness! The kingdom of God belongs to you if you walk in the truth."

### **Chapter 31. ACCIDENTAL BEATITUDE**

We have spoken of essential beatitude, which consists in the immediate vision of God and in the love which flows from this vision. But the Lord, so rich in mercy for His elect, adds to essential beatitude a joy in created good, a joy which corresponds to their aspirations. This is what we call accidental beatitude.

This accidental beatitude is found in the society of friends: in general joy at the good deeds done on earth: in the special recompense given to certain classes, the halo of virgins, for example, of doctors, and of martyrs: in the resurrection and in the qualities of the glorious body.

#### **Accidental Beatitude in the Soul**

In regard to those whom they have known and loved on earth, the saints receive, besides the beatific vision in Verbo, also new knowledge extra Verbum. It is an accidental joy to learn, for example, of the spiritual progress, of their friends on earth, to see them entering heaven. This knowledge extra Verbum, is inferior to the beatific vision. Hence some call it the evening vision, contrasted with the morning vision which sees created things in God. [614]

Further, each soul is happy to be honored by God, by the friends of God, especially by those who shine by wisdom. [615] Each has a special joy in seeing his own good recognized and appreciated, good which he accomplished on earth in the midst of great difficulties.

Special recompense will be given for victories gained against the flesh, the world, and the devil: the halo of virgins, for victory against the concupiscence of the flesh: the halo of the martyrs for victory over persecutors: the halo of doctors for victory over ignorance, errors, infidelity, heresy, over the spirit of division and negation. This halo belongs, not only to those who have publicly taught sacred science, by word or by pen, but also to those who have taught in private fashion when occasion presented itself. [616] "They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity." [617] This halo belongs, first to the spirit, then, after the resurrection, to the body, just as the essential glory of the soul is reflected in the body raised from the dead.

### **Resurrection of the Flesh**

To accidental beatitude belongs also the resurrection of the body and the characteristics of the glorified body. [618] The resurrection is a dogma of faith. It was denied by the Sadducees, the Manicheans, the Albigensians, the Socinians, and is denied today by rationalists.

We must say first: If a good number of those who died (e.g., Lazarus and the son of the widow of Naim) were recalled to life by our Lord, and later by the apostles and other saints, what can hinder our immortal soul, made by nature to inform and vivify its body, from being reunited forever to that body, though in different degrees of merit and demerit?

This revealed truth, defined by the Church, [619] is supported by numerous Scripture texts. The Fourth Council of the Lateran gave this definition: All will arise, each with his own body which he had upon earth, to receive what each has merited, according as his works were good or bad.

The universal resurrection, then, is of faith. This resurrection requires at least that there be essential identity between the risen body and the body which the soul had while it was still in union with the body. According to certain writers [620] this suffices, because the soul, being a substantial form, gives to the body its specific life, even the actuality which we call corporeity. Nevertheless theologians hold commonly, with St. Thomas, that it must also be individually the same body, that is to say, it must contain at least a part of the matter which was formerly in that body. Otherwise how could we say that each one will rise in his own body which he had on earth? How could we say that this individual body rises from the dead? [621] St. Paul says: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." [622] The Catechism of the Council of Trent speaks as follows: "Each of us will rise with the body which we had on earth, which was corrupted in the tomb, and reduced to dust." [623] This is the uniform testimony both of Scripture and of tradition.

In the book of Job we read: "I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God; whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another." [624] Isaias says: "Thy dead men shall live, my slain shall rise again! Awake and give praise, ye that dwell in the dust." [625] Daniel speaks as follows: "Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach." [626] In the Second Book of Machabees, one of the martyrs says to his judge: "Thou indeed, O most wicked man, destroyest us out of this present life, but the King of the world will raise us up, who die for His laws, in the resurrection of eternal life." [627]

Jesus defends the resurrection against the Sadducees. "Fear ye not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and body in hell." [628] Again: "Concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken by God saying to you: I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead but of the living." [629]

In the Gospel of St. John our Lord is still more explicit: "The hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the

resurrection of life; but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment." [630] Again: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day." [631]

St. Paul [632] proves the possibility of the resurrection by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. "If the dead rise not again, neither is Christ risen again, and if Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins." "For by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead. And as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive, but everyone in his own order, . . . and the enemy, death, shall be destroyed last." [633] St. Paul announces the same mystery to the Athenians, [634] to the Governor Felix, [635] to the Thessalonians. [636]

The Fathers of the second century speak explicitly of this dogma. [637] Martyrs proclaim it at their death. [638]

Reason cannot give a demonstrative proof of this truth, but it can give high reasons of appropriateness. These reasons are thus expressed by the Catechism of the Council of Trent: "The first is that our souls, which are only a part of ourselves, are immortal, and retain forever their natural inclination to union with the body." [639] Hence it seems contrary to nature that they should forever remain separated from their bodies. Now that which is contrary to nature is in a state of violence and cannot last long. Hence it is very appropriate that the soul be united to its body again and that the body be raised to life. [640] The soul is naturally the form of the body, hence it groans at the idea of separation. Therefore it should not be deprived forever of this body. [641]

A second reason is found in the infinite justice of God, who has established punishments for the wicked and rewards for the good. Hence it is appropriate that the souls be reunited to their bodies in order that these bodies, which have been instruments, whether of good or of evil, partake with the soul in the awards and punishments deserved. This thought was developed by St. John Chrysostom [642] in a homily to the people of Antioch.

In the case of the wicked the body has taken part in deeds of iniquity, in criminal voluptuousness. In the case of the good the body has been in the service of the soul in the accomplishment of good works, sometimes heroic works, in devotion, in the apostolate, in martyrdom. Further, the bodies of the just are temples of the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says. Hence the resurrection of the body is highly appropriate, that the soul may lack nothing in its state of felicity. Here we see, together with the justice of God, also His wisdom and His goodness.

A third reason is drawn from the victory of Christ over sin and the devil, which victory consequently triumphs over death which is a consequence of sin. He won this victory over death by His own resurrection and by that of His Blessed Mother. Hence it is appropriate, since He is to be the Savior of humanity, body and soul, that He win also the definitive victory over death by universal resurrection.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent speaks thus: "O wonderful restoration of our nature, for which we are indebted to the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ over death!" [643] Holy Scripture is explicit on this point: "He shall cast death down headlong forever." [644] Osee says: "O death, I will be thy death." [645] St. Paul explaining this last word fears not to say that, after all the other enemies, death itself will be destroyed. [646]

We read in St. John: "Death shall be no more." [647] It is supremely appropriate that the merits of Jesus Christ, which destroyed the empire of death, be infinitely more efficacious than the sin of Adam. [648]

### **The Qualities of the Glorious Body**

St. Paul speaks thus: "One is the glory of the celestial bodies and another of the terrestrial: one is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, and another the glory of the stars, for star differs

from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory; it is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power; it is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body." [649]

Following this doctrine, theologians distinguish four chief qualities in the glorified body:

- impassibility,
- subtility,
- agility, and
- clarity.

Impassibility is the gift which preserves not only from death, but also from pain. [650] It arises from the perfect submission of the body to the soul. [651]

Agility delivers bodies from the heaviness which weighs down the present life. The risen body can go where the soul pleases, with a swiftness and ease which St. Jerome [652] compares to that of the eagle.

Subtility renders the body capable of penetrating other bodies without difficulty. Thus the glorious body of the risen Christ entered the Cenacle though the doors were closed. [653]

Clarity gives to the body of the saints that brightness, that splendor, which is the very essence of the beautiful. Our Lord [654] says: "Then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their father." To give an idea of this quality, He was transfigured before His apostles on Thabor. [655] St. Paul says: "Jesus Christ will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of His glory." [656] The Israelites in the desert [657] saw an image of this glory on the forehead of Moses, after He had seen God and received God's words. He was so luminous that their eyes could not endure the splendor.

This clarity is but a reflection, an overflowing, of the glory of the soul on that of the body. [658] Hence the bodies of the saints will not all have the same degree of clarity, but each will have the degree proportioned to its light of glory. Thus St. Paul says: "Star differeth from star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." [659]

Lastly, our senses will find a pure and ineffable joy in the humanity of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin, the choir of the saints, the beauties of the renovated world, the chants of adoration and thanksgiving in the city of God. Such will be the accidental beatitude of heaven after the renovation of the world. [660]

What fruits follow on the knowledge of this mystery to which nature gives us no right to aspire? The Lord has deigned to reveal these things to the little ones, whereas He has hidden them from the wise and prudent. [661] The first fruit is thanksgiving. Second, the control of passion in the service of a holy life, such a life as the Lord expects from us in our own particular conditions. Third, consolation in seeing our dear ones die. Lastly, courage in suffering. Job consoled himself by the hope of seeing the Lord, his God, on the day of resurrection. [662] The splendor which appears at times on the face of saints, e.g., of St. Dominic and St. Francis, is the prelude to the brightness of eternity. [663]

### Notes

299. Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6

300. Ibid., 10:15.

301. Ibid., 11:21-24.

302. Luke 12:47, 48.

303. Apoc., 18:7.

304. Wisd. 6:6.

305. Supplementum, q. 69, a. 5.

306. IV Sent., dist. 23, q. 1, a. 1 ad 5.

307. Ia, q. 21, a. 4 ad 1.

308. II Pet. 3:9.
309. Father Lacordaire, Conferences in Notre Dame, 72nd conference; Dict. theol. cath., "L'Enfer".
310. Dict. theol. cath., "Coeur-sacre de Jesus."
311. Vie et oeuvres, II, 159; lettre 83, p. 176.
548. Dict. theol. cath., "Beatitude."
549. Perfect good is that which quiets and satiates the appetite. Ia IIae, q. 2, a.8.
550. Only God is the universal good, not as predicate, but as being and as cause.
551. Confessions, Bk. V, chap. 4.
552. Matt. 25:21.
553. De civ. Dei, Bk. II, chap. 30, no. 1. This is one of the most beautiful definitions of heaven and beatitude that was ever pronounced. We know none that is more perfect. Cf. Sermo 362, 29: "Insatiably thou wilt be satiated with truth."
554. Ia IIae, q.3, a.4.
555. The will is carried toward its end, by desiring it when it is absent, by enjoying it when it is present. But it is clear that the desire of that end is not the attainment of that end. Delight comes to the will by the fact that the end is already present. But the converse is not true, namely, that something becomes present because the will delights in it. Hence God becomes present to us by the act of intellect, that is, by vision, and then, as a consequence, the will rests with joy in the end already attained.
556. Matt. 5:5.
557. John 17:3.
558. John 3:2.
559. I Cor. 13:12.
560. Ia, q. 82, a. 3.
561. Cf. Janvier, Conferences de Notre Dame, Lent of 1903, pp. 122, 123. See also Dict. theol. cath., "Gloire de Dieu".
562. Denz., no. 530.
563. Confessions, Bk. IX, chap. 25.
564. St. Thomas, Ia, q 12. See also the Commentaries of Cajetan, John of St. Thomas, etc. See also Dict. theol. cath., "Intuitive."
565. Denz., no 530.
566. Ia, q. 12, a. 2.
567. Sometimes, during a storm at night, we may see a flash from one extremity of the heavens to the other. Now let us imagine a flash of lightning, not sensible but intellectual, similar to a lightning flash of genius, but one which subsists eternally, which would be Truth itself and Wisdom itself, and which at the same time would be a vivid flame of Love itself. This imagination will give us some idea of God
568. Ia, q. 12, a. 2, and the commentaries of Cajetan, John of St. Thomas, Gonet, the Salmanticenses, Billuart. The divine essence itself takes the place, both of the impressed species and of the expressed species, that is, of the mental word. Theologians often compare this intimate union in the order of knowledge to the union in the order of being brought about by the hypostatic union, the humanity of Jesus and the person of the Word, where the Word terminates and possesses the humanity. If this second union is not impossible, then the first, with still greater reason, must also be possible.
569. Ia, q. 12, a. 6, 7. God, so say the theologians, is seen in His entirety, but He is not totally seen in that entirety.
570. Ia, q. 12, a. 4, 5.
571. Denz., no. 475.
572. Ibid., no. 693.
573. Ia, q. 12 a. 10. That which the blessed see in God they do not see successively but simultaneously. The beatific vision, measured by participated eternity, does not tolerate succession. Things which the blessed see successively they see extra Verbum, by a knowledge inferior to the beatific vision and hence called the vision of evening whereas the beatific vision itself is like an eternal morning. Cf. Dict. theol. cath., "Intuitive," cols. 2387 ff.
574. De immortalitate, chap. 25.

575. I Cor. 13:8.
576. *Ia IIae*, q.3, a.1. Charity is identified with friendship.
577. *Ia IIae*, q.28, a.3. "Extasis" is an effect of love: "In the love of friendship affection, simply speaking, goes outside itself, because it wills and does good for a friend."
578. Matt. 25:21.
579. *Ibid.*, 25:34.
580. Ps. 113:11.
581. *Ia IIae*, q. 184, a. 2.
582. Sermon 362, no. 29. Cf. also Bossuet, Sermon 4, on All Saints.
583. Nicomachean Ethics, Bk. X, chaps. 4, 5, 8. "Pleasure follows acts as maturity follows youth." Further above he had said that the highest joy is the joy that results from the most elevated act of the most elevated faculty, that is, the intellectual knowledge of God united to the love of the supreme Good.
584. *Ia IIae*, q. 2, a. 1 ad 3; *Ia IIae*, q. 20, a.4.
585. Imitation of Christ, Bk. III chap. 21.
586. There will no longer be indifference. This indifference exist in regard to any object which seems good under one aspect, but not good or insufficiently good under another aspect. Cf. *Ia IIae*, q. 10, a. 2.
587. *Ia*, q. 105, a.4. "The will can be moved by any good object, but cannot be sufficiently and efficaciously moved except by God. God alone is universal good. Hence He alone can fill the will and sufficiently move it as object." Cf. *Ia IIae*, q.4, a.4. "Ultimate beatitude consists in the vision of the divine essence, and thus the will of him who sees God loves of necessity whatever he does love in relation to God, just as the will of him who does not see can love necessarily only under the common viewpoint of the good which it knows." Thomists thus comment on this passage: "Upon the beatific vision there follows the happy necessity of loving its object, a necessity also as regards exercise. The will of the blessed is completely filled, is adequated, conquered by the supreme Good now clearly seen."
588. *Ia IIae*, q.4, a.4. Commentaries of Cajetan, John of St. Thomas, Gonet, Billuart
589. Matt. 25:46.
590. I Pet. 5:4.
591. I Cor. 9:25.
592. II Cor. 4:17.
593. Denz., no. 430.
594. *Ia IIae*, q. 5, a. 4.
595. The First Part, chap. 13, no. 3.
596. John 14:1.
597. II Cor. 9:6. Cf. Supplementum, q.93, a.3.
598. I Cor. 2:9.
609. Cf. Bossuet, Meditations on the Gospels, Second Part, 75th and 76th day.
600. On the contrary, vision extra-Verbum, and with much more reason the sense-vision of Christ and of Mary belong to accidental beatitude. There is a great difference between these two kinds of knowledge. The highest is called by Augustine the knowledge of morning, the other, the knowledge of evening, because the latter knows creatures, not by the divine light, but by the created light which is like that of twilight. We may better understand this difference if we think of two kinds of knowledge which we may have of souls on earth. We may consider them in themselves by what they say and write, studying them as would a psychologist, or we may consider them in God, as was done, for example, by the holy Cure of Ars, when he was hearing confessions. He was the supernatural genius of the confessional, because he heard those souls in God, while he himself remained in prayer. Thus he gave supernatural replies, replies not only true, but immediately suited to the question. Penitents went to him because his soul was full of God.
601. Apoc. 5:12.
602. *Ibid.*, 5:9; 21:23; 21:27.
603. Meditations on the Gospel, Second Part, 72nd day.
604. *Ibid.*, 75th day.
605. John 17:26.



606. Father de Caussade, Abandonment to Divine Providence.
607. *Ila Ilae*, q. 26, a. 13.
608. St. Joseph, though he is the highest of all saints after Mary, is often named after the prophets, the patriarchs, and the Precursor, since he belongs to the New Testament. The Precursor forms the transition from the Old to the New.
609. *Life and Christian Virtue*, chap. 17.
610. *Imitation of Christ*, Bk. III, chap. 49, no. 6.
611. *Ibid.*, chap. 58, no. 3.
612. John 15:19.
613. Apoc. 4:10; 5:8, 14.
614. Between these two kinds of knowledge, as we have said, we find a great difference, just as we find a similar difference between the knowledge of a psychologist based on words and writings and the other kind of knowledge possessed by a holy director, like St. Francis de Sales.
615. Ps. 138:17.
616. Dan. 12:3.
617. *Supplementum* q. 96, a. 5.
618. *Ibid.*, 75-86.
619. Catechism of the Council of Trent, First Part, chap. 12; IV Council of the Lateran., Denz. no. 429.
620. Thus Durandus, who is followed by some modern authors.
621. *Supplementum*, q. 79, a. 1, 2, 3. From the Four Books of Sentences, dist. 44, q. 1, a. 1: "If the soul does not resume the same body, we could not speak of resurrection; we would speak rather of the assumption of a new body." A. 2. "Numerically the same man must rise; and this comes to pass, since it is one and the same individual soul which is united to one and the same numerical body. Otherwise we would not have resurrection." Cf. *ibid.*, a. 3. Also *Contra Gentes*, Bk. IV, chap. 80; also *Tabula aurea*, "Resurrectio," nos. 11, 12. Also Hugon, *Tractatus dogmatici, De novissimis*, p. 470. Nevertheless, just as our organism without losing its identity is renewed by assimilation and disassimilation, it seems sufficient that any part of the matter which once belonged to our body would be reanimated in the risen body. Hence St. Thomas (*Contra Gentes*, Bk. IV, chap. 81) replies to the ordinary objections on this point. Cannibals do eat human flesh, but human flesh is not their only food. Plants in a cemetery do assimilate matter taken from corpses, but the matter of these plants does not come exclusively from corpses. Cf. Herve, *Manuale theologiae dogmaticae*, IV, no. 636. Nor is it impossible for infinite wisdom and omnipotence to recover the matter of a body which has disappeared. Cf. Monsabre, *Conferences de Notre Dame, La resurrection* (1889), pp. 218 ff.
622. I Cor. 15:53.
623. Part I, chap. 12.
624. Job. 19:25, 27.
625. Isa. 26:19.
626. Dan 12:2.
627. II Mach. 7:9.
628. Matt. 5:29-30; 10:28.
629. *Ibid.*, 22:23-32.
630. John 5:29.
631. *Ibid.*, 6:54.
632. I Cor. 15:17.
633. *Ibid.*, 15:21-27.
634. Acts 17:31-32.
635. *Ibid.*, 24:15, 21.
636. I Thess. 4:17.
637. Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, and Tertullian speak at length on this point. Also St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and St. Gregory. See *Enchir. patr. Index theologicus*, nos. 598-600. "The dead will rise, all the dead, each with the body they had on earth."
638. Ruinart, *Acta martyrum*, p. 70.

639. Our intelligence, the lowest of all intelligences, has as proper object intelligible truth known as in a mirror in sense things. Hence normally it has need of the imagination, and the imagination cannot exist actually without a corporeal organ.

640. *Contra Gentes*, Bk. IV, chap. 79.

641. What we are here saying refutes metempsychosis, according to which the human soul would pass from one body to another, either into the body of a beast or into another human body. This is impossible because the human soul has an essential relation to this individual human body and not to the body of a beast. Thus the separated souls remain individual, each by its relation to its own body.

642. Homilies, 49, 50.

643. Catechism of the Council of Trent, Part 1, chap. 12.

644. Isa. 25:8.

645. Osee 13:14.

646. I Cor. 15:26.

647. Apoc. 21:4.

648. Heb. 2:14.

649. I Cor. 15:42.

650. Supplementum, q. 83, a. 1, q. 84, 85.

651. *De civ, Dei*, Bk. XI, chap. 10.

652. Commentary on Isaias, chap. 40.

653. Supplementum, q. 83.

654. Matt. 13:43.

655. *Ibid.*, 17:12.

656. Phil. 3:21.

657. Exod. 34:20.

658. Supplementum, q. 85, a. 1.

659. I Cor. 15:41.

660. Isa. 65:17 announces a new heaven and a new earth. The Apocalypse 21:1 repeats the same truth. The second epistle of St. Peter 3:10 explains the phrase: "The day of the Lord will come like a thief. In these days the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, the elements will be dissolved, and the earth will be consumed with all the works which it encloses. We expect, according to the promise, a new heaven and a new earth where justice dwells." Cf. Monsabre, *Conferences de Notre Dame*, no. 101.

661. Matt. 11:26.

662. Job 19:26.

663. Heretics, wishing to kill St. Dominic, waited for him on a road where he was to pass. But when he came near, such a brilliant light illuminated his features that they did not dare to touch him. This light was the sensible radiation of the contemplation which united him to God. With him was saved also the order which he intended to found.

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**Chapter 13: The Vision of Glories**

**Historical Background of the Doctrine and Covenants**

**Chapter 13: The Vision of Glories**

After residing in Kirtland for many months, the Prophet and his wife were invited to enjoy the hospitality of John Johnson and his family. In the autumn of 1831 they moved to his home which was in the village of Hiram, about thirty miles from Kirtland. Hiram was a hotbed of "Campbellism," where a few converts had been made. The ones who remained with the "Disciples" were so angry at the Mormons that they were determined to put an end to the movement.

Among the leaders in this persecution were Jacob Scott, Ezra Booth, Symonds Ryder, and others who had joined the Church for a season and had apostatized, becoming vicious and brutal in their designs to thwart the work of the Lord in that community. Joseph Smith was headed for trouble and persecution when he rode home with "father Johnson to spend the winter in his large frame house.

Ryder had been in the Church but a short time until the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon wrote him a letter, informing him that it was the will of the Lord that he should go on a mission. Since he did not have a strong testimony and was not anxious to become a missionary he objected to the way his name had been spelled. He spelled it Symonds Ryder, whereas it was spelled Symonds Rider in the letter that sought to call him to the ministry. The revelation that mentioned him also misspelled his name.' He was thus convinced that the inspiration that resulted in his missionary call was responsible for the spelling of his name—the wisdom of men, not the inspiration of heaven. For this reason he left the Church and became a bitter enemy. The persecutions that soon followed in Hiram were a result of the pernicious activities of Ryder and his angry colleagues.

The winter months were spent in revising the scriptures. There were enough strong leaders in all the branches in northern Ohio by that time so that the Prophet could leave many responsibilities for others, as he devoted all his spare time to an intensive and inspired revision of the scriptures. He had scarcely arrived in Kirkland when he was instructed, "Thou shalt ask, and my scriptures shall be given as I have appointed, and they shall be preserved in safety."

A few days later he was advised to commence the revision of the New Testament, his study up to that time having been concerned with the Old Testament.<sup>3</sup> At this time they turned to Matthew and began to revise that book. For a time they alternated, reading a time from the Old and then turning to the New Testament.

In the Johnson home at Hiram they read many of the books in both testaments, making hundreds of changes in the text. The changes were not confined to grammatical corrections, but lengthy additions were supplied in several places. At the close of Genesis was added the prophecy made by Joseph in Egypt, which was preserved in Nephi.

Hundreds of statements like "the lad hardened Pharaoh's heart" were changed to read that "Pharaoh hardened his heart." "It repented the Lord that he had created man," is made to read that Noah repented of the fact. Many faulty texts were revised, such as this mysterious text, "Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien." The inspired revision insists that such flesh should not be eaten, sold or given away.

The disputed text that declares that Melchizedek was "without father, without mother, without descent," is made to read that the priesthood which he held was "after the order of the Son of God which order was without father, without mother, without descent."

### **The Three Kingdoms of Glory**

During this inspired study of the Bible there must have been a flood of wisdom upon the minds of the students that were not included in the revised text of the Bible. One such document has been

preserved in the Doctrine and Covenants, the great vision of the heavenly kingdoms.

Questions arose in their minds as they considered the text that spoke of the resurrection of the good "to life and "they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."<sup>9</sup> Since they did not fully understand this text they prayed for information regarding it. A vision was opened to their minds and they seemed to look into eternity as a voice explained the scenes they were shown.

It was a cold day in winter, February 16, 1832, that the two students prayed for divine information. There were many Saints in the village, some of whom came daily seeking the Prophet's advice on various problems, or to exchange greetings with him. During this vision a few friends walked into the parlor of the Johnson home and stood in sheer bewilderment as they watched and listened. Philo Dibble was one of the witnesses and has left us a description of that wonderful scene.

The two men would stare out in space, oblivious of walls, ceiling, or the few friends who had entered the room unbidden and unnoticed. "I see a glorious kingdom," Joseph would say, "and the voice tells me that this is the church of, the Firstborn..." Sidney would nod his head in approval and then remark that the scene had changed and he now saw a lesser kingdom and a voice declared it to be the terrestrial world. "These are they who are of the terrestrial," declared the voice. "And now the scene changes." Joseph interpolated, "and the voice declares this to be the celestial world, and these are they who receive the celestial glory."

Philo Dibble declared that ten or twelve men crowded into the room during the vision, standing there staring at the ceiling as the two men gazed into, the heavens. These visitors did not see any of the miraculous scenes, nor did they hear the voice that explained the various kingdoms that were shown to them. The most of which time the visitors vision lasted two or three hours, stood in the room, yet seemed unnoticed by the two men who were shown the vision.

"What do I see?" was asked many times by these two men, then each in turn would explain what had been shown to him and related what the voice was saying to him. The other always agreed that he saw and heard the same things. This account is preserved in the Juvenile Instructor, volume 29, page 303, and is a valuable contribution to the understanding of the method in which this revelation was received.

And thus the great vision was given. When it was over Sidney was so weak he could scarcely lift a glass of water to his lips. The Prophet remarked that the early visions he received affected him that way, but he was now accustomed to them. This glorious vision was soon recorded exactly as it was given and as it is preserved today. It is one of the greatest revelations ever given to the children of men. It came like all divine messages, in answer to prayer. Not at any time did the Lord thrust a revelation upon His servants. They always came when asked for and when needed most.

### **In the Camp of the Enemy**

Information like this could not be kept a secret in a small community where there were many members to share the good news and many of the enemy to spread it abroad. Often from the pulpit or the press the heaven-inspired truths were announced to the world soon after they were received. Given in the presence of witnesses this remarkable vision was soon being talked about in the community. In a few days it would reach the ears of the jealous "Campbellite" leaders who were getting enraged at the way "the Mormonites were stealing their thunder."

The irate reformers preached against the new doctrines and flooded their publications with tirades against the reformation that was sweeping far ahead of their own reform movement. The Millennial Harbinger carried such challenging titles as this, "Mormonism—the means by which it Stole the True Gospel," in an effort to turn the public mind against the popular movement that was sweeping the frontier and seriously reducing the membership in the fold of the "Disciples."

Hiram was the headquarters of the enemy camp. Sidney Rigdon and many of their leaders who united with the true Church had resided there and their characters and works were well known. The “Disciples” who apostatized from the Church—Ezra Booth, Symonds Ryder, Jacob Scott, and others—lived in that village or were well known there. In that hamlet a movement was brewing to drive the Mormons from the village.

The Campbells and their ministers were enraged because, because Joseph Smith had “adopted” so many of their teachings, followed their advice and began to revise the Bible, and had convinced many people that his message was divine. In fact they insisted that every important thing that the "Mormonites" taught had been borrowed from them. They rebelled against the revision of the Bible which had made such progress in Hiram. The brilliant Campbell had made many revisions in the New Testament which the three ministers had produced in Ireland. Now the unlearned leader of the Mormons was doing far more in his biblical revision than the daring Campbell had done. At this time the enemy was angry enough to drive the Mormons from the town. They were waiting for one more crisis to arise that would kindle the flame that was ready to ignite and cause a great conflagration.

The great vision on the three degrees of glory was the issue that brought this hostile movement to a head. This message which was so well received by the Saints, kindled the anger of the enemy until it knew no bounds. This glorious revelation in the wake of an extensive revision of the Bible, brought Alexander Campbell and his father on a lecture tour to save their flock at this time of crisis. At Hiram, Mentor, Mantua, Kirtland, and many other villages their voices were raised in opposition to the new movement.

This revelation on the three heavenly kingdoms was the last straw—the straw that broke the Campbell back. One opponent complained that Joseph Smith “out-masoned King Solomon,” but the “Campbellites” complained that he had stolen their thunder and was running wild with it.

### **Campbell's Three Kingdoms**

This incident provoked them to the breaking point because just one year before the Church was organized, Alexander Campbell had expressed his belief in “The Three Kingdoms.” If Joseph Smith had ever heard about this doctrine it certainly would not have influenced him in the least in writing the famous document he recorded on the three heavenly kingdoms. Campbell's philosophy is a good example of the wisdom and conjectures of men. His views when contrasted with the revealed will of the Lord seem childish and worldly, yet they were responsible for the collection of a mob with intent to kill Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon.

For the purpose of acquainting the reader with the worldly views of Alexander Campbell on this subject we glean a few extracts from his discussion of the three kingdoms:

The gates of admission into these three kingdoms is different—Flesh, Faith, and Works. To be born of the flesh, or to be a descendant of Abraham, introduced a child into the first kingdom of God. To be born of water and spirit, through faith in Jesus Christ, brings men and women into the second kingdom. But neither flesh, faith, nor water, without good works, will introduce a man or woman into the third kingdom.

The nature of these three kingdoms, the privileges enjoyed by the subjects, and the terms of admission, are very imperfectly understood in the present day. These kingdoms are unhappily confounded in the minds of many-- All the descendants of Jacob, without regard to regeneration, were lawful subjects of the first kingdom. None can be subjects of the second unless born again; and flesh and blood cannot inherit the third and ultimate kingdom.... It is but an opinion that infants, idiots, and some Jews and Pagans may without even faith or baptism, be brought into the third kingdom, merely in consequence of the sacrifice of Christ; and I doubt not that many Paidobaptists of all sects will be admitted into the kingdom of glory. Indeed, all they who obey Jesus Christ, through faith in his blood, according to their knowledge, I am of the opinion will be introduced into that kingdom....

There are three kingdoms: the kingdom of the law, the Kingdom of Favor, and the Kingdom of Glory; each has a different constitution, different subjects, privileges, and terms of admission.... But when we speak of admission into the everlasting kingdom, we must have due respect to those grand and fundamental principles so clearly propounded in the New Institution. We must discriminate between the kingdom of favor and the kingdom of glow.. (He then spoke at length as if in vision he were speaking as one who had passed from life to the realm of the departed.)

When I waited at the altar and waited in the sanctuary my conscience was often troubled. I saw that His institution differed from that of Moses as the sun excelled a star. I apprehended the reign of favor, and gladly became a citizen of the second kingdom.... I felt myself in a new kingdom, a kingdom of favor. Sin did not now lord it over me as before, and my heart beat in unison with the favor which super, abounded; so that in comparison with the former kingdom, my sun always shone in a bright and cloudless sky.

I ran the race and finished my course. I slept in Jesus; and lo! I awoke at the second trump, and all my deeds came into remembrance, not one of them was forgotten by God. The contrast between the kingdom of law and the kingdom of favor prepared me to enjoy and to relish the contrast between the kingdom of favor and the kingdom of glory.

I have been thrice born—once of flesh, once of water and spirit, and once from the grave. Each birth brought me into congenial society. My fellow citizens always resembled my nativity. I was surrounded once with the children of the flesh, then with those born from above, and now with those born from the ashes of the grave.

Yes, this great revelation was the straw that broke the Campbell back and turned their angry agents against the Mormon leaders. Their historian Hayden later wrote of conditions in Hiram at this critical time:

Perhaps in no place, except Kirtland, did the doctrines of the "Latter-day Saints" gain a more permanent footing than in Hiram. It entrenched itself there so strongly that its leaders felt assured of the capture of the town. Rigdon's former popularity in that region gave wings to their appeal, and many people, not avowed converts, were under a spell of wonder at the strange things sounded in their ears.

This great revelation did much to encourage and unite the Saints as it turned the enemy against them. Its value was well expressed by the Prophet in these words:

Nothing could be more pleasing to the Saints upon the order of the kingdom of the Lord, than the light which burst upon the world through the foregoing vision. Every law, every commandment, every promise, every truth, and every point touching the destiny of man, from Genesis to Revelation, where the purity of the scriptures, remains unsullied by the folly of men, go to show the perfection of the theory (of different degrees of glory in the future life) and witness the fact that that document is a transcript from the records of the eternal world. The sublimity of the ideas; the purity of the language; the scope for action; the continued duration for completion, in order that the heirs of salvation may confess the Lord and bow the knee; the rewards for faithfulness, and the punishments for sins, are so much beyond the narrow-mindedness of men, that every honest man is constrained to exclaim: "It came from God!"

### **A Coat of Tar and Feathers**

As this good news was noised abroad the enemy resolved to put the work down with a cruel hand. In fact they carefully planned to kill the two leaders. During a cold spell in March their wicked plan was to be carried out. A physician in the town contributed two vials of poison, one to kill the Johnson watch dog, the other to be forced down the throats of the men. Some of the poison was inserted in a piece of meat and fed to

the dog. The great watch dog, Rover, was cold and silent when the men were ready for their well planned party. In the day time while the Johnson house was vacant, Eli Johnson and John Ural entered the house, spiked the Johnson guns so they could not be used against them when they should attack the inmates that evening. They even stole one of Joseph's pillows so they could use the feathers to throw upon him after they covered his body with warm tar.

Everything in readiness, the guns spiked, the dog poisoned, the tar and feathers ready, the son of a "Campbellite" minister McClellent, living near Rigdon's house, gave a barrel of whiskey to the mobbers when they were ready to kill the two leaders. On a very cold night, after a round of drinks, the enemy was at the door of the Johnson home. There was no barking dog to sound the alarm and no weapons in the house to be used against them. These drunken fiends seized the Prophet, dragging him from his bed and carried him out into the bitter cold. Several men had their hands upon him at once until they reached the door, where only two or three could find room to hold him in their grasp.

At the doorway he broke loose and seized the largest and strongest man in the crowd, Warren Waste, a trained wrestler who was considered the strongest man on the Western Reserve. Before the crowd could seize the Prophet again he threw his full strength against Waste, but his energy was only wasted, as the gang was soon upon him. Waste later said that "Joe Smith was the strongest man I ever grappled with."

Some of his clothes were torn from his body and he was dragged into the orchard back of the house. An open vial of poison was thrust against his lips, but he kept his mouth closed so no poison would get into it. The small bottle was beaten against his teeth until it was broken, its sharp edges cutting his lips severely.

He was beat unconscious, covered with a coat of warm tar and left for dead. When his friends carried him back to the house he was told that Sidney Rigdon had received the same treatment. He had been dragged over the frozen plowed ground until he was soon knocked unconscious and serious injury was done to the base of his skull. Many people blame this accident for his future delinquency in the Church. While in Liberty Jail he acted like a mad man and was released.

The next day, being the Sabbath, the Prophet kept a preaching appointment in the village. In the audience were some of the mobbers and the men who helped plan the crime.

Within a few years all the men who took part in that raid had suffered a painful death. Miles Norton who poisoned the Johnson watch dog was killed by a ram in the barnyard, its spiral horn being thrust through Norton's body. Warren Waste and Gamut Mason boasted of having bent the Prophet's legs over his back, holding them in that position as he lay on the ground face downward. Waste was later killed by a falling log while he was building a house. Mason died from a spinal affliction that was more painful than a Boston Crab. The man who tried to pour the poison into his mouth was buried alive while digging a well.

At that time the adopted Murdock twins were suffering from the measles. The little boy was very sick, the girl having practically recovered. On that particular night the boy was sleeping with the Prophet so that Emma could get some sleep. When the Prophet was dragged from his bed the little boy was left uncovered, caught a severe cold and soon died. This child may well be called the first martyr in this dispensation.

This was the price Joseph Smith had to pay for spending a winter in Hiram, the hotbed of the "Campbellites," some of whom had apostatized from the Church.

The "Disciples" were so delighted to welcome Symonds Ryder and his colleagues back into their society that he was honored with many positions of trust and responsibility as a reward for his return. In 1843 he employed Abraham Lincoln to institute a chancery suit in the courts, receiving several letters from the young lawyer who was destined to become the great emancipator.

Almost forty years after the incident, Ryder was invited to write an account of Joseph Smith's activity in Hiram during that historic winter. His epistle included these lines:

To give particulars of the Mormon excitement of 1831 would require a volume-a few words must suffice. It has been stated that from the year 1815 to 1835, a period of twenty years, "all sorts of doctrine by all sorts of preachers had been heard;" and most of the people of Hiram had been disposed to turn out and hear. Ibis went by the specious name illiberal." The Mormons in Kirkland, being informed of this peculiar state of things, were scrim prepared for the onset.

In the winter of 1831 Joseph Smith, with others, had an appointment in the south school-house, in Hiram. Such was the apparent piety, sincerity and humility of the speakers, that many of the hearers were greatly affected, and thought it impossible that such preachers should lie in wait to deceive.

During the next spring and summer several converts were made, and their success seemed to indicate an immediate triumph in Hiram. But when they went to Missouri to lay the foundation of the splendid city of Zion, and also of the temple, they left their papers behind. This gave their new converts an opportunity to become acquainted with the internal arrangement of their church, which revealed to them the horrid fact that a plot was laid to take their property from them and place it under the control of Joseph Smith the prophet. This was too much for the Hiramites, and they left the Mormonites faster than they had ever joined them, and by fall the Mormon church in Hiram was a very lean concern.

But some who had been the dupes of this deception, determined not to let it pass with impunity; and, accordingly, a company was formed of citizens from Shalersville, Garrettsville, and Hiram, in March, 1832, and proceeded to headquarters in the darkness of night, and took Smith and Bigdon from their beds, and tarred and feathered them both, and let them go. This had the desired effect, which was to get rid of them. They soon left for Kirtland.

All who continued with the Mormons, and had any property, lost all; among whom was John Johnson, one of our most worthy men; also, Esq. Snow, of Mantua, who lost two or three thousand dollars.

It was a high price they were asked to pay for a few months in Hiram, but it was well worth the cost. The one majestic revelation of the three degrees of glory repaid them for all their efforts, and hardships in that village. It is one of the greatest contributions ever made in the world of religious philosophy.

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**Degrees In Reward And Punishment**

**Thesis at Biola University**

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### **Chapter I - Degrees Of Reward**

For many the question of degrees in reward and punishment is not a pertinent one. The reason for this is not that the Word of God is silent about it, but rather the unwillingness on their part to believe what the Scriptures clearly state relative to this Subject. The ultimate authority for any conclusion herein is from the Word of God.

### **Importance Of Subject And Meaning Of Terms**

Importance of the subject. The importance of the subject is more than would appear on the surface. The concept of reward and punishment should be a real stimulation for thought to every individual.



Salmond senses the importance of the subject when he says:

The principle of degrees in reward and punishment must be taken in all its breadth as an essential and qualifying element in the doctrine in question.

The idea of reward proportioned to the measure of service and penalty proportioned to the measure of failure, occupies a much larger place in Christ's teaching and in the New Testament generally than is usually recognized. If anything deserves to be described as a lost theological principle which it concerns us to recover, it is this.<sup>1</sup>

A right presentation of the Scriptural truth concerning degrees of reward should give real encouragement for further faithful service to the Master. It has definite reference to the Christian's responsibility in his life and conduct. For the unsaved, this truth of punishment should awaken him to the place Where he would at least begin to think of the danger of not accepting Christ for his own salvation. The individual ought to realize that he himself is responsible to God for his actions. It is the purpose of this thesis to prove that the concept concerning degrees of reward and punishment is worthy of consideration, being scriptural, rational and logical.

### **Meaning of terms.**

The term degrees as relating to reward and punishment does not have reference to the length or time of duration, but rather to the intensity of the individual's experience. Strong expresses the concept as follows: "A line is infinite in length, but it is far from being infinite in breadth or thickness."<sup>2</sup> So it is with the rewards and punishment, the length is the same for both, but the degree in each case vary. Salmond makes this observation:

The doctrine of degrees is the relief given us by Christ Himself in thinking of the maladjustments of the present existence, the mystery of unequal circumstance, and the lot of the lost. It provide, for all possible gradations in the punitive awards of the future. It does more to lighten the problem than is done by the Roman Catholic theories of a poena damni and a variety of localities in the other world, or by the idea of a Protestant purgatory, and it does it more simply and reasonably. It is the proper corrective to the dogmas of a second probation and a universal restoration. It gives all the alleviation Which other views of the future profess to give, and it gives it without doing violence either to the power of man's will or to the sufficiency of grace here.<sup>3</sup>

The term reward has particular significance to the believer in Christ. It has specific reference to what a Child of God may treasure up for himself after his, conversion experience. Since salvation is not a reward, but a gift (Ephesians 2:8-9), it can be stated safely that one believer will have more rewards than another believer. There are no degrees of being saved or degrees of being lost. A person is either saved or lost, there being no other alternative. But with rewards it is different. It is not sufficient to say that a believer either has a reward or he does not have a reward. There is ample Scripture to prove that the believer will be rewarded on an individual basis, and that of necessity would imply variation in degree.

Punishment on the other hand deals to a greater extent with the works or deeds of the unsaved. The term unsaved is used with preference to those who reject Christ for the reason that many who have not heard are still lost even though they never did knowingly reject Him. Several commentators prefer the term retribution to the term punishment, the former being more appropriate in relation to the wicked. MacArthur says:

The term retribution is especially and technically applied to the wicked; it refers to their punishment, rather than to the reward which the righteous shall receive.<sup>4</sup>

On this subject Proctor states;

The word "retribution" is to be preferred to "punishment" because the Bible teaches that the fact of the wicked is not an arbitrary (much less a vindicative) infliction, but the necessary consequence of their own sins. The law of retribution can no more be repealed than that of gravitation; it is fixed and unalterable.<sup>5</sup>

Chafer adds these words:

The term retribution is chosen in place of the more familiar word punishment since the latter implies discipline and amendment, which idea is Wholly absent from the body of truth which discloses the final divine dealing with those who are eternally lost.<sup>6</sup>

To be lost and go to a Christless grave is part of the punishment for sin, but that is not all. All men do not have the same opportunities, light or environment; thus God who is omniscient can reward the individual justly. Man himself in his life upon this earth determines the degrees of suffering which he must endure.

After discussing briefly the subject of reward in this first chapter, the matter of degrees of punishment will be the main concern of this thesis. The concept of rewards is stated rather plainly in the Scriptures. The degrees of punishment are also stated, but the ungodly seem to overlook or ignore that warning which is given to them.

### **The Scriptural Basis For Reward**

Before taking up the Scriptural basis for rewards, the fundamental principle of degrees in rewards and punishment should be stated. It is this: God is holy and just, and it is because of His holiness that he can not receive anyone who is unholy into His presence. That anyone can enter into His presence is because that one has availed himself by faith of the holiness and righteousness that is in His son, Jesus Christ. This righteousness, being imputed to the believer, makes him acceptable to God. It is because of the justice of God, that each man is rewarded or punished according to that which he individually deserves. From creation man has been accountable for his actions, and what he sows, that he must also reap. This is God's standard, and man must comply with it.

### **The teaching of Christ.**

It is evident that Christ's view concerning degrees in reward is definite. "For the Son. of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matthew 16:27).

As Thiessen states,

When Christ returns the believer will be judged as to the use he has made of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), the pounds (Luke 19:11-27), and the opportunities (Matt. 20:1-16) that have been entrusted to him.<sup>7</sup>

The Lord will then reward on the basis of how faithful the believer has been in that which has been entrusted to him. Relative to Christ's view, Gifford makes the following statement:

The supposition of equality in rank and position in heaven is contrary to our sense of justice, the teachings of scripture, and the great law of compensation which is everywhere recognized in nature.<sup>8</sup>

The faithful service for reward is not on a competition basis as to who can obtain the most: that only God can determine. This leaves the striving for reward on a personal basis.

### **The teaching of John.**

The Apostle John writes in the book of Revelation these words,

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Here is plainly stated that the believer in this life determines what he takes with him into the next world. &almond has this in mind when he writes:

It may be that there are positive rewards for good and positive penalties for evil ordained by God. But the place which these occupy in Scripture, if they have a place at all, is secondary. That there are such is thought to be implied in the terms in which at times Christ describes the awards of the Judge; as when in certain parables He speaks of the profitable servant set over many things. But these parables speak also of the joy of the Lord as the recompense of the faithful, and unquestionably the general idea which the New Testament gives of the reward of the good is that it is in the good itself, and the penalty of evil that it is in the evil itself,--the harvest of corruption, the receiving of things done in the body, the reaping of what one SOWS, the eating of the fruit of one's deeds. The question is not what God imposes on us in the other life, but what we take with us into it.<sup>10</sup>

The Word clearly states that man can not take any earthly goods with him into the next life. "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we carry nothing out" (1 Timothy 6:7). This is not contradictory to the concept of rewards. Rewards are given to believers after this life and as such they can not be taken along from this life. However, the believer is assured that he can store up treasures in heaven. Future rewards are the natural consequences of obedience. On Revelation 14:13, Barnes comments:

The rewards or the consequences of their works will follow them to the eternal world, the word works here being used for the rewards or results of their works. In regard to this, considered as an encouragement to labor, and as a support in the trials of life, it may be remarked, (a) that all that the righteous do and suffer here will be appropriately recompensed there. (b) This is all that can follow a man to eternity (c) It is one of the highest honors of our nature that we can make the present affect the future for good; that by our conduct on the earth we can lay to foundation for happiness million of ages hence."

### **The teaching of Paul.**

Paul, in particular, sets forth the concept of degrees in reward. One of the central passages is 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Be we, as the context clearly implies, Paul has reference to all believers. The term "judgment seat of Christ" is found only twice in the New Testament, here and in Romans 14:10. This judgment must be distinguished from the judgment of the nations as related in Matthew 25:31-46 and the Great White Throne judgment. More of the latter two will be mentioned later. On the passage quoted above Bancroft writes:

This is a judgment not for destiny, but for adjustment, for reward or loss, according to our works, for position in the kingdom, every man according as his works shall be. There will be a vast amount of healthy work transacted at the judgment seat of Christ. The statement that the bride hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7) surely intimates that she has been at the judgment seat before the glorious blaze of the searching, revealing light of the presence of Christ; now, all having come out, she can happily .take her place at the side of her heavenly Bridegroom.<sup>12</sup>

This judgment is not to determine one's salvation, but its purpose is to give an appraisal of the service which the individual has rendered. The believer's judgment for salvation was accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ

with His atoning work on the cross. There the sin problem, as far as God was concerned, was settled. There remains now no con-damnation for the believer (John 5:24; Romans 8:1). The child of God before the judgment seat of Christ is not the picture of a court scene, but rather that of an household affair. It is his service that is at stake, not his sonship. The Greek term for judgment as used in the passage under consideration is Bema. Harrison makes this pertinent observation concerning this term:

In the Grecian games in Athens, the old Arena contained a raised platform in which the president (or umpire) of the Arena sat. From here, he watched the contestants and here he rewarded all the winners. It was called the "Bema" or, "the reward seat." It was never used as a judicial bench.<sup>13</sup>

Since God has done his part, He now tarries with man so that he may accept that sufficient sacrifice of Christ for his own redemption. Chafer states concerning this judgment:

The saved when standing before the judgment seat of Christ at His coming, are judged according to their works, and this judgment does not determine whether they are saved or lost; it rather determines the reward or loss of reward for service which will be due to each individual believer.

Since, under grace, the character or the believer's life and service does not, and can not, in any way condition his eternal salvation, by so much, the life and service of the believer becomes a separate and unrelated issue. Ye be judged by Christ-- Whose we are and whom we serve."

Man is an accountable being. His gain or loss will be exactly that which he has earned in this earthly life. The searching light of Christ's presence will bring everything to light, both the pleasant and unpleasant deeds. Hodge comments:

The punishment Which men are to receive will be what they have earned, and therefore is in justice due to them. The reward of the righteous, although a matter of grace and not of justice, yet being, agreeable to the tenor of the covenant of grace, according to their works, it is of the nature of a reward. There is no inconsistency, therefore, in the Scriptures denying all merit to believers, and yet teaching that they shall be rewarded according to their works.

Both with regard to the wicked and the righteous, there is to be a great distinction in the recompense, which different members of each class are to receive.<sup>15</sup>

It is of particular significance that Paul states that each man shall receive "the things done in the body."

When a believer dies, he goes to be with the Lord, but awaits his resurrection body. It is the contention of several writers that each man shall receive his reward after he has his resurrection body. Thus the proper place for such a transaction is at the judgment seat of Christ. With reference to "the things done in the body" Denny states:

The things we have done in the body will come back to us, whether good or bad. Every pious thought, every thought of sin; every secret prayer, and every secret curse; every unknown deed of charity, and every hidden deed of selfishness: We will see them all again, and though we have not remembered them for years, and perhaps have forgotten them altogether, we shall have to acknowledge that they are our own, and take them to ourselves.<sup>16</sup>

In 1 Corinthians 3:8 Paul refers to the individual reward when he says, "Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." From this verse it is evident that the believer has his own specific reward. The reward will not be based on what the person intended to do, but what was actually rendered. Filson makes the following comments on this passage:

That a reward varying in each case according to the record of the workman is what Paul means can be clearly seen by the use of [Greek word], the twofold use of [Greek word], and the idea of requital which is unmistakably conveyed by the word [Greek word]. There is only one possible interpretation of this verse. Each workman will at the judgment be individually and suitably rewarded for the worthy labor of his ministry.

Every man, irrespective of his position in the social order of this life, will receive at the judgment an exact equivalent for the good he has done.

Before leaving the Scriptural basis for degrees in reward, the following is what several theologians and commentators conclude on the subject of degrees. Mullins says, "The principle of degrees in rewards and punishments is clearly established in the New Testament teaching." 18 Gifford comments:

There will doubtless be gradations in happiness, all the way from the dividing line between the saved and the lost, BR through the various orders of spiritual beings, till we reach the Infinite himself 19

Berkhof makes reference to the Fathers When they speak concerning the last judgment for believers. He says,

Most of them are of the opinion that the saints in heaven will enjoy different degrees of blessedness, commensurate with the virtues which adorned them on earth. 20

Bancroft states:

There will be degrees of blessedness and honor, proportioned to the capacity and fidelity of each soul (Luke 19:17-19; 1 Cor. 3:13-15), yet each will receive as great measure of blessing and privilege as its capacity and capability make possible, and these will depend largely upon the improvement and use of God's gifts in the present life. This final state, once entered upon, will be changeless in kind and endless in duration (Rev. 3:12; 22:11). 21

### **The Time Op Reward**

#### **The present reward.**

The time of reward is more difficult and often misunderstood. God's love is often called into question, for the ungodly seem to prosper and the godly apparently suffer loss. However, the believer is promised that the Lord will prosper him (Psalm 1:3), though it may not appear so in the physical and material realm. It must not be overlooked that the godly have a present reward (Ephesians 6:2; Philippians 4:17-19). Having these passages in view, Filson says, "it is clear that the afflicted Christian receives a present compensation of a spiritual nature." 22

#### **The future reward.**

The final giving forth of rewards will take place at the judgment or Bema seat of Christ, which will take place Shortly following the rapture of the Bride of Christ, the Church. It was previously stated that the judgment seat of Christ is to be distinguished from the judgment of nations and the Great White Throne judgment. The judgment of nations is to take place at the close of the seven year tribulation. The Great White Throne, a judgment for all unbelievers, will be executed at the close of the Lord's millennial reign. The judgment seat of Christ is one of two main events which are to take place between the rapture and the second coming of Christ. The other main event is the marriage supper of the Lamb. The second coming of Christ then follows the seven years of tribulation and initiates the millennium.

It is as this judgment seat of Christ that every work shall be rewarded and those who have been unfaithful will suffer loss. The believer does not receive his reward immediately upon leaving this world. Those who die in Christ "are now in his personal presence; but they still look forward to the day of reckoning and

recompense."<sup>23</sup> At the rapture the believer shall receive his new body "like unto his glorious body" (Philippians 3:21), and with his new body he shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ and receive his reward or realize his loss of reward.

### **Rewards and salvation.**

Dealing with the judgment seat of Christ also involves the question what relation there is between the believer's salvation and his reward. Salvation is presented in Scripture as a gift. A gift and reward are not synonymous. As a gift, salvation is not to be obtained by man's payment or working for it, nor do only a certain few receive it. It is a gift of God to all men. If man does not receive the gift, the fault is not in the gift or the Giver. If by any manner man works or pays for his salvation, it no longer retains the Scriptural meaning of the term. God bestows both the gift and the reward on the believer by grace. The former deals with salvation, the latter with service. Chafer recognizes the difference between gift and reward when he says:

The doctrine of rewards is the necessary counterpart of the doctrine of salvation by grace. Since God does not, and cannot, reckon the believer's merit or works to the account of his salvation, it is required that the believer's good works shall be divinely acknowledged. The saved one owes nothing to God in payment for salvation which is bestowed as a gift; but he does owe God a life of undivided devotion, and for this life of devotion there is promised a reward in Heaven.<sup>24</sup>

Salvation as a gift can not be lost; rewards for service are subject to loss. The gift is a present possession, but the finality of rewards are to be given at the judgment seat of Christ. Since man will receive according to what he has done, it is evident that the range of service among believers varies as does, for example, the individual's production in a factory. However, rewards are to be given not with respect to the quantity of work, but rather in what spirit it was rendered (Mark 12:41-44). If the believer does his works to be seen of men, he has his reward and need not look for another. It is of supreme importance that God's people should walk worthy of their high calling (Ephesians 4:1).

The reward of the believer will be in proportion to the faithfulness of his service for God in using the talents with which God has endowed him. The rewards, therefore, will differ according to faithfulness or unfaithfulness of our life and service. Faith in Jesus Christ saves the believer, but his position in the future life, together with the measure of his rewards will depend upon his works. Thus it comes to pass that a man may be saved, "so as by fire," i.e., saved because of his faith but his life's work lost.<sup>25</sup>

"Moreover it is required of a man that he be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2). It is this principle that the concept of degrees of reward is ultimately based on, namely, faithfulness or unfaithfulness. Whether it is salvation or reward, both originate from the grace of God. Having distinguished between a gift and reward, the next subject of consideration is the nature of reward.

### **The Nature Of Reward**

#### **Crowns.**

The nature of rewards is partly expressed in the subject of crowns. The Christian's reward is sometimes mentioned as a "prize" (1 Corinthians 9:24), and sometimes as a "crown" (1 Corinthians 9:25). God offers five crowns or rewards for definite Christian service. Some Christians will receive no rewards while others will receive from one to five crowns. Believers are exhorted: "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (2 John 8).

The first crown is the crown of life "for faithfulness under trial--martyr's crown, for those who live the martyr's life and die the martyr's death (Yams 1:12; Revelation 2:10 )."<sup>26</sup> Harrison called this the "Lover's crown" for it is promised to those that love him.<sup>27</sup>

The second crown is a crown of glory; "the under-shepherd's crown, for feeding and caring for those entrusted to his care (1 Peter 5:4 cf. Heb. 2:7; John 17:22)."<sup>28</sup>

The third is the crown of righteousness which is the "triumphant soldier's, the successful runner's, the faithful steward's crown (2 Timothy 4:7,8).<sup>029</sup> The phrase "to be laid away" says Ellicott, "is applied to both future" rewards, as here and Col. 1:5, . . . and to future punishments, and in fact to anything which is set aside, as it were as a treasure, for future uses and applications.

This crown says Barnes is:

A crown won in the cause of righteousness, and conferred as the reward of his conflicts and efforts in the cause of holiness. It was not the crown of ambition; it was not a garland won in struggles for earthly distinction; it was that Which was the appropriate reward of his efforts to be personally holy, and to spread the principles of holiness as far as possible through the world.

As there is a distinction between gift and reward, so also there is a distinction between the gift of righteousness and the crown of righteousness. Ironside makes this observation:

There is a difference between the gift of righteousness and the crown of righteousness. Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ receives the gift of righteousness . . . But the crown of righteousness is something quite different. It is the reward that is given to those who have lived righteous lives as they have waited expectantly for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord, the righteous Judge, will sit on the judgment-seat where the works of the believers will be examined.<sup>32</sup>

The fourth is the crown of rejoicing or the soul-winner's crown (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; Daniel 12:1-3). The believer will know those whom he has won to the Lord and they will be his crown of rejoicing in heaven." Those lukewarm Christians who have no love for the lost and express no desire to join in any endeavor to win the lost for Christ, will not receive this reward.

The fifth crown is the incorruptible crown of self-mastery (1 Corinthians 9:25-27). Harrison considers this the "Runner's crown."<sup>34</sup> "The two lessons" says Edwards, "the apostle wishes to teach are the difficulty of winning and the unspeakable worth of the prize."<sup>35</sup> There is a marked contrast between the prize the believer receives and the one that the victors received in the ancient games. The pine crown which the judge put on the victor's head in the Isthmian games, while it was the emblem of glory, was at the same time the emblem of the transitory character of that glory. Par the spiritual victor there is reserved an unfading crown!<sup>36</sup>

The child of God is encouraged by the hope of receiving an unfading crown. There are crowns for all, but only those who meet God's standard will receive them. Filson summarizes the thought of the nature of reward this way:

It is eternal life which brings glory, honor and peace. It is rest. It is an imperishable crown, a prize, a hope laid up for those worthy, an inheritance. All these terms refer to the blessed life of the coming Kingdom, Which is considered as a reward given at the judgment.<sup>37</sup>

### **Basis For The Following Chapters**

The concept of degrees in rewards is readily accepted by the majority of people. As has been shown in the previous pages, the doctrine is Scriptural. The principle involved with degrees in reward is inseparably connected with that of punishment or retribution. The basis for the one is automatically the foundation for the other. Mullins states this fact clearly by saying:

That as there are degrees in the rewards of the righteous, so also there are degrees in the punishment of the unrighteous. The Judge of all the earth will do right. We need have no misgivings at this point. The doctrine of degrees in rewards and punishments is one of the most clearly revealed doctrines of Scripture.<sup>38</sup>

**Justice of God.**

Since God is just, omnipotent, and omniscient, he is able to reward every believer according to his works. The God Who deals with the works of the believers, also judges the works of the unbelievers. God can not overlook sin, no matter who commits it. When a child of God sins, he has an Advocate who pleads his case before God (1 John 2:2). The unbeliever stands before God condemned.

The doctrine of punishment is inseparable from the doctrine of reward. Rewards and punishments are the necessary opposite alternatives in the experience of moral agents subject to the disorganization of moral evil.

**Man's accountability.**

Man is not just a machine that God operates. Since the first man Adam, he has been a responsible being and has been held accountable to God for his actions. God did not punish Adam before he sinned, but when he did sin, Adam knew it and suffered the consequences. There is not a move that man can make but that God knows all about it. The phrase "Thou God seest me" (Genesis 16:13) embodies more truth than the average man realizes. Though the unbelievers may not accept the doctrine of degrees in punishment, that gives them no license to continue or even to indulge in sin.

God's word does not have to receive the approval of man for it to become authority; it is authority and is final by itself. Had Christ not mentioned anything about degrees of punishment, and had it occurred but once in the Bible, it would still stand as a doctrine to be believed. "If faith predicates something of the redeemed, it must predicate something also of those who spurn redemption."<sup>40</sup> Carman states the importance of claiming the truth of both reward and punishment when he says:

Punishment and reward are co-extensive and stand or fall together. They are both in the human consciousness, the soul's honest claim for reward, the soul's honest call for punishment.

**Separate judgments.**

It has been stated that over a millennium of years separates the judgment seat of Christ and the Great White Throne judgment. Neither of these judgments determine the individual's destiny: that is settled before they appear there. Since these judgments do not determine destiny, there must then be a different purpose for them. The presence of the individual at either judgment is the result of an earlier decision. There is no period of probation after death.

For the believer, his works determine the degrees of reward. Thus the purpose of the unsaved at the Great White Throne judgment is for the Lord to portion our punishment individually according to their own deserts. God will give man exactly that which man has imposed upon himself. God does not separate a man from his works, whether it be the believer or the unbeliever. Their works follow both; for the one it is reward, and the other it is punishment.

**1961**

**Sterling W. Sill (1903—1994), Assistant to Quorum of the Twelve  
The Glory of the Sun & A Journey through Hell  
Chapters in book entitled "The Glory of the Sun"**

**The Glory of the Sun**

SOME friends of ours have recently returned from a trip abroad. Most of their time away was spent in the Holy Land. When they began planning this trip two years ago, they wrote to the steamship companies, airlines, travel bureaus and libraries for information about the places and peoples they expected to visit. Inasmuch as their special interests centered in Palestine they had a large map especially prepared on which the places, events and dates of their particular interest were noted. Then for nearly two years, with the help



of some good reference books, they restudied every chapter in the Bible. Upon their return they indicated that this had been one of the most wonderful experiences of their lives. The benefit they had received had been in proportion to the preparation that they had made.

With this in mind I would like to mention another important journey. In this country we pride ourselves on being extensive travelers. We like to go to new places and see new things and have wonderful experiences. Isn't it interesting then to remember that everyone of us already has a reservation, for the most important and the most exciting trip that anyone will ever make? That is when we will take that final trip beyond the boundaries of mortality.

There is a very important similarity between this post-mortal journey and some others that we are familiar with, in that in each case the benefit received will be in proportion to the preparation made. In fact most all of life is preparation. We prepare for school, we prepare for marriage, we prepare for our life's work, we prepare for death. In the pre existence we prepared for mortality. In mortality we are preparing for eternal life.

Because of the overwhelming importance of this scheduled journey and the new life that it will inaugurate, God himself has provided us with the sacred scriptures to serve us as an authentic guide, a kind of travel literature by which we may prepare for a magnificent experience beyond this life. The gateway to immortality is death, and because we usually think of death as unpleasant, we sometimes fail to make adequate preparation for it. But lack of preparation does not cancel the trip, it just changes the destination.

The school of mortality is like any other school in that only those who have made satisfactory preparation will receive the highest awards. The scriptures tell us that there is one place above all others that we should plan to attain. The Apostle Paul mentioned this in an interesting letter sent to the members of the Church at Corinth. He indicated to them that they had a choice between three possible destinations, each greatly differing in desirability from the others.

He pointed out that after the resurrection those who had not "sinned unto death" would be classified into three main groups according to their preparation. He said,

There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. (I Cor. 15:40-42)

Other scriptures also point out the fact that the most desirable of these kingdoms is the one that Paul refers to as "the glory of the sun." It excels the other kingdoms in glory as the blazing noonday sun excels the soft light of the moon or the twinkle of a tiny star. This is the glory that God himself has instructed us to prepare for. Every single commandment that he has given has to do with the celestial kingdom.

The Lord has given no direction about getting into either of the lesser kingdoms. We get into these only by the degree of our default from the celestial.

In this same letter to the Corinthians Paul said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (I Cor. 2:9)

We can imagine luxury, elegance and beauty costing billions of dollars. In America we speak of our rising standard of living. But who can even conceive of the standard of living in this place where God himself dwells in the "glory of the sun."

In our own day some wonderful things have happened having a direct bearing on our eternal success. Direct revelations from God have vastly enriched our travel literature and given us far greater knowledge about our own future possibilities. On February 6, 1832, at Hyrum, Ohio, the Lord gave to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon a vision regarding these three kingdoms of glory spoken of by Paul. He also told them about another kingdom not mentioned by Paul which is not a kingdom of glory. This vision is recorded word for word in the 76th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants. From any standpoint it is one of the greatest documents in all human literature.

In the 51st to the 53rd verse the Lord tells us exactly how to qualify for the celestial kingdom. He tells us a great deal about what it will be like. There will be no sin there. Celestial glory is the order in which God himself dwells. The glory of God is so great that no mortal in his natural state can live in God's presence. (D & C 67:11-13)

The Lord has also told us where this glory will be located. After the earth has filled the measure of its creation it will go through a series of changes and find its final destiny as the celestial kingdom. When God created this earth he looked upon it and pronounced it very good. Then the earth was defiled by the sins of its inhabitants. But that curse will be removed and after the millennium and the final judgment, the earth shall be purified, resurrected, glorified and celestialized to become the permanent abode of those who have lived here and have qualified for celestial glory. But God has made it very clear that if we desire to live here eternally we must be prepared. His exact words are, "If you will that I should grant you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourself by doing the things that I have commanded you." This is not just some man's idea, this is the word of the Lord. He says:

... he that endureth in faith and doeth my will, the same shall overcome, and shall receive an inheritance upon the earth when the day of transfiguration shall come; When the earth shall be transfigured, even according to the pattern which was shown unto mine apostles upon the mount; of which account the fulness ye have not yet received. (D & C 63:20-21)

On December 27, 1832 the Lord added another important chapter to our great literature on this subject known as the 88th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants. Speaking of the earth he said:

For after it hath filled the measure of its creation, it shall be crowned with glory, even with the presence of God the Father;

That bodies who are of the celestial kingdom may possess it forever and ever; for, for this intent was it made and created, and for this intent are they sanctified.

The Lord has also told us that those who are not qualified must be cast out. He says,

And they who are not sanctified through the law which I have given unto you, even the law of Christ, must inherit another kingdom, even that of a terrestrial kingdom, or that of a telestial kingdom.

For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory.

And he who cannot abide the law of a terrestrial kingdom cannot abide a terrestrial glory.

And he who cannot abide the law of a telestial kingdom cannot abide a telestial glory. Therefore he is not meet for a kingdom of glory. Therefore he must abide a kingdom which is not a kingdom of glory.

And again, verily I say unto you, the earth abideth the law of a celestial kingdom, for it filleth the measure of its creation and transgresseth not the law—

Wherefore, it shall be sanctified; yea, notwithstanding it shall die, it shall be quickened again, and shall abide the power by which it is quickened, and the righteous shall inherit it." (D & C 88:19-26)

Not only will the earth be celestialized and beautiful, but all who live upon it will be resurrected celestial personages capable of receiving a fulness of celestial glory. Try to understand what you, as a celestial personage, will be like, with quickened senses, amplified powers of perception, and vastly increased capacity for understanding and happiness, made suitable to live in the presence of God.

The Lord says of all such, "These are they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all, whose glory the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical." (D & C 76:70) But a celestial person is not just a celestial body. The Lord says that the celestial excels in all things. (D & C 76:92) That means a celestial mind, a celestial personality, a celestial family and celestial friends. Beginning in the 55th verse of Section 76 the Lord says,

They are they into whose hands the father hath given all things.

They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory;

And are priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son.

Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God. (D & C 76:55-58)

What an inspiring portrayal of your possible dignity and destiny!

Now just suppose that we don't qualify. Suppose that we have paid insufficient attention to our inspired literature in which the Lord is trying to give us direction. Suppose that we must then content ourselves with one of the lower kingdoms with something less fine and far less satisfying. Suppose that we are among those that must be cast out, that we must live elsewhere forever, not only away from our family and friends but also excluded from the presence of God. The scripture speaks of outer darkness. It tells of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Who can understand the depth to which our grief may go when we realize that we have missed the celestial kingdom? The Prophet Joseph Smith said that the greatest misery of departed spirits is to know that they come short of the glory that others enjoy that they could have had." (H. of C., Vol. 5:425)

Some of us even in this life have known the intense regret that can come because of a wasted opportunity or some defiling sin. "Of all sad words of tongue or pen the saddest are these, It might have been." The most devastating of all human emotions is the sense of being alone, of being unwanted, of being unworthy. We were born on this earth; we were placed here to get ready; we inherited the right to live here forever, unless through our own disobedience and sin we disqualify ourselves.

In conclusion I would like to read a statement made many years ago by President Charles W. Penrose about the earth when it becomes celestialized. He said,

The earth will die like its products but it will be quickened again and resurrected to celestial glory. It has been born of the water and will be born of the spirit, purified by fire, from the corruption that once defiled it, developed into its perfections as one of the family of worlds fit for the Creator's presence. All its latent light awakened into scintillating action, it will move up into its place among the orbs governed by celestial time, shining like a sea of glass mingled with fire. Every tint and color of the heavenly bow radiates from its surface.

The ransomed of the Lord will dwell upon it. The highest beings of the ancient orbs will visit it. The garden of God will again adorn it. The heavenly government will prevail in every part. Jesus will reign as its king. The river of life will flow from the regal throne. The tree of life whose leaves were for the healing of the nations will flourish upon the banks of the heavenly stream and its golden fruit will be free for the white-robed throngs that they may eat and live forever. This perfected earth with its saved inhabitants will then be presented to the Eternal Father as the finished work of Christ.

What a thrilling experience lies ahead if we are only able to translate the word of the Lord into appropriate preparation and thereby qualify, with our families and friends to live forever in that wonderful place which has been so aptly described as "the glory of the sun!"

### **A Journey through Hell**

IN THE EARLY part of the fourteenth century, the Italian poet, Dante, wrote his great literary masterpiece entitled *The Divine Comedy*. In those days a comedy was not something that was funny. A comedy was something with a happy ending. A more understandable title for our day would have been "The Divine Experience" or "The Divine Story." Thomas Carlyle said that in his opinion *The Divine Comedy* was the most remarkable of all books. It was based on the scriptures, to which Dante added generously out of his own imagination.

The book is divided into three parts. Part one is "The Inferno." It tells of an imaginary trip which Dante made through hell. In Dante's story hell was the place where departed spirits were consigned who were forever lost. These were the ones whose lives were so warped, twisted, and perverted, that there was no hope. Then Dante traveled through a second kingdom which he called "Purgatory." This was a place of purification where certain spirits who had not sinned unto death were cleansed through suffering, then educated, and made worthy to ascend unto heaven. The Bible refers us to this place as the place where Jesus went and preached to the spirits in prison who had been disobedient in the days of Noah some twenty-five centuries earlier. (I Peter 3:19-20)

Then the happy ending came when Dante concluded his journey in what he refers to as "Paradise" which was that place where the righteous lived forever with God. Dante believed that it was his mission in life to show men hell, and that seems to me to be a necessary and a very important mission. However, it is a pretty difficult assignment because generally we don't like to think about things that are unpleasant, even to avoid them. Think how reluctant we are to think or talk about death or the consequences of sin, and so we bury our heads in the sand so to speak, to hide from those truths that we do not like. But unpleasant things do not cease to exist just because they are ignored. And a far better way to avoid an unpleasant prospective situation is to do a lot of the right kind of thinking about it in advance.

One of our biggest problems so far as our eternal exaltation is concerned is that we are such incurable optimists. We usually have an overwhelming, unshakeable belief in our own "happy ending," regardless of what we do leading up to it. But Jesus talked about many unpleasant things such as repentance, and the possibility that even some of the elect may be lost. He probably talked as much about hell as he did about heaven. He said, ". . . wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat." (Matt. 7:13) Yet comparatively very few people ever think of themselves as being in that particular group.

Shakespeare was probably trying to get us to think a little more realistically about our own situation as over

one-half of all of his plays were tragedies. Shakespeare understood what is very important for us to understand, that unless we do something specific about it, every life does not have a happy ending.

We are reminded of our natural optimism when we say that in our business affairs we work under "the profit system." That is just not true. We work under the profit and loss system, and that is the same system that regulates our eternal welfare.

With the thought in mind of helping ourselves to avoid this useless loss, suppose that we take a mental journey similar to the one that Dante took. And a good place to begin is where Dante began—in hell.

It was reported that a certain minister once announced that his next Sunday's sermon would be about hell. A newspaper man went to hear him and then commented that the minister was certainly full of his subject. But it is thought to be a very good idea at least to get enough of the ideas about hell into our minds that we may avoid actually going there in person. Hell must be a very exciting place, but there are a great many advantages to first making this trip in the imagination. One advantage is that it is a little easier to get out if we don't want to stay. Another advantage is that we may not want to go there in the first place.

I would like to point out in passing that hell is a divine institution. It was not established by Satan as some of our present-day institutions seem to have been. Hell was established by God for a very important purpose. You remember that in the council of heaven Lucifer rebelled and drew away one-third of all of the hosts of heaven after him. The Lord said, "And they were thrust down and thus came the devil and his angels: And, behold, there is a place prepared for them from the beginning, which place is hell" (D & C 29:37-38) There are some people who don't believe in hell. Many others have just never thought about it either one way or the other.

Of course, we have the direct word of God on many occasions that there is a hell. Reason also tells us that there must be a hell. We know that the basic law of the universe is this unchangeable, irrevocable law of the harvest that says "Whatsoever a man soweth, that must he also reap." If everyone is going to be judged according to his works, then if there is a heaven there must be a hell. In the great enterprise of human salvation there must be different places for instruction and reformation, rewards and punishments. Unfortunately Satan and his angels are not going to occupy hell alone. In discussing the outcome of the judgment the Lord said, "And the righteous shall be gathered on my right hand unto eternal life; and the wicked on my left hand will I be ashamed to own before the Father. Wherefore, I will say unto them—Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (1D & C 29:27-28)

In spite of its unpleasantness hell was established for a good purpose, just as penitentiaries are established for a good purpose, and mental hospitals are established for a good purpose, and reform schools and the organizations of Alcoholic Anonymous are established for a good purpose. There is a certain purification that sometimes can best be brought about only through suffering. The members of some religious organizations do what they call "whipping the flesh." They deliberately torture themselves, to help themselves understand the meaning of pain. They believe that a little suffering now may help them to avoid a lot of suffering later on.

But one of the most important success factors in life is to settle definitely our minds about the existence of hell. Dr. William E. Orchard, a noted religious leader, was once asked whether or not he thought the concept of hell might now be safely abandoned in this day of education and enlightenment. With a strange quietness in his manner Dr. Orchard replied, "I would not bank on it if I were you."

A student once asked his Sunday School teacher, "Is there a hell?" The teacher replied, "There is a hell all right, but we won't go into that now." But Dante thought it was important that we should go in occasionally.

The Prophet Joseph Smith once said, "If you could gaze into heaven for five minutes, you would learn more than by reading all of the books that have ever been written on the subject." But we might also learn a great deal by gazing into hell for five minutes. That is, human nature is often more effectively motivated by the prospect of pain or loss, than by a comparable promise of reward. But if we go about it right, we can get good from both the promise of rewards, and a foreknowledge of punishments. Of course, no one is ever sent to hell by compulsion. Everyone who goes there goes there voluntarily by his own choices. And everyone who goes to

hell goes there only because he just hasn't made definite plans not to go there. No one needs to go to hell who definitely makes up his mind to go some other place. And if the "picturing power" of our minds is sufficiently effective, we will be able to make some firm decisions about where we want to go, if as Dante did we visit all three places in advance. Suppose then that we first go in imagination and stand before the great gate of Dante's hell and consider its challenging inscription which reads as follows:

Through me you pass into a world of woe  
Through me you enter into eternal pain;  
Through me you join with souls forever lost  
All hope abandon ye who enter here.

Suppose that we become familiar with the real hell by reading the inspired words of the great scriptures and think about the importance of such messages as those contained in the 40th chapter of Alma, the 76th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the sixteenth chapter of Luke, and many others.

It is thought that a thorough understanding of these passages pertaining to hell would forever free us from our difficult problems in obtaining eternal life. That is, it would not be very difficult to forsake our sins and get rid of our weaknesses if occasionally we could clearly see in advance the tragic consequences of our evil.

In trying to show us these kingdoms of hell and purgatory Dante pictures a series of circles or elevations. The top levels are inhabited by the spirits who have sinned least. And then as we descend from one layer to another into the depths of hell, the corruption and consequent suffering increases. Dante tries to picture the worst conceivable suffering of which his mind was capable. But the human imagination even at best is very limited in its power, and is not capable of giving more than a faint suggestion of the real experience. For example, note the difference between a toothache in your imagination and one in your tooth. For the same reason it is probable that no matter how vivid a description of hell might be, it must of necessity fall far short in its ability to convey to our minds the full impression of those who will actually suffer there. But to see it as clearly as possible in our minds can be a wonderfully helpful experience.

Suppose that we could go as Jesus did and talk with these spirits who had been confined to their prison house for many centuries. Just suppose that we could feel their regret and understand their suffering. Or suppose that we could learn first hand from them what brought them to this unhappy place. We would probably recognize a great many of our own personal sins. It has been pointed out that there are no new sins, there are only new sinners. As an example, one of hell's prisoners said to Dante, "Not what I did but what I failed to do lost me the right to live with God on high." And then from the point of view of his own hindsight he said, "This desire for God and goodness I knew too late."

One of hell's groups said,

Our lukewarm eagerness for doing good  
brought us to this place of misery.

Another said,

We could not endure the toil unto the end  
and thereby forever lost the glory of our lives.

As Dante went into the lower regions he visited with some of those unfortunates who had sinned unto death. These had lived such lives that they could never be redeemed. For them there was no forgiveness. We do not know how intense either mental or physical suffering can be. We know that it can be severe enough to send one insane. And Dante pictures some of hell's inmates as afflicted with madness because some incurable grief had unhinged their minds.

One of hell's spirits said to Dante,

We beg that if ever you escape from these dark places  
to look again upon the stars of heaven,  
see that ye speak of us to other men.

And then attempting to discharge that obligation in our interests, Dante said, "Reader, as God may grant you reason, gather wisdom from reading this and then take council with yourself." We should also take council with God and his word, which tells us that there are at least two ways to cleanse ourselves from sin. One is by suffering. A great line in latter-day scripture says,

For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;  
But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; Which suffering caused myself, even God,  
the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and  
spirit—and would that I might not drink of the bitter cup, and shrink.D & C 19:16-18)

The other way is repentance, as indicated by Walter Malone's poem entitled "Opportunity." He said:

Art thou an idler, then rouse thee from thy spell  
Art thou a sinner, sin may be forgiven.  
Each morning gives thee wings to Bee from hell.  
Each night a star to guide thy soul to heaven.

God has promised us that we may have any blessing that we are willing to live and we must pay the awful penalty of every sin. This helpful experience, of an occasional mental journey beyond the borders of mortality may help us to avoid the suffering of hell and find a happy ending in the celestial kingdom of God.

**1964**

**Craig J. Ostler and Joseph Fielding McConkie, BYU Religious Scholars**

**Section 76: Revelations of the Restoration**

**A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants and Other Modern Revelations**

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### **Section 76**

Date: 16 February 1832

Place: Hiram, Ohio

After returning to Hiram from the Amherst conference, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon resumed their labors on the translation of the New Testament. The vision recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76 was received while they were translating John 5:29.

Philo Dibble, one of a dozen men present when this vision was received, said that he saw the glory and felt the power but did not see the vision. He described the event by saying:

"Joseph would, at intervals, say: 'what do I see?' . . . Then he would relate what he had seen or what he was looking at. Then Sidney replied, 'I see the same.' Presently Sidney would say, 'what do I see?' and would repeat what he had seen or was seeing, and Joseph would reply, 'I see the same.'

"This manner of conversation was repeated at short intervals to the end of the vision, and during the whole time not a word was spoken by any other person. Not a sound nor motion made by anyone but Joseph and Sidney, and it seemed to me that they never moved a joint or limb during the time I was there, which I think was over an hour, and to the end of the vision.

"Joseph sat firmly and calmly all the time in the midst of a magnificent glory, but Sidney sat limp and pale, apparently as limber as a rag, observing which, Joseph remarked, smilingly, 'Sidney is not used to it as I am'" ("Recollections," 27:303-4).

Adding to that recollection on another occasion, Philo Dibble observed that "Joseph wore black clothes, but at this time seemed to be dressed in an element of glorious white, and his face shone as if it were transparent, but I did not see the same glory attending Sidney. Joseph appeared as strong as a lion, but Sidney seemed as weak as water, and Joseph, noticing his condition smiled and said, 'Brother Sidney is not as used to it as I am'" ("Philo Dibble's Narrative," 81).

"Nothing could be more pleasing to the Saints upon the order of the kingdom of the Lord, than the light which burst upon the world through the foregoing vision. Every law, every commandment, every promise, every truth, and every point touching the destiny of man, from Genesis to Revelation, where the purity of the scriptures remain unsullied by the folly of men, go to show the perfection of the theory [of different degrees of glory in the future life] and witnesses the fact that that document is a transcript from the records of the eternal world. The sublimity of the ideas; the purity of the language; the scope for action; the continued duration for completion, in order that the heirs of salvation may confess the Lord and bow the knee; the rewards for faithfulness, and the punishments for sins, are so much beyond the narrow-mindedness of men, that every honest man is constrained to exclaim: 'It came from God.'" (Smith, History of the Church, 1:252-53).

Initially, the revelation was not as well received by the Saints as would be supposed. Brigham Young explained, "When God revealed to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon that there was a place prepared for all, according to the light they had received and their rejection of evil and practice of good, it was a great trial to many, and some apostatized because God was not going to send to everlasting punishment heathens and infants, but had a place of salvation, in due time, for all and would bless the honest and virtuous and truthful, whether they ever belonged to any church or not" (Journal of Discourses, 16:42).

On 1 February 1843 there appeared in the Times and Seasons (4:81-85) a short poem by W. W. Phelps addressed to Joseph Smith, entitled Vade Mecum ("go with me"), which was an appeal that in death he and the Prophet might go together to the paradise of God to find refuge there. Accompanying Vade Mecum was a much longer poetic response by the Prophet, A Vision, which consisted of a poetic rephrasing of Doctrine and Covenants 76 with some interpretive commentary. The Prophet's poetic response is perhaps the most authoritative and helpful commentary we have on this revelation (see page 540).

### **The Greatness of God**

Doctrine and Covenants 76:1-4

76:1 Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth. This revelation is for the inhabitants of both heaven and earth. The gospel is the same among the living and the dead. God is the same, the principles of salvation are the same, the necessity of faith, repentance, and baptism are the same, and the system by which those principles are taught is the same. Thus the revelation of those principles must also be the same. As the fulness of the gospel goes forth to those of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people by the Book of Mormon, so it must go forth in the same manner among their kindred dead. Indeed, its testimony is announced to be "a voice of gladness for the living and the dead" (D&C 128:19). The dead cannot be blessed by the authority restored to the living unless they are also blessed by the doctrines restored to them. So it is that "the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free" (D&C 128:22; Isaiah 1:2; Deuteronomy 32:1).

The Lord is God. Jesus Christ is God. The God of the prophets of the Old Testament, the Lord Jehovah, was the promised Savior, Redeemer, Deliverer, and Messiah of the New Testament. He was and is the Lord Jesus Christ. This same truth is sustained by the prophets of the Book of Mormon. For instance, Nephi prophesied that when "the very God of Israel" dwelt among men, they would "set him at naught, and hearken not to the voice of his counsels" and would themselves "be scourged by all people, because they crucify the God of Israel" (1 Nephi 19:7, 13). A perfect witness that Israel's God and Mary's Son were one and the same was



borne by the resurrected Jesus to the Nephites in these words: "I am Jesus Christ. . . . Come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world" (3 Nephi 11:10-14).

Beside him there is no Savior. See commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 76:14, 22, 23-24.

76:4 From eternity to eternity he is the same. "From eternity to eternity means from the spirit existence through the probation which we are in, and then back again to the eternal existence which will follow. Surely this is everlasting, for when we receive the resurrection, we will never die. We all existed in the first eternity. I think I can say of myself and others, we are from eternity; and we will be to eternity everlasting, if we receive the exaltation. The intelligent part of man was never created but always existed. That is true of each of us as well as it is of God, yet we are born sons and daughters of God in the spirit and are destined to exist forever. Those who become like God will also be from eternity to eternity" (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:12).

"In other words Christ, as an eternal, exalted Being, never varies; from one eternity to the next he is the same. From pre-existence to pre-existence his course goes on in one eternal round, and so will it be with all exalted beings. Those who become gods will then be from eternity to eternity, everlastingly the same, always possessing the fullness of all things and multiplying their race without end" (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 240).

### **All Things to be Revealed to the Faithful**

Doctrine and Covenants 76:5-10

76:5-10 Those who serve God in righteousness and truth become heirs to the riches of his kingdom. The rewards he promises include an understanding of those things held to be of greatest worth in the heavenly realm. No mention is made here of the kind of things so often envied by those whose hearts are set upon the honors and riches of this world. Rather, the promise of heaven centers in a knowledge of things past and future as they pertain to the kingdom of God. Such knowledge embraces the wonders of eternity and the glory of things to come. It centers in wisdom beyond that known to the wisest and most prudent of men. The treasure least known to the world, and yet that which is of greatest worth, is that knowledge that comes only by way of revelation. It is God's alone to give, and he has promised the wisdom of heaven in full measure to his faithful servants. Truly, the "glory of God is intelligence" (D&C 93:36).

This promise extends to all faithful Saints. It stands independent of office or position, of gender or of age. Whether our position be high or low, whether we stand in the public view or are entirely shielded from it, it is the purity of our soul and of our service, not the position we hold, that opens the windows of heaven to us. To be righteous is to be justified; it is to follow a course that is approved by the Lord. It will be recalled, for instance, that Christ was baptized "to fulfil all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). Those who are righteous comply with all the laws and ordinances of the gospel. They do the right thing for the right reason. They act out of a proper understanding of gospel principles.

One cannot serve the Lord in ignorance or error. We must serve in "truth," that is, according to the light of heaven and in a course that is constant or steadfast. Those serving after this pattern will enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost, the spirit of revelation, and will have the heavens opened to them.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie illustrated the principles involved by sharing this experience: "When I was a mission president in Australia, I once said to those of my missionaries in Tasmania: 'Tomorrow we shall climb Mt. Wellington and hold our missionary meeting on the top. We shall there seek to commune with the Lord and partake of his Spirit.'

"We made the climb, and while on top of the peak we visited a television broadcasting station. A bright young man explained to us in words I had never heard, and using principles I could not and do not understand, how the sounds and scenes of television were broadcast into the valley below.

"That night, back in the city of Hobart, my two young sons and I sat before a television set that was tuned to the proper wave band, and we saw and heard and experienced what had been described to us in words.

"Now I think this illustrates perfectly what is involved in the receipt of revelation and the seeing of visions. We can read about visions and revelations in the records of the past, we can study the inspired writings of people who had the fullness of the gospel in their day, but we cannot comprehend what is involved until we see and hear and experience for ourselves.

"This Tabernacle is now full of words and music. Handel's Messiah is being sung, and the world's statesmen are propagandizing their people. But we do not hear any of it.

"This Tabernacle is full of scenes from Vietnam and Washington. There is even a picture of men walking on the surface of the moon. But we are not seeing these things. The minute, however, in which we tune a radio to the proper wave band and tune a television receiving set on the proper channel, we begin to hear and see and experience what otherwise remains completely unknown to us.

"And so it is with the revelations and visions of eternity. They are around us all the time. This Tabernacle is full of the same things which are recorded in the scriptures and much more. The vision of the degrees of glory is being broadcast before us, but we do not hear or see or experience because we have not tuned our souls to the wave band on which the Holy Ghost is broadcasting. . . .

"How this is done we do not know. We cannot comprehend God or the laws by which he governs the universe. But that it does happen we know because here in the valley below, when we attune our souls to the Infinite, we hear and see and experience the things of God.

"The laws governing radio and television have existed from the time of Adam to the present moment, but only in modern times have men heard and seen and experienced these miraculous things. And the laws have always existed whereby men can see visions, hear the voice of God, and partake of the things of the Spirit. But millions of people everywhere live and die without tasting the good word of God, because they do not obey the laws which implant the revelations of the Lord in their souls" (Conference Report, April 1971, 98-99).

76:5 Fear me. The fear of God has nothing to do with fright. It is rather a reverential awe that elicits the highest behavior from humankind.

Here the Lord tells us that he is "merciful and gracious" to those who fear him and serve him in "righteousness and in truth" to the end of their lives. The text attests that neither God's mercy nor his grace is unconditional. As to God's mercy, Alma testified that "whosoever repenteth shall find mercy," and again that "God is merciful unto all who believe on his name" (Alma 32:13, 22). From ancient times the Lord has promised his mercy to those who love him and keep his commandments (Exodus 20:6; Deuteronomy 5:10). We are told that the Lord showed mercy to David "according as he walked before [him] in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart" (1 Kings 3:6). Standing before the altar of the Lord, Solomon declared, "Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart" (1 Kings 8:23). As the Psalmist noted, "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies" (Psalm 25:10). Christ himself, speaking to his newly called apostles, said, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7). Thus to enjoy the graciousness of God is to be blessed and favored by him.

76:7 Will I reveal all mysteries. In the theological sense, a mystery is something known by revelation. In some instances rituals are also referred to as mysteries because participation in them has the effect of unlocking the heavens. Without revelation, everything that pertains to God, to his kingdom, or to the life beyond this mortal sphere remains a mystery.

In the Prophet Joseph Smith's inspired poem A Vision, the stanza standing opposite this verse reads:

From the council in Kolob, to time on the earth.  
And for ages to come unto them I will show  
My pleasure & will, what my kingdom will do:  
Eternity's wonders they truly shall know. (Times and Seasons, 4:82)

From this it would appear that the Grand Council in Heaven took place on Kolob, which we learn from the book of Abraham is the planet nearest to the throne of God (Abraham 3:3; Facsimile 2, Explanation, Figure 1). This stanza may suggest that Kolob was our place of residence during our premortal estate.

### **The Resurrections of the Just and the Unjust**

Doctrine and Covenants 76:11-18

76:13 Who was in the bosom of the Father. Christ was "Beloved and Chosen from the beginning" (Moses 4:2) because he "was in the bosom of the Father"; that is, he was perfectly at one with the Father.

76:14 The record which we bear is the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. All that Joseph Smith taught in his role as a prophet, seer, and revelator about Christ becomes part of his testimony of Christ. Testimony is knowledge. One's competence as a witness is predicated on his or her knowledge. The fulness of Joseph Smith's testimony of Christ embraces all that the Prophet revealed, all that he taught, and all that he understood about the Only Begotten of the Father. Thus Joseph Smith becomes the great revelator, testator, and teacher of Christ for this dispensation. No man of whom we have record has revealed and taught more truth about Christ than Joseph Smith. The composite of all that he taught constitutes his testimony of Christ. This revelation (D&C 76) adds substantially to that testimony, particularly by the manner in which it extends his saving role to the inhabitants of worlds without number (v. 24).

With whom we conversed. To converse may also mean to dwell with or to associate with, as well as to have dialogue with.

76:15 The work of translation. This refers to the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible.

76:16 Son of Man. Jesus Christ is the Son of Man, meaning the Son of "Man of Holiness," or God the Father (Moses 6:57; 7:35).

76:18 This caused us to marvel. As Joseph Smith worked on his inspired translation of the Bible, he read that those who had done "good" would come forth in the resurrection "of life," while those who had done "evil" were to come forth in the resurrection "of damnation" (John 5:29). At the bidding of the Spirit, the word life was changed to read just and the word damnation was changed to read unjust. Apparently it was this change that caused Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to marvel. The context of the next verse suggests that they made the change at the direction of the Spirit without knowing why. Desirous to understand the reason for this change, they "meditated upon these things" (v. 19) and were granted this revelation. This in turn indicates that the Prophet's explanation in the introduction to this revelation that it was self-evident that much had been lost or taken from the writings of the ancient prophets before the Bible was compiled and that "Heaven" must include more kingdoms than one was the result of later reflection and not necessarily clear to him when this revelation was received.

## **The Atonement of Christ Applies to Other Worlds**

Doctrine and Covenants 76:19-24

76:21 Holy angels, and them who are sanctified. In his poetic rendering of this verse the Prophet wrote:

I beheld round the throne, holy angels and hosts,  
And sanctified beings from worlds that have been,  
In holiness worshipping God and the Lamb,  
Forever and ever, amen and amen! (Times and Seasons, 4:82)

The reference to sanctified beings in this text thus seems to refer to the faithful of other worlds who, in their resurrected state, continue to worship both the Father and the Son.

76:22 Last of all. This phrase means "most recently." There is no suggestion here that this would be the last time that the Father and the Son would manifest themselves to men in the flesh. The whole purpose of the vision is to testify otherwise. It both begins and ends with the promise that the glories of eternity, including the vision of God, will continue to be manifest to those who serve him in truth and righteousness (vv. 5-10, 116-18).

76:23-24 That Christ, under the direction of the Father, created worlds without number, which were inhabited by the sons and daughters of God, was first revealed to Joseph Smith in June 1830 when he labored on the book of Moses (Moses 1:29-35). It could be reasoned that if Christ was their Creator he of necessity must be their Redeemer also. We need not rely only on reason, however. This revelation plainly states that through Christ the inhabitants of those worlds "are begotten [born again] sons and daughters unto God" (v. 24). In his poem A Vision, the Prophet stated the matter thus:

By him, of him, and through him, the worlds were all made,  
Even all that career in the heavens so broad,  
Whose inhabitants, too, from the first to the last,  
Are sav'd by the very same Saviour of ours;  
And, of course, are begotten God's daughters and sons,  
By the very same truths, and the very same pow'rs. (Times and Seasons, 4:83)

In harmony with this doctrine, this revelation also emphatically teaches that "the Lord is God, and beside him there is no Savior" (v. 1). The poetic counterpart (stanza 2) reads, "And besides him there ne'er was a Saviour of men." Verse 13, which refers to Christ as the "Only Begotten Son," is changed in the poem to read, "Jesus the Maker and Saviour of all" (stanza 12).

## **Lucifer Fell and Became Perdition**

Doctrine and Covenants 76:25-27

76:25 With this verse the scene changes from the throne of the Father and Son, where they were worshiped by holy angels and sanctified beings, to that of our premortal estate.

In this setting in the Grand Council in Heaven, we find Lucifer, a son of the morning, rebelling against the Father and his Firstborn Son, who had been chosen to redeem men from their fallen state. Our understanding of these events has been restored to us line upon line. While translating the book of Genesis, the Prophet learned that Satan (here referred to as Lucifer) sought to be born into mortality as the Son of God and thus become the Redeemer of all humankind. His plan was to do so by contravening the principle of agency, promising that not one soul would be lost; then, having saved all, he would claim for himself the honor of God. In contrast, he who is referred to as the Beloved and Chosen of the Father stood forth and said, "Father thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever." Thus the Father explained, "Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him; and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten I caused that he

should be cast down; and he became Satan. Yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive, and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice" (JST Genesis 3:4-5; Moses 4:1-4). In a revelation given shortly after the Prophet received this inspired translation of Genesis, attention was returned to these events when the Lord said, "He [Satan] rebelled against me, saying, Give me thine honor, which is my power; and also a third part of the hosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their agency; and they were thrust down, and thus came the devil and his angels; and, behold, there is a place prepared for them from the beginning, which place is hell" (D&C 29:36-38).

To that which had been revealed, this text adds the knowledge that Satan had been "in authority" in our premortal estate, meaning that an organization of some kind existed in which he held a position of considerable importance. Of this the inspired poetic version states:

And I saw and bear record of warfare in heav'n;  
For an angel of light, in authority great,  
Rebell'd against Jesus and sought for his pow'r,  
But was thrust down to woe from his Godified state.

Of Christ the revelation simply says that he was "in the bosom of the Father," meaning that there was a closeness or oneness of purpose that existed between them.

Three years later, more of the story would be revealed in the book of Abraham. Here we learn that in the heavenly council our Father, having explained the necessity of a Redeemer, asked, "Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I, send me. And another answered and said: Here am I, send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first. And the second was angry, and kept not his first estate; and, at that day, many followed after him" (Abraham 3:27-28).

76:26 Perdition. To be called perdition means one is hopelessly and irredeemably lost. It is to be so given up to wickedness and so filled with hatred of the gospel cause and of the Father and the Son that even the Atonement cannot extend the hope of salvation. Of those who come to the point of perdition, the Prophet said, "You cannot save such persons; you cannot bring them to repentance; they make open war, like the devil, and awful is the consequence" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 358; D&C 132:27-28). See commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 76:35.

Lucifer. The name means "the Shining One" (Bible Dictionary, 726). Before his fall the devil was one of the great luminaries of heaven.

### **Sons of Perdition Suffer Eternal Damnation**

Doctrine and Covenants 76:28-49

76:29 He maketh war with the saints of God. The war that commenced in heaven now finds its battlefield on earth. Satan's animosity is toward the Saints of God, those who, like Christ, seek to do the will of the Father. One result of this ongoing war is that the truth of all things is established in the mouth of two witnesses: the quiet and peaceful whisperings of the Spirit, and, in opposition, the loud, ugly ranting of the adversary. He leaves unopposed no principle that leads to heaven.

76:30 Sufferings. Earlier renderings of this verse read "eternal suffering." This was also the case in verse 49 (Woodford, "Historical Development," 949, 950).

76:31 Only those who have known the power of God and once were partakers thereof can be numbered among the children of perdition. They must deny the truth, having a sure knowledge of it, and then defy or war against it. These are they who seek the blood of the Lord's anointed. They are partakers of that spirit that filled those who crucified Christ (v. 35).

76:35 Having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it. The issue here is denying the Holy Ghost. Christ said: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Matthew 12:31-32; Mark 3:29).

A perfect knowledge of the gospel comes only by the spirit of revelation, meaning the Holy Ghost. Those who are entrusted with such knowledge and then choose to deny it, coming out in open rebellion against God and his servants, will suffer perdition. These unite themselves with the legions of the devil who warred against God and Christ in the councils of heaven. For such a sin there is no forgiveness in this world or the world to come (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 358). So it is that the Lord told the Jews that eventually either in this world or in the world to come all sins would be forgiven except blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is the unpardonable sin.

Forgiveness of sin, as this revelation teaches, does not in and of itself open the gate to the celestial kingdom. In the world to come the wicked will suffer until they choose to obey Christ, repent of their sins, and obtain forgiveness. Only then will they be resurrected, after which they will inherit the telestial kingdom (vv. 81-107). Those who have committed the unpardonable sin will not be redeemed from the devil, and after their resurrection, they will be cast out with the devil and his angels into everlasting darkness.

To commit the unpardonable sin, a person must receive the gospel, gain from the Holy Ghost by revelation the absolute knowledge of the divinity of Christ, and then deny "the new and everlasting covenant by which he was sanctified, calling it an unholy thing, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 128). He thereby commits murder by assenting unto the Lord's death, that is, having a perfect knowledge of the truth, he comes out in open rebellion and places himself in a position wherein he would have crucified Christ, knowing perfectly that he was the Son of God. Christ is thus crucified afresh and put to open shame. See commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 132:27.

The Prophet further explained: "What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against him. After a man has sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy. This is the case with many apostates of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"When a man begins to be an enemy to this work, he hunts me, he seeks to kill me, and never ceases to thirst for my blood. He gets the spirit of the devil the same spirit that they had who crucified the Lord of Life the same spirit that sins against the Holy Ghost" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 358).

76:36 Fire and brimstone is a figure of speech representing the anguish associated with sin.

76:37 The second death. The second death is separation from the presence of God. The only souls throughout all eternity who will know no glory, no light, nor the presence of God in any form suffer perdition; they are hopelessly lost.

76:38 Shall not be redeemed. To be redeemed is to be freed from the dominion and power of Satan. Only those who become children of perdition are left without redemption.

After the sufferings of his wrath. Those who inherit the telestial kingdom will do so only after suffering the wrath of God and making full payment for their sins. All who inherit a degree of glory must eventually be free from sin. The children of perdition remain everlastingly without glory.

76:39 For all the rest shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead. This passage appears to say that sons of perdition will not be resurrected, yet that is not the case. Paul stated the matter succinctly: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22). The Book of Mormon repeatedly affirms that the resurrection is universal (2 Nephi 9:15, 22; Alma 11:42; 33:22; 40:4-5). Early manuscripts resolve this difficulty. For instance, The Evening and The Morning Star, the "Kirtland Revelation Book," and the "Book of Commandments, Laws, and Covenants," Book B, all read: "Who [or They] shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead," thus affirming that those who are destined to suffer perdition will be resurrected (Woodford, "Historical Development," 949-50). The poetic version of this verse reads:

While all the rest are, through the triumph of Christ,  
Made partakers of grace, by the power of his word.  
(Times and Seasons, 4:83)

Thus, "all of the rest" those inheriting celestial, terrestrial, or telestial glory are redeemed from the second death, even spiritual death, through the resurrection. Samuel the Lamanite explained: "For behold, he surely must die that salvation may come; yea, it behooveth him and becometh expedient that he dieth, to bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, that thereby men may be brought into the presence of the Lord.

"Yea, behold, this death bringeth to pass the resurrection, and redeemeth all mankind from the first death that spiritual death; for all mankind, by the fall of Adam being cut off from the presence of the Lord, are considered as dead, both as to things temporal and to things spiritual.

"But behold, the resurrection of Christ redeemeth mankind, yea, even all mankind, and bringeth them back into the presence of the Lord.

"Yea, and it bringeth to pass the condition of repentance, that whosoever repenteth the same is not hewn down and cast into the fire; but whosoever repenteth not is hewn down and cast into the fire; and there cometh upon them again a spiritual death, yea, a second death, for they are cut off again as to things pertaining to righteousness" (Helaman 14:15-18).

76:43 Who deny the Son after the Father has revealed him. Before a person can become one of the children of perdition, the Father and the Son must manifest themselves to them. They must have a perfect knowledge of the truthfulness of the gospel which they knowingly deny. See commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 76:35.

76:44 Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. This imagery is chosen to dramatize the endless or eternal nature of the punishment that will be known only to those who will join the devil and his angels in their never-ending punishment. This expression was used both by Isaiah (Isaiah 66:24) and by Christ (Mark 9:44-49). In this mortal world, the worms that prey upon the carcass of the dead must also die, as do fires when there is nothing left to fuel them. Conversely, in the place of eternal torment neither worm nor fire will ever die; that is, the torment will never end.

76:48 Ordained. The meaning of the word ordained as used in this instance is "appointed" (Webster, Dictionary, 1828). See commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 20:2.

## **Exaltation**

Doctrine and Covenants 76:50-70

76:50-70 These verses are descriptive of the rewards known to exalted beings. In a subsequent revelation it would be made known to Joseph Smith that within the celestial kingdom are three degrees of glory (D&C 131). These verses are descriptive of the highest of those three degrees (see commentary on D&C 76:71). Of the other two degrees within the celestial kingdom, we know only that their inhabitants will be ministering

servants to those who have obtained the fulness of the Father, which can be done only through the ordinance of eternal marriage (D&C 132:15-19).

76:50-53 "We are not preaching a salvation for the inhabitants of the terrestrial or the telestial kingdoms. All of the ordinances of the gospel pertain to the celestial kingdom, and what the Lord will require by way of ordinances, if any, in the other kingdoms he has not revealed" (Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 2:329).

76:50 We saw and heard. Not only were Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon permitted to see this marvelous vision, but they were also privileged to hear the voice of the Father testify that he who sat on his right hand was his Only Begotten Son.

The resurrection of the just. Two great resurrections await the inhabitants of the earth: the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust. These could also correctly be called the resurrection of the justified and the resurrection of the unjustified. The justified are those who stand approved of God and are thus heirs of his kingdom and his glory. See commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 88:97-104.

These are they that arise in their bodies of flesh,  
When the trump of the first resurrection shall sound;  
These are they that come up to Mount Zion, in life,  
Where the blessings and gifts of the spirit abound. (Times and Seasons, 4:84)

76:51 Received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name. Two separate concepts are mentioned here. First, those who obtain a place in the celestial world will do so on the strength of their testimony of Christ. In addition to that testimony, they must also believe on the name of Christ. That is, they must also accept and reverence those who come in the authority, or the name, of Christ. They must respect the authority of the priesthood and all of its offices. Not only must they have accepted Christ, but they must also have complied with all the laws and ordinances of his gospel. They must accept and sustain the president of the Church, the Twelve Apostles, and all those who have been called to preside over them in the government of the kingdom of God. In the true and proper sense of things, one cannot accept Christ and at the same time reject those he has sent to act in his name. In the meridian day one could not truly profess to accept Christ while rejecting Peter, James, and John. Similarly, in our day people cannot genuinely profess to accept Christ but reject the testimony of Joseph Smith or his lawful successors in the presidency of the Church, nor can they reject the ordinances of salvation as they are found in that Church. Only by accepting these things can one take upon themselves the name of Christ or truly believe in his name.

Baptized after the manner of his burial. There is no true baptism except by immersion. Paul explained the symbolism of this sacred ordinance by saying, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:3-6).

76:52 By keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins. It is supposed by many that the remission of sins comes in the waters of baptism. Independent of keeping the commandments, this is not and cannot be the case. Moroni said in teaching this principle, "Baptism cometh by faith unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth remission of sins" (Moroni 8:25). Baptism of water precedes the baptism of the Spirit, in which we are sanctified or cleansed. "Be baptized in my name," the Savior said, "that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day" (3 Nephi 27:20).



76:53 Who overcome by faith. In an earlier revelation the Lord had said, "He that endureth in faith and doeth my will, the same shall overcome" (D&C 63:20). Only those of proven faith will inhabit the celestial kingdom. They will have met and conquered the great challenges of this mortal probation through faith in Christ (JST Genesis 14:30-32).

Sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise. It is not enough to receive an ordinance. For any ordinance to be valid, it must be ratified by the Holy Ghost, making it of efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection. For an ordinance and its promised blessings to stand approved in the eternal world it must pass a threefold test. First, it must have a divine origin; it must be of God's making, not of man's; second, it must be performed by one in authority, under the direction of the keys or presidency of the appropriate priesthood; third, it must receive the seal of the Holy Spirit of promise. That is, the Holy Ghost who cannot be deceived must attest that the one seeking the promised blessing lived in compliance with the terms of the covenant he or she made. "All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations" that we desire to have in a future world must be approved by the Holy Ghost (D&C 132:7).

This principle assures that there will be no unearned blessings in the heavenly realms. One might deceive a bishop or other ecclesiastical leader and thereby obtain the promise to a blessing in mortality for which he or she is not worthy (for instance, baptism, priesthood, the endowment, temple marriage), but no one will deceive the Holy Ghost. The promises given to those unworthy to receive them will have no effect on the other side of the veil, for the performance involved will not bear the approving seal of the Holy Ghost.

On the other hand, those who have received all the ordinances of salvation each of them bearing the seal of the Holy Spirit of promise have the sure promise of salvation. The Holy Ghost may place his approving seal on the various ordinances of salvation as we enter into them; then when we have received all the ordinances of salvation and have received the seal on all those ordinances, we have essentially received the sure promise of exaltation.

The poetic rendering of this verse reads:

For these overcome, by their faith and their works,  
Being tried in their life-time, as purified gold,  
And seal'd by the spirit of promise, to life,  
By men called of God, as was Aaron of old. (Times and Seasons, 4:84)

Of this phrase, as it was used by Paul, Clarke's Commentary observes with surprising insight: "The Holy Spirit, which is promised to them who believe on Christ Jesus, was given to you, and thus you were ascertained to be the children of God, for God has no child who is not a partaker of the Holy Ghost, and he who has this Spirit has God's seal that he belongs to the heavenly family. It was customary among all nations, when a person purchased goods of any kind, to mark with his seal that which he had bought, in order that he might know it, and be able to claim it if mixed with the goods of others; to this custom the apostle may here allude but it was also customary to set a seal upon what was dedicated to God, or what was to be offered to him in sacrifice" (Clarke, Clarke's Commentary, 3:434; emphasis in original).

76:54 Church of the Firstborn. As baptism is the gate to the Church, celestial marriage is the gate to the Church of the Firstborn. Its membership is spoken of as "the inner circle of faithful saints who are heirs of exaltation and the fulness of the Father's kingdom" (McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, 139). Members of the Church of the Firstborn are those who have been sealed by the Holy Spirit as described in the previous verse and in Doctrine and Covenants 88:3-5 (see also D&C 78:21). Those members of the Church of the Firstborn who dwell in heaven abide in the presence of God and are heirs of the fulness of the Father (D&C 107:19). They will be numbered with the church of Enoch and will "come down out of heaven" with them to possess the earth (JST Genesis 9:23).

They are they, of the church of the firstborn of God,

And unto whose hands he committeth all things;  
For they hold the keys of the kingdom of heav'n  
And reign with the Saviour, as priests, and as kings. (Times and Seasons, 4:84)

76:55 Given all things. See commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 76:59, 94-95; see also Doctrine and Covenants 93:19, 20, 28.

76:56 Who are priests and kings. "Holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood have power to press forward in righteousness, living by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, magnifying their callings, going from grace to grace, until through the fulness of the ordinances of the temple they receive the fulness of the priesthood and are ordained kings and priests. Those so attaining shall have exaltation and be kings, priests, rulers, and lords in their respective spheres in the eternal kingdoms of the great King who is God our Father (Rev. 1:6; 5:10)" (McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, 425).

It naturally follows that if such privileges are accorded to men, women of similar faith will be endowed with similar blessings. Indeed, no man can become a king and priest without an eternal companion at his side, a wife who is a queen and priestess. President Joseph Fielding Smith observed that "women do not hold the priesthood, but if they are faithful and true, they will become priestesses and queens in the kingdom of God, and that implies that they will be given authority" (Doctrines of Salvation, 3:178). See commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 132:20.

It is in the house of the Lord that a husband and wife are prepared for such offices and callings, though the realization of the blessings will not come until after the resurrection.

76:57 After the order of Melchizedek. See Doctrine and Covenants 107:1-4; see also commentary on Joseph Smith Translation Genesis 14:26-40, page 331.

76:58 They are gods. This verse stands at the heart of Mormonism. It sets us apart from the world. It ennobles and exalts beyond the imagination of man. At the commencement of this revelation the Lord promised to reveal "the wonders of eternity," even wisdom and understanding that would "reach to heaven" and that would cause the wisdom of the worldly wise and prudent to "come to naught" (vv. 8-9). It is in such verses as this that the heavens are opened and we are invited to see as prophets saw. What soul can remain unstirred by such a vision! "God himself was once as we are now," declared the Prophet Joseph Smith, "and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by his power, was to make himself visible I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with him, as one man talks and communes with another" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 345).

This verse immediately brings to mind the declaration of the Psalmist, who declared, "Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High" (Psalm 82:6). And again, the Psalmist asks, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels [gods], and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet" (Psalm 8:4-6).

So it is that we are the children of God, who is himself an exalted, glorified man. And thus it is our divine destiny as his heirs to stand at his side and become as he is. Such is the purpose of the plan of salvation, and for that purpose the faith of the ancients has been restored again in our time, in the dispensation of the fulness of all dispensations.

76:59 All things are theirs. "All those who keep his commandments shall grow up from grace to grace, and become heirs of the heavenly kingdom, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ; possessing the same mind, being transformed into the same image or likeness, even the express image of him who fills all in all; being filled with the fullness of this glory, and become one in him, even as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one" (Smith, Lectures on Faith, 5:2; see also D&C 84:38).

76:60 They shall overcome all things. In and through the atonement of Christ, the faithful and obedient will overcome all that is not rightfully a part of the celestial kingdom. Christ reconciles us not only to God but also to the fulness of his glory. Thus it is said of the man and woman who obtain that glory, "Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them" (D&C 132:20).

76:63 When Christ returns to rule and reign upon the earth, he will bring with him all who have lived upon the earth who are worthy of a celestial glory (Joseph Smith-Matthew 1:1). Those living upon the earth who are worthy of that same glory will be caught up to meet them, as will their righteous counterparts in the world of spirits (D&C 88:96-98; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). Speaking of this same event, Jude quoted Enoch as promising that the "Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints" (Jude 1:14).

76:64-65 The first resurrection is synonymous with the resurrection of the just. Patriarchal blessings commonly use the expression "morning of the first resurrection" to identify those who will be exalted. Doctrine and Covenants 45:54 indicates that heathens who knew no law shall come forth in the first resurrection. This resurrection, which is spoken of as being "tolerable," could properly be thought of as the afternoon of the first resurrection.

Abinadi said the first resurrection consisted of "all the prophets, and all those that have believed in their words, or all those that have kept the commandments of God." These, he said, would come forth with Christ in his resurrection (Mosiah 15:22). In like manner, Alma defined the first resurrection as the "resurrection of all those who have been, or who are, or who shall be, down to the resurrection of Christ from the dead" (Alma 40:16). Another resurrection, also termed a first resurrection, will include the righteous down to the time of Christ's return. Those righteous souls who are living when Christ returns, as well as the righteous who are born thereafter, will also come forth in what can properly be called a first resurrection (D&C 132:19). The idea conveyed in the use of the expression "first resurrection" is that the righteous are resurrected first. The resurrection represents the order of heaven, which demands that the just be resurrected first and only thereafter will they who have been unjust be brought forth.

76:66 Mount Zion. In ancient days, Jerusalem, or the holy city, was sometimes referred to as Mount Zion, the place where God dwelled (Psalm 48:1-2). Thus the heavenly abode of God was also referred to as Mount Zion, or "the heavenly Jerusalem" (Hebrews 12:22). In the latter days the Lord revealed that he and his saints would "stand upon Mount Zion, which shall be the city of New Jerusalem. Which city shall be built, beginning at the temple lot, which is appointed by the finger of the Lord, in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri" (D&C 84:2-3; see also 133:18).

76:67 An innumerable company of angels. It is a false notion, one not worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that only a few of God's children will be saved in the kingdom of God. In his vision of the redemption of the dead, President Joseph F. Smith saw an "innumerable company of the spirits of the just, who had been faithful in the testimony of Jesus while they lived in mortality" (D&C 138:12). All these awaited a glorious resurrection and their number was limited to those who had lived from the days of Adam to the time of the crucifixion of Christ. Similarly, Alma spoke of "many, exceedingly great many, who were made pure and entered into the rest of the Lord their God" (Alma 13:12). Paul told the faithful of his day that they would join "an innumerable company of angels" in the heavenly place (Hebrews 12:22), while Daniel numbered the

righteous who would stand before God as a "thousand thousands" who ministered to him, "and ten thousand times ten thousand" who stood before him (Daniel 7:10).

When Christ said, "In my Father's house [kingdom] are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2; see also Smith, History of the Church, 4:184), he was not suggesting that there were various degrees of glory. At that moment he was speaking to the Twelve, and though one of them would betray him, he was giving them the assurance that there was room for them and as many as would believe on their word in his Father's kingdom. There is no boundary to the heavenly city, no limit that needs to be put on its population. There is room in his Father's kingdom for every one of his children, if they will but choose to abide there. Were this not the case, were it true that God did not desire to save all of his children, Christ said, "I would have told you" (John 14:2).

The general assembly and church of Enoch. All those caught up into heaven with Enoch and his city will be numbered among those who eventually inhabit the celestial world. At the same time, all those who inherit the celestial kingdom will also come to a union with the people, or church, of Enoch.  
Church . . . of the Firstborn. See commentary on verse 54.

76:69 Just men made perfect through Jesus. A just man is one whose course is justified or approved by the Holy Ghost; in the resurrection he will be made perfect because of the atonement of Christ. Thus the inhabitants of paradise are referred to as "just men made perfect" (D&C 129:3).

76:70 Whose glory is that of the sun. Speaking of those who will come forth in the morning of the first resurrection to inherit the celestial kingdom, Joseph Smith said, "They shall rise again to dwell in everlasting burnings in immortal glory, not to sorrow, suffer, or die any more; but they shall be heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. What is it? To inherit the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation, until you arrive at the station of a God, and ascend the throne of eternal power, the same as those who have gone before" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 347).

#### Those Who Shall Inherit the Terrestrial Kingdom

Doctrine and Covenants 76:71-80

76:71 Fulness of the Father. This verse affirms that the description in the previous verses (50-70) applies exclusively to the highest of the three degrees in the celestial kingdom (D&C 131). Only there do we find members of the Church of the Firstborn and those who have received the fulness of the Father.

76:72 Died without law. The law referred to here is the law of the gospel. Another four years would pass before Joseph Smith learned that the gospel will be taught to those who die without the opportunity to hear it in mortality. Among their number will be many who accept and live it. They, of course, will inherit the celestial kingdom. This phrase describes those who died without hearing the gospel and who did not accept it when it was taught to them in the spirit world, yet who lived worthy of a terrestrial glory. Every person will be rewarded according to the law he or she chooses to live. See commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 88:21-24; 137:7-9.

76:73-74 Those who rejected the gospel in mortality will have the opportunity to hear it again in the spirit world. Thus they receive a second chance to accept it. By so doing they are, of course, blessed but not with the fulness of the Father. Rather, they receive the glory of the terrestrial order.

They receiv'd not the truth of the Savior at first;  
But did, when they heard it in prison, again.  
(Times and Seasons, 4:84)

76:73 Spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them. Peter told us that Christ preached the gospel to the "spirits in prison" who had been disobedient in an earlier age (1 Peter

3:19). He also said that the gospel was preached to them that are dead, that they might be judged by the same law or the same standard as those who heard the gospel while in the flesh (1 Peter 4:6). Notwithstanding the plainness of these expressions, most within the historical Christian world reject the idea that the gospel is taught in the spirit world. These verses, however, confirm the plain meaning of Peter's language though they are greatly amplified in Joseph F. Smith's vision of the redemption of the dead. That vision affirms that all the dead, whether good or evil, are in spirit prison, for all are subject to the effects of Adam's fall, chief among them being death itself. Thus, though we learn in that vision that Christ did not go in person to the wicked, sending others in his name, he nonetheless preached to the spirits in prison, for the righteous too are prisoners who look upon the long absence of their spirits from their bodies as a bondage. See Doctrine and Covenants 138:50.

76:75 Only honorable men and women will inherit the terrestrial kingdom. Among their number will be those who were blinded to the message of the Restoration, either by their allegiance to the theories of men or because both the example and doctrines of apostate Christianity closed their minds to the possibility that such a thing as true religion could exist.

76:77 Those of the terrestrial order will be permitted to enjoy the glory of Christ's presence, but they will not have the privilege of becoming as he is.

76:78 The nature of our glory in the eternal worlds is determined by the nature of our bodies. As a celestial body is necessary to inherit the glories of a celestial world, so a terrestrial body is necessary to enjoy the glories of a terrestrial world and a telestial body those of a telestial world. All three degrees of glory are beyond the capacity of a mortal or fallen body to experience unaided by the power of God. See commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 88:21-32.

76:79 It is one thing to know the truth and quite another to accord one's life with it. In like manner, it is one thing to have a testimony of Christ and quite another to live true and faithful to that knowledge. There will be those with testimonies who fail to live up to them and who find place in the terrestrial kingdom.

To be valiant is to be courageous, brave, and bold in the testimony of Jesus. It is to be valorous, gallant, and intrepid in that testimony. It is to be fully committed to the doctrines of the kingdom and the cause of Zion. Those who are not willing to give all their heart, might, mind, and strength in the service of their God will not be numbered in the worlds to come with those who do.

### **Those Who Shall Inherit the Telestial Kingdom**

Doctrine and Covenants 76:81-91

76:84-85 The citizenry of the telestial kingdom will at death be consigned to hell, where they must pay in full measure for their sins. Thereafter, they will come forth in the resurrection of the unjust to take their place in the telestial or lowest of the degrees of glory. "You cannot take a murderer, a suicide, an adulterer, a liar, or one who was or is thoroughly abominable in his life here, and simply by the performance of an ordinance of the gospel, cleanse him from sin and usher him into the presence of God," explained President Joseph F. Smith. "God has not instituted a plan of that kind, and it cannot be done. He has said you shall repent of your sins. The wicked will have to repent of their wickedness. Those who die without the knowledge of the gospel will have to come to the knowledge of it, and those who sin against light will have to pay the uttermost farthing for their transgression and their departure from the gospel, before they can ever get back to it. Do not forget that. Do not forget it, you elders in Israel, nor you, mothers in Israel, either; and, when you seek to save either the living or the dead, bear it in mind that you can only do it on the principle of their repentance and acceptance of the plan of life. That is the only way in which you can succeed" (Gospel Doctrine, 95).

76:86-87 Those in this kingdom will be ministered to by those in the terrestrial kingdom, who will be enlightened by the Holy Ghost. Those in the terrestrial kingdom, in turn, are ministered to by celestial beings.

76:89 The glory of the telestial, which surpasses all understanding. Here we are told that the glory of the telestial world will exceed anything known to this earth. In so saying, it is not the purpose of this revelation to encourage satisfaction in obtaining this rather than a greater glory. Instead, this promise evidences the love of God even for his errant children and his willingness to bless them with all that they are willing to receive. What are the blessings of this kingdom? Satan and his legions will have no power here. Death and suffering will be unknown. Hunger and pain will no longer exist. Oppression and injustices will have no place. Through Christ, all the effects of Adam's fall will have been rectified. This alone will create a world the glory and goodness of which will surpass all understanding. The nature of this world will be much like the one known to Adam and Eve prior to the fall.

### **The Glories of the Telestial Terrestrial and Celestial Kingdoms Contrasted**

Doctrine and Covenants 76:94-98

76:94-95 These verses speak of the glories to be enjoyed by all who inherit the celestial kingdom. They are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. Explaining this phrase, Joseph Smith taught that they would "inherit the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation" as that enjoyed by Christ "until [they] arrive at the station of a God, and ascend the throne of eternal power, the same as those who have gone before. What did Jesus do? Why; I do the things I saw my Father do when worlds came rolling into existence. My Father worked out his kingdom with fear and trembling, and I must do the same; and when I get my kingdom, I shall present it to my Father, so that he may obtain kingdom upon kingdom, and it will exalt him in glory. He will then take a higher exaltation, and I will take his place, and thereby become exalted myself. So that Jesus treads in the tracks of his Father, and inherits what God did before; and God is thus glorified and exalted in the salvation and exaltation of all his children" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 347-48).

76:94 Church of the Firstborn. Faithful Saints who have received the fulness of temple blessings are members of the Church of the Firstborn. They are heirs of exaltation and of the fulness of the Father's kingdom. With the faithful of ages past, they become joint-heirs with Christ in receiving all that the Father has. See Doctrine and Covenants 93:20-22; see also commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 76:54.

They see as they are seen, and know as they are known. Those who obtain a celestial glory will no longer see and know in part. All things will be opened to their understanding. Developing this same thought, Paul said, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Corinthians 13:12). The word glass in this text refers to a mirror, which in that ancient day was made of polished metal that often gave an imperfect or distorted image. By analogy Paul is saying that in this life we often have an imperfect or distorted view of eternal things, but in a future day we will see things as they really are. The Living New Testament renders Paul's words thus, "We can understand only a little about God now, as if we were peering at his reflection in a poor mirror; but someday we are going to see him in his completeness, face to face" (1 Corinthians 13:12). In that day we will come to understand the majesty and glory with which God has endowed all his creations.

### **The Telestial Kingdom**

Doctrine and Covenants 76:99-113

76:99-101 The telestial kingdom is full of religions and priests and ministers of every kind. It is a battleground of ideas and ideologies. Professing Christians there will include self-claimed disciples of Paul declaring the gospel of salvation by grace alone; those loyal to Apollos, or the learning of men, as articulated by the suave and sophisticated; and those claiming to follow Peter (Cephas) and the church of Rome in thoughtless submission. "These are they who say they are some of one and some of another" (v. 100), some of Christ so they profess some of John and the mystery of apocalypse, others of Moses and the law that he brought, some of Elias, and of Esaias, and of Isaiah, of Enoch and still more

These are they that came out for Apollos and Paul;  
For Cephas and Jesus, in all kinds of hope;  
For Enoch and Moses, and Peter, and John;

For Luther and Calvin, and even the Pope.  
For they never received the gospel of Christ,  
Nor the prophetic spirit that came from the Lord;  
Nor the covenant neither, which Jacob once had;  
They went their own way, and they have their reward. (Times and Seasons, 4:85)

Mischief and the profession of piety have always gone hand in hand, as has the practice of picking and choosing among heaven's truths to find those that fit the professing believer's appetites and fancies. At the same time, such people turn a blind eye to the principles of sacrifice and obedience. So it is that living prophets are ignored in preference to dead ones and the spirit of revelation denied while the Bible is enshrined.

76:112 The question is often asked, Throughout the endless expanses of eternity will there eventually be advancement from degree to degree? That is, can those whose glory is telestial progress to a terrestrial order, while those of a terrestrial order become celestial? Though conflicting opinions have been given by men in positions of authority, the question is answered, in the judgment of the writers, by the very nature of the resurrection itself. If the resurrection is the inseparable union of body and spirit (Alma 11:45; D&C 138:17), then that which is telestial cannot be changed so that it could endure or abide a terrestrial law, "worlds without end," and that which is terrestrial for the same reason could not become celestial. See commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 88:17-32.

### **All the Faithful May See the Vision of the Degrees of Glory**

Doctrine and Covenants 76:114-19

76:114-19 Doctrine and Covenants 76 stands unrivaled as the greatest revelation of our dispensation. No other revelation reveals more of eternity past and eternity future than this revelation does. From it we learn of the role of Christ as creator and Savior of countless worlds, of the premortal life and the war in heaven, of the destiny of those who become children of perdition, and of the glories of the celestial, terrestrial, and telestial kingdoms. This combination of visions given to the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon stands unsurpassed in teaching the doctrine of heirship, with its testimony that mortal man in the course of the eternities can become equal in power, might, and dominion with God himself! The boldness of such a doctrine assures that we as a people will forever stand alone among those professing a faith in Christ. None want fellowship with us on doctrinal grounds, nor would we have reason to seek it with them. Plainly we stand alone. Yet in it all, no doctrine in this revelation matches in greatness the promise that every faithful soul is a rightful heir to all the mysteries of the kingdom, to every revelation and vision given or shown to the prophets, even to the manifestation of Christ himself.

There is but one gospel, and by that gospel all humankind will be saved or condemned. If that gospel allows one man to repent, it must in like manner allow all men the same privilege; and if it grants the visions of eternity to one man, it must, by the same principle, grant that same vision to all worthy Saints who seek it. Thus it is for each of us to choose that portion of heaven's light in which we will stand.

76:115 He commanded that we should not write. Joseph Smith later explained, "I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 305).

76:118 Bear his presence in the world of glory. This revelation, which began with the promise that the faithful Saints may have the "wonders of eternity" (v. 8) revealed to them now, concludes with the promise that they might stand in the presence of God "while in the flesh." It is fundamental to our faith that if the God of heaven extends the promise of salvation to so much as a single soul he must in justice extend it to every soul on the same terms and conditions. If one can receive a remission of sins through faith, repentance, and baptism, so can all; if one can receive an answer to his prayers, so can all; if one can entertain angels, so can all; if one can stand in his presence while in the flesh, so can all. Such is the promise of the restored gospel;

such is the declaration of this text. We do not have one gospel for prophets and another for their followers. There is but one gospel, and its covenants and promised blessings are alike for all.

### **1971 (1830's Period LDS Beliefs)**

**Robert J. Matthews, BYU Religious Scholar**

#### **Degrees of Glory and the Bible Translation**

#### **The New Translation of the Bible 1830 – 1833: Doctrinal Developments**

That (Joseph Smith's) work with the Bible sometimes brought the Prophet into visionary experiences is evident from the fact already noted that the vision of the degrees of glory was received in connection with the translation of the fifth chapter of John. (BYU Studies 11:4 (1971), Robert J. Matthews? The New Translation of the Bible 1830 – 1833: Doctrinal Developments

### **1974**

**Robert J. Woodford (BYU Ph.D Dissertation)**

#### **Section 76**

#### **The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants (Volumes I-III)**

#### **Section 76 Of The Doctrine And Covenants**

##### **Historical Background**

Section 76 of the D&C is one of the most important revelations given through the Prophet Joseph Smith. His of its historical background is rather lengthy, but is important enough to be given full consideration here.

Joseph Smith wrote:

Upon my return from Amherst conference, I resumed the translation of the Scriptures. From sundry revelations which had been received, it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of man, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled. It appeared self-evident from what truths were left, that if God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body the term "Heaven," as intended for the Saints' eternal home must include more kingdoms than one. Accordingly, on the 16th of February, 1832, while translating St. John's Gospel, myself and Elder Rigdon saw the following vision: [Section 76]

Nothing could be more pleasing to the Saints upon the order of the kingdom of the Lord, than the light which burst upon the world through the foregoing vision. Every law, every commandment, every promise, every truth, and every point touching the destiny of man, from Genesis to Revelation, where the purity of the scriptures remains unsullied by the folly of men, go to show the perfection of the theory [of different degrees of glory in the future life] and witnesses the fact that that document is a tran script from the records of the eternal world. The sublimity of the ideas; the purity of the language; the scope for action; the continued duration for completion, in order to be heirs of salvation may confess the Lord and bow the knee; the rewards for faithfulness, and the punishments for sins, are so much beyond the narrow-mindedness of men, that every honest man I constrained to exclaim: "It came from God."1

Many years after this revelation was received, Elder Philo Dibble, who was an eye-witness to the actual reception of The Vision, wrote the following account in the Juvenile Instructor:

The vision which is recorded in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants was given at the house of "Father Johnson," in Hyrum, Ohio, and during the time that Joseph and Sidney were in the spirit and



saw the heavens open, there were other men in the room, perhaps twelve, among whom I was one during a part of the time--probably two-thirds of the time--I saw the glory and felt the power, but did not see the vision.

The events and conversation, while they were seeing what is written (and many things were seen and related that are not written,) I will relate as minutely as is necessary.

Joseph would, at Intervals, say: "What do I see?" as one might say while looking out the window and beholding what all in the room could not see. Then he would relate what he had seen or what he was looking at. Then Sidney replied, "I see the same." Presently Sidney would say "what do I see?" and would repeat what he had seen or was seeing, and Joseph would reply, "I see the same."

This manner of conversation was repeated at short intervals to the end of the vision, and during the whole time not a word was spoken by any other person. Not a sound nor motion made by anyone but Joseph and Sidney, and it seemed to me that they never moved a joint or limb during the time I was there, which think was over an hour, and to the end of the vision.

Joseph sat firmly and calmly all the time in the midst of a magnificent glory, but Sidney sat limp and pale, apparently as limber as a rag, observing which, Joseph remarked, smilingly, "Sidney is not used to it as I am."<sup>2</sup>

Elder Dibble intimated in this account that not all Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw in the vision was recorded.

Joseph later indicated that not a hundredth part of it was written. He said: I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them.<sup>3</sup>

It would be hard at this point to determine if Joseph ever used this additional information as part of other revelations; however, such a supposition is a real possibility. His later writings on the resurrection (Section 88), pre-earth life (Section 93 and Abraham 3), astronomy (Section 130 and Abraham 3), and the degrees of glory within the celestial kingdom (Section 131) may all have reflected some of the things he learned in this vision. But his knowledge on this subject was not complete after this vision, for he later wrote:

The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof, whether in the body or out I cannot tell. I saw the transcendent beauty of the gate through which the heirs of that kingdom will enter, which was like unto circling flames of fire; also the blazing throne of God, whereon was seated the Father and the Son. I saw the beautiful streets of that kingdom, which had the appearance of being paved with gold. I saw Fathers Adam and Abraham, and my father and mother, my brother, Alvin, that has long since slept, and marvelled how it was that he had obtained an inheritance in that kingdom, seeing that he had departed this life before the Lord had set His hand to gather Israel the second time, and had not been baptized for the remission of sins.<sup>4</sup>

Today most Latter-day Saints find the information in Section 76 awe-inspiring and majestic in nature. However, those same concepts that are held in such high regard today were such a departure from the common thought in Joseph's day, and were so revolutionary to the accepted Christian concept of life after death, that many members of the Church were hesitant or even opposed to accept this vision as truth.

Brigham Young wrote of its contrast with his former teachings:

After all, my traditions were such, that when the Vision came first to me, it was so directly contrary and opposed to my former education, I said, wait a little; I did not reject it, but I could not understand

it. I then could feel what incorrect traditions had done for me. Suppose all that I have ever heard from my priest and parents--the way they taught me to read the Bible, had been true;--my understanding would be diametrically opposed to the doctrine revealed in the Vision. I used to think and pray, to read and think, until I knew, and fully understood it for myself, by the visions of the Holy Spirit. At first, it actually came in contact with my own feelings, though I never could believe like the mass of the Christian world around me; but I did not know how nigh I believed as they did. I found, however, that I was so nigh, I could shake hands with them any time I wished."

This experience is not an isolated case for John Murdock records:

At Lewisville we took passage on a steamer & sailed to Cincinnati thence to Dayton thence to Columbus seat of government in Ohio thence to Cleveland thence to Warrenville & Orange & the brethren had just received the Revelation called the vision & were stumbling at it I called them together & confirmed them in the truth.<sup>6</sup>

Later on, Elders John Murdock and Orson Pratt found that the Genesco Branch were also having problems accepting this revelation. From the journals of these two men, we are able to piece together the following events:

May 1st Br L. Johnson came to me said he & O Pratt had visited Ezra Landing in Genesco who denied the vision & other Revelations & other members joined him & they wanted to get help. Br. Rich & my self went with him.

We met in conference with Br Landing at 6 O'clock P.M. 4 High Priests formed the council Viz O Pratt L. Johnson Leonard Rich & myself Presided in the meeting I opened by dedicating our selves to the Lord in prayer Br O laid the case before the conference by stating that Br Landing said the vision was of the Devil & he believed it no more than he believed the devil was crucified & many like things all which Br Lyman witnessed to & that he Br Landing would not have the vision taught in the church for \$1000. & was very obstinate. Br Landing arose and thanked God with great pomposity that he was permitted to speak for himself & with Sing Song tone tried to work up Sympathy in us & those present by relating the Sacrifices he had made the hardships he endured & the good he had done for the cause. After he was done I told him he had given us quite a relation of his Sacrifices he had made the hardships he endured & the good he had done but what does it all amount to, perhaps I & others have made a great Sacrifice as your self but if we do not hold out to the end we donot obtain the croon. Ezra Booth likewise suffered privation & traveled two thousand miles & then denied the revelations & was cut off from the Church. He was ashamed. I exhorted him to repent he said he was willing to be taught We adjourned till 8 O'clock next morning. 2nd. The Church met according to appointment Br Orson led in explanation of the vision & other revelation followed by my self & Br Lyman. We continued til 12 1/2 O'clock & dismissed. Met in one hour Br Landing acknowledged what we taught to be true. Br O said he did not like his confession for it appeared to be extorted. But he acknowledged he had talked hard to the brethren & asked their forgiveness Said he heartily received all we taught & would teach it to the Church & said he would not for \$2000. be put back where he was before we came to him. We forgave him allowing him to Stand in his office. We taught the same things to the church they promised obedience to all the commands of God & I blessed them in the name of the Lord the Spirit attend. We visited from house to house among the Brethren.'

The 16th [September 1833] I left Bolton for Kirtland & providentially came across Bro. Lyman in Ithica - we both took the Stage until we came near to Genesco. We then went to visit the church in that place some of the brethren received not our teachings among whom was Bro. Landon an High Priest.<sup>8</sup>

Su 29th [December 1833]. Br. Ezra Landon Preached but did not hold the truth in purity. We visited him . P.M. he was wicked Said the vision was of the Devil came from hel & would go there again. We preached in the evening.

30th. We notified all the official members E Landon with the rest that a council would be held next day at Br C. Avery's on the case of E Landon

31st. Met in council O Pratt L Johnson A. Lyman & my self High Priests & Elders Joseph Young R. Orton O Granger & Hiran Stratten Priest or Decon E. Bosley The conference organized by appointing L. Johnson moderator O. Pratt clerk E. Landon refused to attend & treated the council with contempt & it unanomously voted that E Landon be no longer a member of the church & ajourned one hour. The four High Priests visited E. Landon & demanded his licence he would not give it up & according to the Law of God & the land forbade him preaching any more & told him we would advertize him.-

2nd [January 1834]. 4 H.P. & Elders Present in church meeting about half of the church After the meeting was opened we explained the vision & gave the resons why E. Landon was cut off from the Church

6th. We met in Church meeting 4 H.P. & 4 Elders present & about half the Church & when the meeting was opened the first resolution taken was that we receive Br Joseph Smith Jun. as a servant of God to build up the kingdom in these last days & receive all the revelations that have come forth by him as being the word of God & will abid the order of this Church of Christ. The vote was unanimous by the uplifted hand except one member.<sup>10</sup>

Joseph Smith realized the negative impact this vision could have on people well schooled in traditional Christian thought, and so he cautioned the elders who were going to England not to even mention The VIsion.<sup>11</sup> He wrote:

My instructions to the brethren were, when they arrived in England, to adhere closely to the first principles of the Gospel, and remain silent concerning the gathering, the vision, and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants; until such time as the work was fully established, and it should be clearly made manifest by the Spirit to do otherwise.<sup>12</sup>

In spite of these instructions, the following incident occurred:

The Elders at Bedford continued to lecture in the basement of Mr. Matthews' chapel from evening to evening, with the most flattering prospects until this evening, when Elder Goodson, contrary to the most positive instructions of President Kimball, and without advising with any one, read publicly the vision from the Doctrine and Covenants, which turned the current of feeling generally, and nearly closed the door in all that region. Mr. Matthews wished the meetings to be removed from his house, but continued to attend the meetings occasionally and investigated the subject to considerable extent.<sup>13</sup>

Heber C. Kimball also recorded this incident in his journal as follows:

A minister by the name of Timothy R. Matthews, a brother in law to Joseph Fielding, received them very kindly and invited them to preach in his church, which was accepted, and in which they preached several times when a number, amongst whom were Mr. Matthews and his lady; believed their testimony. and the truths which they proclaimed. Mr. Matthews had likewise borne testimony to his congregation of the truth of these things and that they were the same principles that were taught by the Apostles anciently; and besought his congregation to receive the same. Forty of his members went forward and were baptized and the time was appointed when he was to be baptized. In the interval however,

brother Goodson contrary to my counsel and positive instructions, and without advising with any one, read to Mr. Matthews, the vision seen by Pres. Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, which caused him to stumble, and darkness pervaded his mind, so much so, that at the time specified he did not make his appearance, but went and baptized himself in the river Ouse; and from that time he began to preach baptism for the remission of sins; he wrote to Revd. James Fielding, saying that his best members had left him.<sup>14</sup>

Eventually, as this revelation was published in the periodicals of the Church and taught to the members over the pulpit, the saints were able to overcome their prejudice, and Section 76 is now held in high regard by the members of the Church.

Over ten years after The Vision was received, Joseph Smith penned a poetic version of the same at the request of Elder W.W. Phelps. Joseph wrote in his history:

In reply to W.W. Phelps's Vade Mecum, or "Go with me," of 20th of January last, I dictated an answer: [It consisted of the "Revelation known as the Vision of the Three Glories," Doctrine and Covenants, section lxxvi, made into verse.]<sup>15</sup>

This was immediately published in the Times and Seasons,<sup>16</sup> in other periodicals of the Church,<sup>17</sup> and in the public press.<sup>18</sup>

In this poetic version, Joseph developed more fully the concept that Jesus Christ is the Savior for more worlds than ours, as seen in the following lines from the poem:

And I heard a great voice, bearing record from heav'n  
He's the Saviour, and only begotten of God--  
By him, of him, and through him, the worlds were all made;  
Even all that career in the heavens so broad,  
Whose inhabitants, too, from the first to the last  
Are sav'd by the very same Saviour of ours;  
And, of course, are begotten God's daughters and sons,  
By the very same truths, and the very same pow'rs.<sup>19</sup>

### **Extant Copies of Section 76**

Only five months elapsed between the time The Vision was received and the time it was published in the Evening and Morning Star. This publication is the earliest identifiable copy of this revelation as can be seen in Table 76, a bibliography of known LDS sources for Section 76.<sup>20</sup>

As can be seen from the Millennial Star entry in Table 76, The Vision was published in England only four years after the Goodson-Matthews affair.

### **Text Development**

One reason there are so many variations identified in the Text Analysis of the text of this revelation is because of the number of extant manuscript copies. In all of Part II of this study, those revelations that are compared with several manuscript copies, have, without exception, more variations.

There are several changes in this section that are significant in terms of clarification or change of meaning. One such change is identified in the Text Analysis by the letters "F," "Y," and "Z" on page 123 and "G" on page 124. In all of these, the suffering of the damned is the subject, and these deletions refer to the eternal nature of suffering. In light of the definitions given in Section 19 of eternal damnation, these deletions do not in actuality alter the meaning of the verses involved.

The letter "O" on page 123 of the Text Analysis is a major deletion in the text of this section as found in the Book of Commandments, Laws, and Covenants, Book B. As it is written there, those who deny the Savior, and not the Holy Ghost, are the ones condemned to dwell in outer darkness.

Another important change on page 123 is identified by the letter "R" in verse 39. The meaning of this verse is reversed by the way it is found in the Kirtland Revelation Book, the Evening and Morning Star, and the Book of Commandments, Laws, and Covenants.

A significant mistake in the text of this revelation as it is found in the June 1841 edition of the Millennial Star is identified in the Text Analysis by the number 30 in verse 58. According to that text, man's destiny would not be that of becoming a god; but he would be the possession of God. Another significant mistake, this time in the Times and Seasons and the fourteenth volume of the Millennial Star, is identified by the letter "J" in verse 85. These two copies of Section 76 have the sons of perdition coming forth in the first resurrection.

According to the text in the current editions of the D&C, the people in the terrestrial and telestial kingdoms are "ministered" to by those of higher kingdoms; however, in some manuscript copies, these two kingdoms are "administered" by these angels. These earlier texts are identified by the letters "7," on page 125 and "A" and "B" on page 126 in the Text Analysis.

Finally, the letters "H" and "P" on page 126 identify a major omission in the text of the Book of Commandments, Laws; and Covenants; Book B.

#### **Footnotes**

1 HC, I, 245, 252, 253.

2 The Juvenile Instructor [Salt Lake City], May 15, 1892, pp. 303, 304.

3 HC, V, 402.

4 HC II, 380.

5 Deseret News,--Extra [Salt Lake City], September 14, 1852, p. 24.

6 John Murdock Diary (1830-1859), p. 18, located in the HDC.

7 John Murdock Diary (1830-1859), pp. 27-29, located in the HDC.

8 Orson Pratt Journal (1833, 1834), located in the HDC. See also entries in his journal for December 1833.

9 See Evening and Morning Star [Kirtland, Ohio], February 1834, p. 134.

10 John Murdock Diary, *ibid.*

11 A. William Lund, former Assistant Church Historian, maintained that the vision mentioned in this incident was the First Vision and not Section 76.

12 HC II 492.

13 HC II, 505.

14 Heber C. Kimball Journal, Book 94C, p. 66, located in the HDC.

15 HC V, 288.

16 Times and Seasons [Nauvoo, Illinois], February 1, 1841, pp. 81-85.

17 See Millennial Star [Liverpool, England] August 1843, pp. 50-55 and November 13, 1858, p. 599; and Deseret News Lake City], May 14, 1856 op. 73. 74.

18 HC, V, 302.

19 Times and Seasons [Nauvoo, Illinois], February 1, 1841, pp. 82, 83.

20 The Vision was also published in: Parley P. Pratt, Key to Theology Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1855). This source is not included in Table 76 or in the Text Analysis because of its similarity to the copy in the D&C of the time.

**1984**

**Larry E. Dahl, BYU Religious Professor**

## **The Vision of the Glories (D&C 76)**

### **Studies in Scripture: The Doctrine and Covenants**

**Larry E. Dahl, "The Vision of the Glories," in Kent Jackson and Robert Millet, eds., Studies in Scripture: The Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: Randall, 1984), 1:279-308**

#### **A Significant Doctrinal Communication**

"It is full of light; it is full of truth; it is full of glory; it is full of beauty. It portrays the future of all the inhabitants of the earth, dividing them into three grand classes or divisions—celestial, terrestrial, and telestial, or as compared to the glory of the Sun, the glory of the Moon, and the glory of the Stars. It shows who will be redeemed, and what redemption they will enjoy; and describes the position the inhabitants of the earth will occupy when they enter into the future state." 1

"Section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants in its sublimity and clearness in relation to the eternal destiny of the human family, has not been surpassed. It should be treasured by all members of the Church as a priceless heritage. It should strengthen their faith and be to them an incentive to seek the exaltation promised to all who are just and true. So plain and simple are its teachings that none should stumble or misunderstand." 2

#### **Historical Context**

The Prophet Joseph Smith had been engaged "somewhat regularly" 3 in making an inspired translation of parts of the Bible since June of 1830. That work was periodically interrupted by other duties. One such interruption was a conference of the Church held in Amherst, Ohio, 25 January 1832. Concerning his return from that conference and the reception of the revelation known to us as D&C 76, the Prophet wrote:

Upon my return from Amherst conference, I resumed the translation of the scriptures. From sundry revelations which had been received, it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of man, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled. It appeared self-evident from what truths were left, that if God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body the term "Heaven," as intended for the Saint's eternal home must include more kingdoms than one. Accordingly, on the 16th of February, 1832, while translating St. John's Gospel, myself and Elder Rigdon saw the following vision. 4

At this time Joseph and his family were living in the home of John Johnson in Hiram, Ohio, about 30 miles southeast of Kirtland. It was in this home that the vision was received.

The only description that has surfaced thus far of the event, in addition to the Prophet's brief introduction cited above, is the following remembrance of Philo Dibble published in the *Juvenile Instructor*, 15 May 1892:

The vision which is recorded in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants was given at the house of "Father Johnson," in Hyrum [sic], Ohio, and during the time that Joseph and Sidney were in the spirit and saw the heavens open, there were other men in the room, perhaps twelve, among whom I was one during a part of the time—probably two-thirds of the time,—I saw the glory and felt the power, but did not see the vision.

The events and conversation, while they were seeing what is written (and many things were seen and related that are not written,) I will relate as minutely as is necessary.

Joseph would, at intervals, say: "What do I see?" as one might say while looking out the window and beholding what all in the room could not see. Then he would relate what he had seen or what he was looking at. Then Sidney replied, "I see the same." Presently Sidney would say "what do I see?" and would repeat what he had seen or was seeing, and Joseph would reply, "I see the same."

This manner of conversation was repeated at short intervals to the end of the vision, and during the whole time not a word was spoken by any other person. Not a sound nor motion made by anyone but Joseph and Sidney, and it seemed to me that they never moved a joint or limb during the time I was there, which I think was over an hour, and to the end of the vision.

Joseph sat firmly and calmly all the time in the midst of a magnificent glory, but Sidney sat limp and pale, apparently as limber as a rag, observing which, Joseph remarked, smilingly, "Sidney is not used to it as I am." 5

Ten years earlier (1882), "Philo Dibble's Narrative," an autobiographical sketch, was published by the Juvenile Instructor office. Concerning D&C 76 the narrative states:

On a subsequent visit to Hiram, I arrived at Father Johnson's just as Joseph and Sidney were coming out of the vision alluded to in the book of Doctrine and Covenants, in which mention is made of the three glories. Joseph wore black clothes, but at this time seemed to be dressed in an element of glorious white, and his face shone as if it were transparent, but I did not see the same glory attending Sidney. Joseph appeared as strong as a lion, but Sidney seemed as weak as water, and Joseph noticing his condition smiled and said, "Brother Sidney is not as used to it as I am." 6

If both of these accounts are accurate remembrances, Philo Dibble must have arrived in time to observe the latter portion ("probably two-thirds of the time," "which I think was over an hour") of the vision. No mention is made of the names of the "other men in the room, perhaps twelve." Whether any of those men wrote of the experience is not known.

### **Reaction of the Saints and Early Publication of the Vision**

Some of the Saints had difficulty accepting the doctrine in the vision, as it was different from their traditional view of life after death. Brigham Young wrote of his own struggle with it:

After all, my traditions were such, that when the Vision came first to me, it was so directly contrary and opposed to my former education, I said, wait a little; I did not reject it, but I could not understand it. I then could feel what incorrect traditions had done for me. Suppose all that I have ever heard from my priest and parents—the way they taught me to read the Bible, had been true;—my understanding would be diametrically opposed to the doctrine revealed in the Vision. I used to think and pray, to read and think, until I knew, and fully understood it for myself, by the visions of the holy Spirit. At first, it actually came in contact with my own feelings, though I never could believe like the mass of the Christian world around me; but I did not know how nigh I believed as they did. I found, however, that I was so nigh, I could shake hands with them any time I wished. 7

"Eventually, as this revelation was published in the periodicals of the Church and taught to the members over the pulpit, the Saints were able to overcome their prejudice, and section 76 is now held in high regard by the members of the Church." 8

The revelation was first published in the Church publication *The Evening and Morning Star* in July 1832, and was included in the 1835 edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*.

It should be noted that in the vision itself Joseph and Sidney were told what they were to write and what they were not to write (D&C 76:28, 49, 80, 113, 114-16).

Eleven years after the vision (May 1843) Joseph Smith said: "I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them." 9 It is possible that by then he already had revealed more than is recorded in D&C 76. Robert Woodford has suggested: "His later writings on the resurrection, . . . pre-earth life, . . . astronomy,

. . . and the degrees within the celestial kingdom . . . may all have reflected some of the things he learned in this vision." 10

If we have but a hundredth part, it seems obvious that the recorded revelation, as marvelous as it is, will not answer all the questions we may have about our eternal destinies. From what we do have, however, it is abundantly clear that there is an eternal reward commensurate with every level of obedience—rewards that range from godhood to perdition.

### **An Overview**

The revelation contained in D&C 76 is a series of visions on the following topics:

1. The Son of God (vv. 1-24)
2. Satan and His Followers (vv. 25-49)
3. The Celestial Kingdom (vv. 50-70, 92-96)
4. The Terrestrial Kingdom (vv. 71-80, 91, 97)
5. The Telestial Kingdom (vv. 81-90, 98-112)

The sequence is interesting. It must have been a profound lesson in contrast for Joseph and Sidney to see and converse with Christ (v. 14), hear "the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father" (v. 23), then to be shown the darkness of rebellion and perdition, and then again to bask in the glory and power attending the celestial kingdom.

### **The Vision of the Son of God (vv. 1-24)**

After being assured that God's purposes do not fail and that he delights to honor the faithful with wisdom and understanding through his Spirit, Joseph and Sidney were privileged to see and converse with the Son of God in heavenly vision. The details of that conversation, or even by what means it was carried out, are not stated. The effect of it, however, is clearly stated in vv. 22-24. "Last of all" (v. 22) does not mean there will be no future testimonies born of him, rather that these brethren could now add their personal witness to all former testimonies that had been born to that time.

Note that John 5:29 is rendered somewhat differently in v. 17 than in the Bible—"just" and "unjust" replacing "life" and "damnation." Note, too, that the new rendering "was given" to them (v. 15). A careful examination of the words and their theological meanings will show that the new rendering is more in keeping with the idea of varied levels of eternal reward than are the words "life" and "damnation."

The vision came as a prophet and his scribe were marveling and meditating upon a gospel truth, which in this case they had just learned through the spirit of revelation. This seems to be a pattern. It is interesting to note how many of the great recorded visions through the ages came while prophets were engaged in "pondering," "reflecting," or "meditating" upon some principle brought to their attention by the scriptures and the Spirit. Examples include Joseph Smith's First Vision (JS-H 12), Nephi's vision of the tree of life (1 Ne. 11:1), Joseph F. Smith's Vision of the Redemption of the Dead (D&C 138:1, 2), Enos and Nephi (son of Helaman) being reassured by the voice of God of their spiritual standing (Enos vv. 3, 4; Hell 10:2, 3), and Spencer W. Kimball's revelation on priesthood (OD 2). No doubt all of us could have revealed to us deeper understanding by devoting ourselves more to "pondering" and "reflecting" upon eternal truths. Perhaps that is why we are continually reminded to "search" (D&C 1:37), "treasure" (JS-M 37), "ponder" (Moro. 10:3), and "feast" (2 Ne. 31:20) upon the words of the Lord.

Verse 24 contains a powerful statement about the infinite nature of Christ's atonement. Citing this verse and the Prophet Joseph Smith's poetic version thereof (see below), Elder Bruce R. McConkie has written: "Now our Lord's jurisdiction and power extend far beyond the limits of this one small earth on which we dwell. He is, under the Father, the creator of worlds without number (Moses 1:33). And through the power of his atonement the inhabitants of these worlds, the revelation says, 'are begotten sons and daughters unto God'



(D&C 76:24), which means that the atonement of Christ, being literally and truly infinite, applies to an infinite number of earths." 11

### **The Vision Of Satan and His Followers (vv. 25-49)**

"The heavens wept over him" (v. 26), and with good reason! He was an "angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God" (v. 25). He was Lucifer, which means torch-bearer, or bringer of light. He was a "son of the morning," which could mean either "son of light" or an early-born spirit child of our Father in the pre-earth life. Obviously he had great capacity and promise and influence. But in his case pride ruled predominant. He rebelled against God. By his power and influence he convinced "a third part of the hosts of heaven" to rebel with him "because of their agency" (D&C 29:36). Satan, along with his followers, was "thrust down" (v. 25) "into the earth" (Rev. 12:9), "to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto [the Lord's] voice" (Moses 4:4). The revelation (v. 29) states that "he maketh war with the Saints of God, and encompasseth them round about." Joseph Smith said, "The devil will use his greatest efforts to trap the Saints." 12 He also told Heber C. Kimball that "The nearer a person approaches the Lord, a greater power will be manifest by the adversary to prevent the accomplishment of His purposes." 13

Just as those who completely follow Christ become sons of God (D&C 76:58; Moses 6:68), those who suffer "themselves through the power of the devil to be overcome" (v. 31) become sons of perdition, "Perdition" being another name for Satan (D&C 76:26). In both cases those involved make decisions with their eyes wide open—it is "impossible . . . to be saved in ignorance" (D&C 131:6), and those who become sons of perditions must:

- know God's power (v. 31)
- have been made partakers thereof (v. 31)
- have suffered themselves to be overcome (v. 31)
- deny the truth (v. 31)
- defy God's power (v. 31)
- deny the Holy Spirit after having received it (v. 35)
- deny the Only Begotten Son (crucify him unto themselves) (v. 35)
- deny the Son after the Father has revealed him (v. 43)

The question is often asked, "Just how much does one have to know before one could become a son of perdition?" The following quotations from Joseph Smith and Spencer W. Kimball may help:

All sins shall be forgiven, except the sin against the Holy Ghost; for Jesus will save all except the sons of perdition. What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against Him. After a man has sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy. This is the case with many apostates of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

When a man begins to be an enemy to this work, he hunts me, he seeks to kill me, and never ceases to thirst for my blood. He gets the spirit of the devil—the same spirit that they had who crucified the Lord of Life—the same spirit that sins against the Holy Ghost. You cannot save such persons; you cannot bring them to repentance; they make open war, like the devil, and awful is the consequence. 14

The sins unto death may be thought of as somewhat difficult to define and limit with precision. From the words of Joseph Smith quoted above we note that ". . . many apostates of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" will fall into this category. We cannot definitely identify them individually since it is

impossible for us to know the extent of their knowledge, the depth of their enlightenment, and the sureness of their testimonies before their fall. . . .

The sin against the Holy Ghost requires such knowledge that it is manifestly impossible for the rank and file to commit such a sin. Comparatively few Church members will commit murder wherein they shed innocent blood, and we hope only few will deny the Holy Ghost. 15

The consequence of becoming sons of perdition is the "second death" (v. 37). They are the "only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord" (v. 38). Through the power of the atonement, Christ "saves all the works of his hands, except those sons of perdition" (vv. 43, 44). "They cannot be redeemed from their spiritual fall because they repent not; for they love darkness rather than light" (D&C 29:44, 45). Their determined lawlessness and its result is described in another revelation: "That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to be a law unto itself, and willeth to abide in sin, and altogether abideth in sin, cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, nor judgment. Therefore, they must remain filthy still" (D&C 88:35).

The Lord explained to Joseph and Sidney in the vision that though some are permitted to catch a brief glimpse of perdition, no one except the sons of perdition themselves truly understand the nature, extent and duration of the suffering there (vv. 44-48). In an earlier revelation the Lord said: "Wherefore I will say unto them—Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And now, behold, I say unto you, never at any time have I declared from my own mouth that they should return, for where I am they cannot come, for they have no power. But remember that all my judgments are not given unto man" (D&C 29:28-30). The "but remember" portion of that revelation has led some to speculate that eventually the sons of perdition may be restored, recycled, or redeemed. Concerning those who were advocating such an idea in the early Church, the First Presidency (Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Fredrick G. Williams) wrote in 1833:

Say to the brother Hulet and to all others, that the Lord never authorized them to say that the devil, his angels or the sons of perdition, should ever be restored; for their state of destiny was not revealed to man, is not revealed, nor ever shall be revealed, save to those who are made partakers thereof; consequently those who teach this doctrine, have not received it of the Spirit of the Lord. Truly Brother Oliver declared it to be the doctrine of devils. We therefore command that this doctrine be taught no more in Zion. We sanction the decision of the Bishop and his council, in relation to this doctrine being a bar to communion. 16

Speculation, then, about the ultimate destiny of the sons of perdition—something that was not, is not, and will not be revealed—seems fruitless.

Some have wondered if the words "for all the rest shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead" (v. 39) means that sons of perdition will not be resurrected. We are assured by scripture and by modern prophets that they will be resurrected (see 1 Cor. 15:22; D&C 29:26; D&C 88:32, 102; Alma 11:41-45). 17 The sense of v. 39 then, is that all the rest (all except sons of perdition) will be "brought forth" (i.e., redeemed or brought out of hell) by the resurrection of the dead (see D&C 29:44; 88:16, 32). 18

Satan and his unembodied followers, along with his resurrected but unredeemed followers, inherit a "kingdom which is not a kingdom of glory" (D&C 88:24), suffering "everlasting," "endless," "eternal" punishment (v. 44 explained to mean "God's punishment" in D&C 19:6-12), "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (v. 44). The "worm" and "fire" represent "guilt and pain, and anguish" (Mosiah 2:38). Joseph Smith said: "The torment of disappointment in the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone." 19 What a sad end. It is no wonder that the heavens wept!

### **The Vision of the Celestial Kingdom (vv. 50-70, 92-96)**

A careful reading of the verses pertaining to the celestial glory shows that they refer to those who are exalted in that kingdom (see v. 55, "into whose hands the Father has given all things"; v. 56, "received of his fulness"; v. 58, "they are gods"). Later (see D&C 131:1-4) the Prophet explained that there were "three heavens or degrees" in the celestial glory; whether this fact was made known during the vision or whether he learned of it later is not stated. However, it seems clear that the focus of this part of the vision is upon the highest heaven or glory within the celestial kingdom.

Requirements include:

- a testimony of Jesus (v. 51)
- belief—faith? (v. 51)
- baptism (v. 51)
- receiving the Holy Ghost (v. 52)
- keeping the commandments (v. 52)
- overcoming by faith—overcoming sin? or the world? or whatever trial or obstacle "the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him" (Mosiah 3:19), proving to himself and to God that he is "determined to serve God at all hazards" 20 (v. 53)
- sealing by the Holy Spirit of Promise (v. 53)

The Holy Spirit of Promise is the Holy Spirit promised the saints, or in other words the Holy Ghost. This name-title is used in connection with the sealing and ratifying power of the Holy Ghost, that is, the power given him to ratify and approve the righteous acts of men so that those acts will be binding on earth and in heaven. "All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations," must be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, if they are to have "efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead" (D&C 132:7).

To seal is to ratify, to justify, or to approve. Thus an act which is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise is one which is ratified by the Holy Ghost; it is one which is approved by the Lord; and the person who has taken the obligation upon himself is justified by the Spirit in the thing he has done. The ratifying seal of approval is put upon an act only if those entering the contract are worthy as a result of personal righteousness to receive the divine approbation. They "are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true" (D&C 76:53). If they are not just and true and worthy, the ratifying seal is withheld. 21

Nothing specific is said in this revelation about the necessity of eternal marriage in order to achieve exaltation in the celestial kingdom. That requirement is made clear in D&C 131:1-4 and D&C 132:15-25. Also, we learn from D&C 84:33-44 that faithfulness to the oath and covenant of the priesthood is a requirement.

Those who attain this glory are members of the "Church of Enoch, and of the Firstborn" (vv. 54, 67), and "are come unto Mount Zion" (v. 66). These are simply other ways of saying that they are exalted. 22

"Just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant" (v. 69) is a reminder that even though someone learns to live in perfect harmony with the laws of God (i.e., becomes a just man) he must be absolved from his earlier mistakes before he is considered perfect. The blood of Christ remits those sins of which one has repented, and thus he is "made perfect."

Verse 94 (see also 1 Cor. 13:12) carries a powerful thought: exalted souls "see as they are seen, and know as they are known." How marvelous to consider the idea of living in such an open society, where there are no hidden agendas, where motives, thoughts, words, and actions are pure, so that there is nothing of which to be ashamed and therefore nothing to try to hide. It is an interesting experience to try to live that way for one day, or even one hour.

Verse 95 indicates that those who achieve this glory will be made "equal in power, and in might, and in dominion." What is probably meant is that ultimately "all that My Father has" will be given to those who qualify for exaltation (D&C 84:38). This blessing will not necessarily be conferred simultaneously upon all at the resurrection. Joseph Fielding Smith has said: "To be 'made equal in power, and in might, and in dominion,' does not mean that all shall advance with equal rapidity and perfection, but that means are given to them as sons of God by which they may obtain this fulness." 23 And the Prophet Joseph Smith taught in 1844:

When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave. 24

Applying the principles contained in D&C 130:18-19, it will take some people less time than others to achieve a "fulness." Surely as we contemplate dwelling "in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever" (v. 62), with all the blessings attendant thereto, we can understand Alma's declaration: "And my soul did long to be there" (Alma 36:22).

#### **The Vision of the Terrestrial Kingdom (vv. 71-80, 86-89, 91, 97)**

Those who are to receive the terrestrial glory are described as:

- those who died without law (v. 72)
- the spirits of men kept in prison, who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it (vv. 73-74)
- honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men (v. 75)
- those who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus (v. 79)

It seems clear that these categories are not absolutely definitive. For instance, all those who die without law will not end up in the terrestrial kingdom—those who would have received the gospel had they heard it are heirs of the celestial kingdom (D&C 137:7-9). And what better way is there of knowing whether they would have received it than seeing what they do with it when they do receive it, in the post-earth spirit world? Similarly all those who are "not valiant in the testimony of Jesus" will not receive terrestrial glory—some will be so "not valiant" (i.e., liars, sorcerers, adulterers, etc.) that they will be consigned to the celestial kingdom. Hence, it appears that these categories qualify one another, and taken together give us a profile of terrestrial personality.

That personality is capsulized in vv. 75 and 79 — "honorable men" who have a testimony of Jesus, but who are not valiant in that testimony. Some, evidently, settled themselves into that mold in the pre-earth life and simply maintain it through this earthly probation. Elder Melvin J. Ballard suggested:

Now those who died without law, meaning the pagan nations, for lack of faithfulness, for lack of devotion in the former life, are obtaining all that they are entitled to. I don't mean to say that all of them will be barred from entrance into the highest glory. Any one of them who repents and complies with the conditions might also obtain celestial glory, but the great bulk of them will only obtain terrestrial glory. 25

Others, like some of the disobedient in the days of Noah, reject the gospel on earth, but through repentance and suffering in the post-earth spirit world raise themselves to a terrestrial level of obedience and qualify for a terrestrial reward (Moses 7:36-40; 1 Pet. 3:18-21, 4:6; D&C 138:32, 58). Still others accept the testimony of Jesus on earth or in the Spirit world and live honorable lives, but permit the craftiness of men to blind them to the higher gospel principles. Neither celestial laws nor celestial wickedness appeals to them.

By the time of the resurrection and judgment, the accumulated effect of all our decisions in the pre-earth life, mortality, and the post-earth spirit world will be an unmistakable demonstration of what we really are, what law we can and will obey, and therefore what measure of truth and light and glory we can abide (D&C 88:22-24, 40). In regard to those spoken of in D&C 76:72-74, discussion sometimes focuses upon whether rejecting the fulness of the gospel at one point in time disqualifies them from receiving it later. Perhaps more emphasis should be placed upon the idea that it is not so much a matter of God denying opportunity as it is a matter of our unwillingness or inability to repent fully and respond to higher levels of light and truth.

Those who receive the terrestrial glory will enjoy "the presence of the Son, but not the fulness of the Father" (v. 77). Their bodies differ from celestial bodies in glory "as the moon differs from the sun" (v. 78). They will be governed by "the ministrations of the celestial" (v. 87) kingdom, and have a part in governing the telestial kingdom (vv. 86, 88).

### **The Vision of the Telestial Kingdom (vv. 81-90, 98-112)**

Just as there are souls who love and obey the truth with all their hearts and receive celestial rewards, and as there are souls who are honorable but not valiant and who receive terrestrial rewards, there are those who live wickedly, rejecting the gospel and Christ and the prophets. These receive telestial rewards.

The word "telestial" is a uniquely Latter-day Saint term. It does not appear in the Bible and even in Latter-day scripture only appears in D&C 76 and D&C 88. Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines "telestial glory" as "The lowest of three Mormon degrees or kingdoms of glory attainable in heaven." 26 Although Paul speaks of three glories of the sun, moon, and stars, and names the first two as celestial and terrestrial, he does not name the third. That name, telestial, comes from this vision to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon (see 1 Cor. 15:40, 41; see also 27).

Those who will enter the telestial kingdom, where they will differ in glory from one another as one star differs from another star (v. 98), are described as:

- they who received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus (v. 82)
- they who deny not the Holy Spirit (v. 83) 28
- they who say they are some of one, and some of another—some of Christ and some of John, and some of Moses—but received not the gospel, neither the testimony of Jesus, neither the prophets, neither the everlasting covenant (vv. 99-101)
- they who are liars and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie (v. 103; Rev. 22:15 adds murderers)

Verse 82 has an interesting thought—seed in it. By speaking of "the gospel of Christ" and "the testimony of Jesus" as two factors, it appears that a person could have one, or both, or neither. In the context of this revelation, such an idea harmonizes with the concept that terrestrial-type souls receive a testimony of Jesus but are not valiant enough in that testimony to receive the fulness of the gospel; celestial personalities receive a testimony of Jesus and baptism and the Holy Ghost and a cleansing from all sin (i.e., the fulness of the gospel); telestial people do not receive either a testimony of Jesus or the gospel.

However, "these all shall bow the knee, and every tongue shall confess . . . that Jesus Christ is Lord" (v. 110; Philip. 2:9-11). This obeisance and confession will come sometime during the process of preparing to be "heirs of salvation" (v. 88). 29 This cleansing process involves their spirits' being called up and judged unworthy of resurrection at the beginning of the Millennium (D&C 88:100-1), then spending one thousand years in hell suffering for the sins they earlier refused to repent of, and learning to obey at least a telestial law (vv. 84-85, 105-7). Once they are cleansed and prepared, they shall be resurrected and placed in the telestial kingdom, the glory of which "surpasses all understanding" (v. 89). 30 No longer liars, sorcerers, whoremongers, adulterers, "they shall be servants of the Most High; but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end" (v. 112). Charles W. Penrose, later to become an apostle and counselor in the First Presidency, wrote in 1897:

- While there is one soul of this race, willing and able to accept and obey the laws of redemption, no matter where or in what condition it may be found, Christ's work will be incomplete until that being is brought up from death and hell, and placed in a position of progress, upward and onward, in such glory as is possible for its enjoyment and the service of the great God.
- The punishment inflicted will be adequate to the wrongs performed. In one sense the sinner will always suffer its effects. When the debt is paid and justice is satisfied; when obedience is learned through the lessons of sad experience; when the grateful and subdued soul comes forth from the everlasting punishment, thoroughly willing to comply with the laws once rejected; there will be an abiding sense of loss. The fullness of celestial glory in the presence and society of God and the Lamb are beyond the reach of that saved but not perfected soul, forever. The power of increase, wherein are dominion and exaltation and crowns of immeasurable glory, is not for the class of beings who have been thrust down to hell and endured the wrath of God for the period allotted by eternal judgment. . . .
- Those who were cast down to the depths of their sins, who rejected the gospel of Jesus, who persecuted the Saints, who reveled in iniquity, who committed all manner of transgressions except the unpardonable crime, will also come forth in the Lord's time, through the blood of the Lamb and the ministry of His disciples and their own repentance and willing acceptance of divine law, and enter into the various degrees of glory and power and progress and light, according to their different capacities and adaptabilities. They cannot go up into the society of the Father nor receive of the presence of the Son, but will have ministrations of messengers from the terrestrial world, and have joy beyond all expectations and the conception of uninspired mortal minds. They will all bow the knee to Christ and serve God the Father, and have an eternity of usefulness and happiness in harmony with the higher powers. They receive the telestial glory. 31

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw that the inhabitants of the telestial world were "as innumerable as the stars in the firmament of heaven, or as the sand upon the seashore" (v. 109). Though denied access to where God and Christ dwell, they will enjoy the presence "of the Holy Spirit through the ministration of the terrestrial" (vv. 86, 112).

### **The Prophet's Poetic Version of the Vision**

On 1 February 1843 there appeared in the *Times and Seasons* (pp. 81-85) a short poem by W. W. Phelps addressed to Joseph Smith, entitled "Go With Me." With it was a much longer poetic response by the Prophet. The Prophet's piece is a poetic re-phrasing of D&C 76, with some interpretive commentary. It is interesting to compare the verses from D&C 76 with Joseph Smith's poetic version of the same vision. The verse numbers from D&C 76 are given in parentheses following the corresponding verse in the poem.

### **From W. W. Phelps To Joseph Smith: The Prophet. Vade Mecum, (Translated.) Go With Me.**

Go with me, will you go to the saints that have died,—  
To the next, better world, where the righteous reside;  
Where the angels and spirits in harmony be  
In the joys of a vast paradise? Go with me.

Go with me where the truth and the virtues prevail;  
Where the union is one, and the years never fail;  
Not a heart can conceive, nor a nat'ral eye see  
What the Lord has prepar'd for the just. Go with me.

Go with me where there is no destruction or war;  
Neither tyrants, or sland'ers, or nations ajar;  
Where the system is perfect, and happiness free,  
And the life is eternal with God. Go with me.

Go with me, will you go to the mansions above,  
Where the bliss, and the knowledge, the light, and the love,  
And the glory of God do eternally be?—  
Death, the wages of sin, is not there. Go with me.  
Nauvoo, January, 1843.

**The Answer. To W. W. Phelps, Esq.  
A Vision.**

1. I will go, I will go, to the home of the Saints,  
Where the virtue's the value, and life the reward;  
But before I return to my former estate  
I must fulfil the mission I had from the Lord.
2. Wherefore, hear, O ye heavens, and give ear O ye earth;  
And rejoice ye inhabitants truly again;  
For the Lord he is God, and his life never ends,  
And besides him there ne'er was a Saviour of men. (verse 1)
3. His ways are a wonder; his wisdom is great;  
The extent of his doings, there's none can unveil;  
His purposes fail not; from age unto age  
He still is the same, and his years never fail. (verses 2-3)
4. His throne is the heavens, his life time is all  
Of eternity now, and eternity then;  
His union is power, and none stays his hand,—  
The Alpha, Omega, for ever: Amen. (verse 4)
5. For thus saith the Lord, in the spirit of truth,  
I am merciful, gracious, and good unto those  
That fear me, and live for the life that's to come;  
My delight is to honor the saints with repose; (verse 5)
6. That serve me in righteousness true to the end;  
Eternal's their glory, and great their reward;  
I'll surely reveal all my myst'ries to them,—  
The great hidden myst'ries in my kingdom stor'd— (verse 6)
7. From the council in Kolob, to time on the earth.  
And for ages to come unto them I will show  
My pleasure & will, what my kingdom will do:  
Eternity's wonders they truly shall know. (verse 7)
8. Great things of the future I'll show unto them,  
Yea, things of the vast generations to rise;  
For their wisdom and glory shall be very great,

And their pure understanding extend to the skies: (verse 8)

9. And before them the wisdom of wise men shall cease,  
And the nice understanding of prudent ones fail!  
For the light of my spirit shall light mine elect,  
And the truth is so mighty 't will ever prevail. (verses 9-10)

10. And the secrets and plans of my will I'll reveal;  
The sanctified pleasures when earth is renew'd,  
What the eye hath not seen, nor the ear hath yet heard;  
Nor the heart of the natural man ever hath view'd. (verse 10)

11. I, Joseph, the prophet, in spirit beheld,  
And the eyes of the inner man truly did see  
Eternity sketch'd in a vision from God,  
Of what was, and now is, and yet is to be. (verses 11-12)

12. Those things which the Father ordained of old,  
Before the world was, or a system had run,—  
Through Jesus the Maker and Savior of all;  
The only begotten, (Messiah) his son. (verse 13)

13. Of whom I bear record, as all prophets have,  
And the record I bear is the fulness,—yea even  
The truth of the gospel of Jesus—the Christ,  
With whom I convers'd, in the vision of heav'n. (verse 14)

14. For while in the act of translating his word,  
Which the Lord in his grace had appointed to me,  
I came to the gospel recorded by John,  
Chapter fifth and the twenty ninth verse, which you'll see. (verse 15)  
Which was given as follows:  
"Speaking of the resurrection of the dead,—  
"Concerning those who shall hear the voice of  
"the son of man—  
"And shall come forth:—  
"They who have done good in the resurrection  
"of the just.  
"And they who have done evil in the  
"resurrection of the unjust." (verses 16-17)

15. I marvel'd at these resurrections, indeed!  
For it came unto me by the spirit direct:—  
And while I did meditate what it all meant,  
The Lord touch'd the eyes of my own intellect: — (verses 18-19)

16. Hosanna forever! they open'd anon,  
And the glory of God shone around where I was;  
And there was the Son, at the Father's right hand,  
In a fulness of glory, and holy applause. (verse 20)

17. I beheld round the throne, holy angels and hosts,



And sanctified beings from worlds that have been,  
In holiness worshipping God and the Lamb,  
Forever and ever, amen and amen! (verse 21)

18. And now after all of the proofs made of him,  
By witnesses truly, by whom he was known,  
This is mine, last of all, that he lives; yea he lives!  
And sits at the right hand of God, on his throne. (verse 22)

19. And I heard a great voice, bearing record from heav'n,  
He's the Saviour, and only begotten of God—  
By him, of him, and through him, the worlds were all made,  
Even all that career in the heavens so broad, (verses 23-24)

20. Whose inhabitants, too, from the first to the last,  
Are sav'd by the very same Saviour of ours;  
And, of course, are begotten God's daughters and sons,  
By the very same truths, and the very same pow'rs. (verse 24)

21. And I saw and bear record of warfare in heav'n;  
For an angel of light, in authority great,  
Rebell'd against Jesus, and sought for his pow'r,  
But was thrust down to woe from his Godified state. (verse 25)

22. And the heavens all wept, and the tears drop'd like dew,  
That Lucifer, son of the morning had fell!  
Yea, is fallen! is fall'n, and become, Oh, alas!  
The son of Perdition; the devil of hell! (verses 26-27)

23. And while I was yet in the spirit of truth,  
The commandment was: write ye the vision all out;  
For Satan, old serpent, the devil's for war,—  
And yet will encompass the saints round about. (verses 28-29)

24. And I saw, too, the suff'ring and mis'ry of those,  
(Overcome by the devil, in warfare and fight,)  
In hell-fire, and vengeance, the doom of the damn'd;  
For the Lord said, the vision is further: so write. (verse 30)

25. For thus saith the Lord, now concerning all those  
Who know of my power and partake of the same;  
And suffer themselves, that they be overcome  
By the power of Satan; despising my name: — (verse 31)

26. Defying my power, and denying the truth;—  
They are they—of the world, or of men, most forlorn,  
The Sons of Perdition, of whom, ah! I say,  
'T were better for them had they never been born! (verses 31-32)

27. They're vessels of wrath, and dishonor to God,  
Doom'd to suffer his wrath, in the regions of woe,  
Through the terrific night of eternity's round,

With the devil and all of his angels below: (verse 33)

28. Of whom it is said, no forgiveness is giv'n,  
In this world, alas! nor the world that's to come;  
For they have denied the spirit of God,  
After having receiv'd it: and mis'ry's their doom. (verses 34-35)

29. And denying the only begotten of God,—  
And crucify him to themselves, as they do,  
And openly put him to shame in their flesh,  
By gospel they cannot repentance renew. (verse 35)

30. They are they, who must go to the great lake of fire,  
Which burneth with brimstone, yet never consumes,  
And dwell with the devil, and angels of his,  
While eternity goes and eternity comes. (verse 36)

31. They are they, who must groan through the great second death,  
And are not redeemed in the time of the Lord;  
While all the rest are, through the triumph of Christ,  
Made partakers of grace, by the power of his word. (verses 37-39)

32. The myst'ry of Godliness truly is great;—  
The past, and the present, and what is to be;  
And this is the gospel-glad tidings to all,  
Which the voice from the heavens bore record to me: (verse 40)

33. That he came to the world in the middle of time,  
To lay down his life for his friends and his foes,  
And bear away sin as a mission of love;  
And sanctify earth for a blessed repose. (verse 41)

34. 'Tis decreed, that he'll save all the work of his hands,  
And sanctify them by his own precious blood;  
And purify earth for the Sabbath of rest,  
By the agent of fire, as it was by the flood. (verse 42)

35. The Savior will save all his Father did give,  
Even all that he gave in the regions abroad,  
Save the Sons of Perdition: They're lost; ever lost,  
And can never return to the presence of God. (verse 43)

36. They are they, who must reign with the devil in hell,  
In eternity now, and eternity then,  
Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quench'd;—  
And the punishment still, is eternal. Amen. (verse 44)

37. And which is the torment apostates receive,  
But the end, or the place where the torment began,  
Save to them who are made to partake of the same,  
Was never, nor will be, revealed unto man. (verses 45-46)

38. Yet God shows by vision a glimpse of their fate,  
And straightway he closes the scene that was shown:  
So the width, or the depth, or the misery thereof,  
Save to those that partake, is forever unknown. (verses 47-48)

39. And while I was pondering, the vision was closed;  
And the voice said to me, write the vision: for lo!  
'Tis the end of the scene of the sufferings of those,  
Who remain filthy still in their anguish and woe. (verse 49)

40. And again I bear record of heavenly things,  
Where virtue's the value, above all that's pric'd—  
Of the truth of the gospel concerning the just,  
That rise in the first resurrection of Christ. (verse 50)

41. Who receiv'd and believ'd, and repented likewise,  
And then were baptis'd, as a man always was,  
Who ask'd and receiv'd a remission of sin,  
And honored the kingdom by keeping its laws. (verse 51)

42. Being buried in water, as Jesus had been,  
And keeping the whole of his holy commands,  
They received the gift of the spirit of truth,  
By the ordinance truly of laying on hands. (verse 52)

43. For these overcome, by their faith and their works,  
Being tried in their life-time, as purified gold,  
And seal'd by the spirit of promise, to life,  
By men called of God, as was Aaron of old. (verse 53)

44. They are they, of the church of the first born of God,—  
And unto whose hands he committeth all things;  
For they hold the keys of the kingdom of heav'n,  
And reign with the Savior, as priests, and as kings. (verses 54-56)

45. They're priests of the order of Melchizedek,  
Like Jesus, (from whom is this highest reward,)  
Receiving a fulness of glory and light;  
As written: They're Gods; even sons of the Lord. (verses 57-58)

46. So all things are theirs; yea, of life, or of death;  
Yea, whether things now, or to come, all are theirs,  
And they are the Savior's, and he is the Lord's,  
Having overcome all, as eternity's heirs. (verses 59-60)

47. 'Tis wisdom that man never glory in man,  
But give God the glory for all that he hash;  
For the righteous will walk in the presence of God,  
While the wicked are trod under foot in his wrath. (verse 61)

48. Yea, the righteous shall dwell in the presence of God,  
And of Jesus, forever, from earth's second birth—

For when he comes down in the splendor of heav'n,  
All these he'll bring with him, to reign on the earth. (verses 62-63)

49. These are they that arise in their bodies of flesh,  
When the trump of the first resurrection shall sound;  
These are they that come up to Mount Zion, in life,  
Where the blessings and gifts of the spirit abound. (verses 64-66)

50. These are they that have come to the heavenly place;  
To the numberless courses of angels above:  
To the city of God; e'en the holiest of all,  
And the home of the blessed, the fountain of love: (verse 67)

51. To the church of old Enoch, and of the first born:  
And gen'ral assembly of ancient renown'd.  
Whose names are all kept in the archives of heav'n,  
As chosen and faithful, and fit to be crown 'd. (verse 68)

52. These are they that are perfect through Jesus' own blood,  
Whose bodies celestial are mention'd by Paul,  
Where the sun is the typical glory thereof,  
And God, and his Christ, are the true judge of all. (verses 69-70)

53. Again, I beheld the terrestrial world,  
In the order and glory of Jesus, go on;  
'Twas not as the church of the first born of God,  
But shone in its place, as the moon to the sun. (verse 71)

54. Behold, these are they that have died without law;  
The heathen of ages that never had hope.  
And those of the region and shadow of death,  
The spirits in prison, that light has brought up. (verses 72-73)

55. To spirits in prison the Savior once preach'd,  
And taught them the gospel, with powers afresh;  
And then were the living baptiz'd for their dead,  
That they might be judg'd as if men in the flesh. (verse 74)

56. These are they that are hon'orable men of the earth;  
Who were blinded and dup'd by the cunning of men:  
They receiv'd not the truth of the Savior at first;  
But did, when they heard it in prison, again. (verses 74-75)

57. Not valiant for truth, they obtain'd not the crown,  
But are of that glory that's typ'd by the moon:  
They are they, that come into the presence of Christ,  
But not to the fulness of God, on his throne. (verses 76-79)

58. Again I beheld the telestial, as third,  
The lesser, or starry world, next in its place.  
For the leaven must leaven three measures of meal,  
And every knee bow that is subject to grace. (verse 81)

59. These are they that receiv'd not the gospel of Christ,  
Or evidence, either, that he ever was;  
As the stars are all different in glory and light,  
So differs the glory of these by the laws. (verse 82)

60. These are they that deny not the spirit of God,  
But are thrust down to hell, with the devil, for sins,  
As hypocrites, liars, whoremongers, and thieves,  
And stay 'till the last resurrection begins. (verses 83-85)

61. 'Till the Lamb shall have finish'd the work he begun;  
Shall have trodden the wine press, in fury alone,  
And overcome all by the pow'r of his might:  
He conquers to conquer, and save all his own. (verses 85 and 107)

62. These are they that receive not a fulness of light,  
From Christ, in eternity's world, where they are,  
The terrestrial sends them the Comforter, though;  
And minist'ring angels, to happify there. (verse 86)

63. And so the telectual is minister'd to,  
By ministers from the terrestrial one,  
As terrestrial is, from the celestial throne;  
And the great, greater, greatest, seem's stars, moon, and sun. (verses 86-88)

64. And thus I beheld, in the vision of heav'n,  
The telectual glory, dominion and bliss,  
Surpassing the great understanding of men,—  
Unknown, save reveal'd, in a world vain as this. (verses 89-90)

65. And lo, I beheld the terrestrial, too,  
Which excels the telectual in glory and light,  
In splendor, and knowledge, and wisdom, and joy,  
In blessings, and graces, dominion and might. (verse 91)

66. I beheld the celestial, in glory sublime;  
Which is the most excellent kingdom that is,—  
Where God, e'en the Father, in harmony reigns;  
Almighty, supreme, and eternal, in bliss. (verses 92-93)

67. Where the church of the first born in union reside,  
And they are as they're seen, and they know as they're known;  
Being equal in power, dominion and might,  
With a fulness of glory and grace, round his throne. (verses 94-95)

68. The glory celestial is one like the sun;  
The glory terrest'ral is one like the moon;  
The glory telectual is one like the stars,  
And all harmonize like the parts of a tune. (verses 96-98)

69. As the stars are all different in lustre and size,

So the telestial region, is mingled in bliss;  
From least unto greatest, and greatest to least,  
The reward is exactly as promis'd in this. (verse 98)

70. These are they that came out for Apollos and Paul;  
For Cephas and Jesus, in all kinds of hope;  
For Enoch and Moses, and Peter, and John;  
For Luther and Calvin, and even the Pope. (verses 99-100)

71. For they never received the gospel of Christ,  
Nor the prophetic spirit that came from the Lord;  
Nor the covenant neither, which Jacob once had;  
They went their own way, and they have their reward. (verses 100-1)

72. By the order of God, last of all, these are they,  
That will not be gather'd with saints here below,  
To be caught up to Jesus, and meet in the clouds:—  
In darkness they worshipping'd; to darkness they go. (verse 102)

73. These are they that are sinful, the wicked at large,  
That glutted their passion by meanness or worth;  
All liars, adulterers, sorc'ers, and proud;  
And suffer, as promis'd, God's wrath on the earth. (verses 103-4)

74. These are they that must suffer the vengeance of hell,  
'Till Christ shall have trodden all enemies down,  
And perfected his work, in the fulness of times:  
And is crown'd on his throne with his glorious crown. (verses 105-8)

75. The vast multitude of the telestial world—  
As the stars of the skies, or the sands of the sea;—  
The voice of Jehovah echo'd far and wide,  
Ev'ry tongue shall confess, and they all bow the knee. (verses 109-10)

76. Ev'ry man shall be judg'd by the works of his life,  
And receive a reward in the mansions prepar'd;  
For his judgments are just, and his works never end,  
As his prophets and servants have always declar'd. (verse 111)

77. But the great things of God, which he show'd unto me,  
Unlawful to utter, I dare not declare;  
They surpass all the wisdom and greatness of men,  
And only are seen, as has Paul, where they are. (verses 114-18)

78. I will go, I will go, while the secret of life,  
Is blooming in heaven, and blasting in hell;  
Is leaving on earth, and a budding in space:—  
I will go, I will go, with you, brother, farewell.

**Joseph Smith.**  
**Nauvoo, Feb. 1843.**

## Conclusion

Truly there are many mansions in our Father's house (John 14:2). In his justice and mercy and love he will do all he can do for us—all we will permit him to do—for he "granteth unto men according to their desire" (Alma 29:4, 5; 41:3-8). D&C 76 bears eloquent testimony of this truth. Perhaps the Prophet Joseph Smith said it best.

Nothing could be more pleasing to the Saints upon the order of the kingdom of the Lord, than the light which burst upon the world through the foregoing vision. Every law, every commandment, every promise, every truth, and every point touching the destiny of man, from Genesis to Revelation, where the purity of the scriptures remains unsullied by the folly of men, go to show the perfection of the theory [of different degrees of glory in the future life] and witnesses the fact that that document is a transcript from the records of the eternal world. The sublimity of the ideas; the purity of the language; the scope for action; the continued duration for completion, in order that the heirs of salvation may confess the Lord and bow the knee; the rewards for faithfulness, and the punishments for sins, are so much beyond the narrow-mindedness of men that every honest man is constrained to exclaim: "It came from God." 32

## Notes

### The Vision of the Glories

1. Charles W. Penrose, JD 24:92.
2. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1953), 2:50.
3. Robert J. Matthews, *A Plainer Translation: Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, A History and Commentary* (Provo, Ut.: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), p. xxviii.
4. HC 1:245.
5. *Juvenile Instructor*, vol. 27, pp. 303-4.
6. "Early Scenes in Church History," *Four Faith Promoting Classics* (Salt Lake City, Ut.: Bookcraft, 1968), p. 81.
7. *Deseret News—Extra* (Salt Lake City), 14 Sept. 1852, p. 52, as quoted in Robert J. Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants," unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1974, p. 929.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 933.
9. HC 5:402.
10. Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants," p. 928.
11. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), p. 65. Cf. McConkie, "Christ and the Creation," *Ensign*, June 1982, p. 10.
12. TPJS, p. 161.
13. In Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967), p. 132.
14. TPJS, p. 358.
15. Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969), pp. 122-23.
16. HC 1:366; TPJS, p. 24.
17. See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., comp. Bruce R. McConkie (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-56), 2:25, 273-78 for statements by Joseph Smith, John Taylor, Joseph F. Smith, George Q. Cannon, and Joseph Fielding Smith.
18. It is interesting to note that in the earliest available manuscripts and printings of the vision it is rendered "who" (*Kirtland Revelation Book* and *Evening and Morning Star*) and "they" (*Book of Commandments and Law and Covenants*) rather than "for all the rest." See Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants," p. 951.
19. TPJS, p. 357.
20. *Ibid.* p. 150.
21. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 361-62.
22. Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation*, 2:57-58; Heb. 12:22-24.
23. Smith, *ibid.*, 2:58.
24. TPJS, p. 348.

25. "The Three Degrees of Glory," in Melvin J. Ballard: Crusader for Righteousness (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), p. 221.
26. Unabridged (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1969).
27. Regarding the expression "deny not the Holy Spirit": This may seem like a strange way to speak of wicked souls. The same thing could be said of those who attain terrestrial and celestial glory. As used here (v. 83) it seems to mean that although these people may be very wicked, they did not sink so low as to deny the Holy Spirit and thus become sons of perdition, that they are somewhat above irreconcilable defiance.
28. Regarding "heirs of salvation": Although the words "save" and "salvation" are generally used in the scriptures to mean exaltation, they are on a few occasions used simply to mean resurrection (e.g., 2 Ne. 2:4), and at other times to mean redemption from the grave and from the devil, although those thus redeemed receive different rewards, according to their works (see D&C 76:43-44, 88; 132:16, 17). Hence, by virtue of the atonement, all who have ever lived as mortals on this earth are "saved" from physical death (i.e., resurrected), and all except the sons of perdition are "saved" from death and hell or the devil; only those who obey the fulness of the gospel are "saved" (i.e., exalted) in the kingdom of God. The context in which these words are used must be considered carefully.
29. Regarding "surpasses all understanding": A rather common notion in connection with this verse is that Joseph Smith had taught that if we knew what the telestial kingdom was like, we would commit suicide to get there. What the Prophet said was not in reference to the telestial kingdom, but to life "behind the veil," which may mean a number of things. The Prophet's statement (Charles Walker quoting Wilford Woodruff quoting Joseph Smith) is as follows:  
Br. Woodruff spoke. . . . He referred to a saying of Joseph Smith which he heard him utter (like this) That if the People knew what was behind the veil, they would try by every means to commit suicide that they might get there, but the Lord in his wisdom had implanted the fear of death in every person that they might cling to life and thus accomplish the designs of their creator. (Diary of Charles Lowell Walker, ed. by A. Karl Larson and Katherine M. Larson [Logan, Ut.: Utah State University Press, 1980], vol. 1, pp. 465-66.)
30. "Mormon" Doctrine (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1897), pp. 72, 74, 75.
31. HC 1:252-53.

## **1985 (1830's Period LDS Beliefs)**

**Grant Underwood, BYU Religion Professor**

### **Saved Or Damned: Tracing a Persistent Protestantism in Early Mormon Thought BYU Studies**

(Early LDS lack of Adoption of Degrees of Glory)

"Saved Or Damned": Tracing a Persistent Protestantism in Early Mormon Thought by Grant Underwood ,  
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In the July 1838 issue of the Elders' Journal, Joseph Smith responded to series of questions which he said were "daily and hourly asked by all classes of people." To the question "Will every body be damned but Mormons?" he replied, "Yes, and a great portion of them, unless they repent and work righteousness." For years, I have assumed, along with others, that Joseph's response was rather tongue-in-cheek. Actually, as we shall see, he was very much in earnest and was simply reflecting a sentiment widely held among the early Saints. Benjamin Winchester, for example, reasoned that as "Mormonism" was the restoration of the New Testament Christianity "all who reject this will be damned, if the scriptures are true." Such categorical statements were indeed rooted in the scriptures, particularly passages like Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall damned." One finds this verse frequently and unequivocally invoked in the early literature. In an article entitled "Gospel I," Sidney Rigdon wrote:

And unless God had sent the apostles, or others authorized as they were, the world must have perished: every creature in it must have been damned: for they were to go into all the world, and



preach the gospel to every creature, he (that is, every creature) that believed and was baptized, should be saved; but he (that is, every creature) that believed not, should be damned. Had there been one creature in all the world who has in a state of salvation, or could have attained that state without the apostles, this commission would not have been correct, that is, that every creature in all the world who did not believe them and be baptized by their direction should be damned.

But what of the honest and honorable of other churches? A Times and Seasons editorial answered bluntly that it did not matter "how often a man prayed, how much alms he gave, how often he fasted, or how punctual he was in paying his tithes, if he believed not, he would be damned." Such "either/or" thinking did belong to some fanatic fringe; it permeated the membership from the Prophet on down. In a Nauvoo address Joseph referred to "the various professors of religion who do not believe in revelation & the oracles of God" and said, "I tell you in the name of Jesus Christ they will be damned & when you get into the eternal world you will find it to be so they cannot escape the damnation of hell." A week later, he singled out the Presbyterians as an example and declared, "If they reject our voice they shall be damnded."

That the Saints did not balk at laying out the consequences of rejecting the message of the restored gospel is also evident from the frequency with which anti-Mormons and other observers commented on this very point, an emphasis they found suffocatingly exclusivistic. La Roy Sunderland, an active abolitionist minister who wrote one of the more widely circulated anti-Mormon pamphlets of the 1830s, decried Mormonism's "monstrous cruelty" in "pretending to send all to hell who do not believe it." In *Truth Vindicated*, Parley P. Pratt replied:

Every dispensation that God ever sent, is equally cruel in this respect; for God sends all to hell who reject any thing that he sends to save those that believe. And I add, if Methodism be true, God will send every man to hell who rejects it. And a man must be very inconsistent, to come with a message from God, and then, tell the people that they can be saved just as well without, as with it.

For modern Latter-day Saints accustomed to extolling the vision of the three degrees of glory as the antidote to the confining polarities of Protestant conceptions of the afterlife, the idea that early Mormons spoke almost entirely in terms of either being saved in the celestial kingdom or else being damned, rather than discussing terrestrial or telestial salvation, seems foreign indeed. Yet it is the purpose of this article to trace within Mormon thought the persisting lineaments of traditional salvationist rhetoric and to demonstrate that the vision of the three degrees of glory did not begin to alter such notions until the end of the Nauvoo period.

We begin with a word about background. After surveying the religious landscape in America in 1844, the eminent German churchman Philipp Schaff remarked that "the reigning theology of the country . . . is the theology of the Westminster Confession." The Westminster Confession, a creedal delineation of faith formulated two hundred years earlier by Reformed divines from both England and Scotland, had announced that, upon death, the souls of the "righteous" are received in heaven while the "wicked" are cast into hell. "Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies," concluded the Confession, "the Scripture acknowledgeth none." The final chapter of the Confession dealt with the Last Judgment and explained:

The end of God's appointing this day, is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of his justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fulness of Joy and refreshing which shall come from the presence of the Lord: but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

For centuries, the polarities of heaven and hell, election and reprobation, had informed the contours of Protestant thought. Thus, in the world into which Mormonism was born, it was customary to conceptualize

man as either saint or sinner, righteous or wicked, bound for heaven or headed for hell; and this formed an important part of the cultural baggage early converts carried with them into the Church.

Significantly, such sharply contrasting categories were not explicitly contradicted either in the Book of Mormon or in the new revelations. One early revelation described the Last Judgment in these familiar terms: "And the righteous shall be gathered on my right hand unto eternal life; and the wicked on my left hand. . . . I will say unto them--Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." On another occasion the Lord spoke of the gathering "that the wheat may be secured in the garner to possess eternal life, and be crowned with celestial glory . . . while the tares shall be bound in bundles . . . that they may be burned with unquenchable fire." To portray Judgment Day outcomes only as either "celestial glory" or "unquenchable fire," "eternal life" or "everlasting fire" without mentioning the intermediate glories seems incomplete from a modern perspective. Yet, with the exception of the Vision, a subject to which we will later return, the revelation of the Restoration perpetuated such traditional polarizations.

In fact, they seemed to strengthen the dichotomies by crystalizing into a single criterion the distinction between the two groups. That criterion was an individual's response to the Mormon message. "Mine elect," declared the Lord, "hear my voice and harden not their hearts." By divine definition, the "elect" were only those who accepted the restored gospel. The same criterion was extended to the definition of "goodness." "And there are none that doeth good except those who are ready to receive the fulness of my gospel, which I have sent forth unto this generation."

Conversely, the Lord defined the "wicked" just as succinctly. They were simply those "that will not hear my voice but harden their hearts." Even the casual observer will note that this is phrased as the exact negation of what constituted election. As if it were not already clear enough, a year later the Lord taught his Saints how to distinguish the two types of people: "Whoso cometh not unto me is under the bondage of sin. . . . And by this you may know the righteous from the wicked." When talking theology, then, the Saints used the word wicked as a sort of generic term for all unbelievers whether or not they were morally bankrupt. Parley P. Pratt, for instance, defined "the wicked" as "that portion of the people who were not of the Kingdom of God." On the other hand, believers were collectively described as "the righteous." A Times and Seasons article explained that when a man "is adopted into the church and kingdom of God, as one of his Saints; his name is then enrolled in the book of the names of the righteous."

In terms of these polarities, what was true for the one was also true for the many. Whole churches of non-Mormons were designated in various revelations as "the congregations of the wicked." "Babylon, literally understood," wrote John Taylor, "is . . . the Roman Catholics, Protestants, and all that have not had they keys of the kingdom." Entire cities were also classified collectively. After their initial failure in London, early missionaries wrote home that though it was "the boast of the Gentiles" London contained "one million five hundred thousands souls who are ripening in iniquity and preparing for the wrath of God; and like the ox going to the slaughter, know not the day of their visitation." Yet, as Parley P. Pratt later explained:

The people of England may repent, and never be destroyed; but if they do not repent, they will perish, in common with all nations who are unprepared for the second advent of the Messiah: For lo! the time is near--very near, when every one who does not give heed to Jesus Christ "will be destroyed from among the people." This applies equally to England, and all other places.

Thus, this was not just Yankee arrogance, for the American cities of Boston, Albany and Cincinnati were also promised "desolation and utter abolishment" if they rejected the gospel. Even close friends were not exempt. Edward Partridge once penned this earnest entreaty to all his former acquaintances: "O take the advice of one that wishes you well . . . humble yourselves before god and embrace the everlasting gospel before the judgments of God sweep you from the face of the earth."

Here we pause to notice a subtlety of early Mormon thought. Given its markedly millenarian character, it tended to move ahead the traditional saved-damned reckoning of Judgment Day to a saved-destroyed outcome apparent at Christ's coming. "In the day of the coming of the Son of Man," declared an early revelation, "cometh an entire separation of the righteous and the wicked; and in that day will I send mine angels to pluck out the wicked and cast them into unquenchable fire." The first Mormons spoke often of the Second Advent as a day of judgment or vengeance, demonstrating their focus on the attendant destruction of the unbelievers as much as on the salvation of the Saints. And there was no middle ground. Only Mormons would survive the second coming of Christ. According to Sidney Rigdon, all people on the earth during this period would be Saints: "all the rest of the world will without exception be cut off." When in 1841 Joseph first advanced the idea that there would be "wicked" men on the earth during the Millennium, it represented an abrupt about-face from a decade's consensus to the contrary, and it would be at least another decade before the idea really caught hold even among Church leaders. To introduce the color gray to those so accustomed to black and white was not easy. Because of their apocalyptic orientation, then, early Saints spoke more often of a "temporal" judgment to be effected at Christ's coming than they did of the far-off Final Judgment.

Such an apocalyptic scenario infused the saved-damned dichotomy with an imminence and a tangibility that provided both motivation and rationale for missionary outreach. Orson Hyde, in what is recognized as the earliest LDS missionary tract, urged: "Pray, therefore, that God may send unto you some servant of his, who is authorized from on high, to administer to you the ordinances of the gospel. Except you do this, you . . . must fall victims to the messengers of destruction, which God will soon send upon the earth." And in the dedicatory prayer for the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith petitioned the Lord thus:

And whatsoever city thy servants shall enter, and the people of that city receive not the testimony of thy servants . . . let it be upon that city according to that which thou hast spoken . . . terrible things concerning the wicked, in the last days--that thou wilt pour out thy judgments without measure.

If in the early years the phrase "voice of warning" carried very literal connotations, it must be balanced with an acknowledgment that the elders were occasionally counseled to avoid overzealousness in declaring judgments against the wicked. As W.W. Phelps advised:

Warn in compassion without threatening the wicked with judgments which are to be poured upon the world hereafter. You have no right . . . to collect the calamities of six thousand years, and paint them upon the curtain of these last days to scare mankind to repentance; no; you are to preach the gospel . . . even glad tidings of great joy unto all people.

In the same dedicatory prayer, it was remarked, "O Lord, we delight not in the destruction of our fellow men; their souls are precious before thee; but thy word must be fulfilled."

It is not surprising that people weaned on the Bible and steeped in its literal interpretation would feel there were simply too many graphic passages predicting "wo" upon unbelievers to have the notion "spiritualized" or "explained away." Time and again in early Mormon periodicals and pamphlets one encounters references to Moses' prophecy that all who will not hearken to Christ will be cut off from among the people or to Paul's portrayal of a Savior descending in flaming fire to take vengeance "on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel." No Bible verse, however, more effectively bolstered the saved-destroyed dichotomy than Luke 17:26: "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." This scripture told the Saints two things. First, the majority of mankind in their day would reject the message; and second, such people would therefore be destroyed. "Just precisely as it was then," wrote the editors of the Times and Seasons, "so shall it be at the coming of the Son of Man." Revelation shall precede his coming, the whole world shall ridicule them and cast them off, for so it was in the days of Noah, and the consequences were, inevitable destruction; and so it will be with this generation, the righteous only, will be saved." That this would leave few men to enjoy the Millennium merely accorded with their understanding of Isaiah's prophecy

that "the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left." "This destruction," explained Parley P. Pratt in his Voice of Warning, "is to come by fire as literally as the flood in the days of Noah; and it will consume both priests and people from the earth . . . or else we must get a new edition of the Bible, leaving out the 24th of Isaiah." For literalist Latter-day Saints, it was no more difficult to conceive of the earth being swept clean of every single non-Mormon at the Second Coming than it was to accept the fact the the Flood had destroyed all but the eight believers then in existence. As Parley P. Pratt explained to Queen Victoria, "As Noah was a survivor of a world destroyed, and himself and family the sole proprietors of the earth, so will the saints of the Most High possess the earth, and its whole dominion, and tread upon the ashes of the wicked."

From all that has been presented thus far, it seems clear that a saved-damned duality was deeply entrenched in early Mormon thought. But what about the vision of the three degrees of glory? Did it not immediately uproot all the old "either-or" notions? Did not the Saints quickly discard their former thinking as theologically naive when presented with this vision of a pluralized rather than a polarized afterlife? The answer is "no", and that should not come as much of a surprise to those aware of the historical development of ideas within the Church. Nonetheless, that early Mormons neither understood the implications of the vision of the three degrees of glory nor lampooned notions they still retained is significant enough to merit careful consideration.

First, a brief history. The "Vision", as it was commonly called in the early years, was received by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon in February 1832. Five months later what appears to be the earliest identifiable copy of the revelation was published in The Evening and the Morning Star. The Vision seemed to attract some attention for the first year or two. Though a few "Stumbled at it", at least one individual considered it "the greatest news that was ever published to man." Some developed strange ideas about it that required reproof, but even legitimate comments were sufficiently superficial that they offered no real interpretation or elucidation of the Vision and certainly no repudiation of the traditional Christian cosmos. A specific search of presently available periodicals, pamphlets, and tracts, as well as hundreds of unpublished diaries, journals, and letters from this time period reveals that throughout the rest of the decade and on into the early 1840s, the Vision was virtually ignored. Admittedly there were numerous references to the celestial kingdom, but that term for most Mormons seems to have been just another name for the heaven Christians had always talked about, and it required no new mental framework to adopt it. Celestial, after all, was a common synonym for heavenly. Discussion, even mention, of the terrestrial and telestial glories, however, which might have hastened the demise of dualistic thinking, appears to have been almost nonexistent. The only example of anything like a substantive commentary on the Vision was Joseph Smith's 1843 poetic version. Perhaps the experience of reissuing the revelation as a kind of epic poem stimulated the Prophet's pondering of the overall significance of the Vision, for in the remaining sixteen months of his life he discussed in new ways the nature of hell and the torment of the damned. Furthermore, he specifically ridiculed the pervasive Protestant rhetoric that in the hereafter there were only two possible outcomes--heaven or hell. This represents a watershed in Mormon thought.

Until the time, if the Vision were discussed at all, it was done from within an interpretive framework that was still patently polarized. Even the Prophet himself, when describing the thinking which led to revelation, wrote: "It appeared self-evident from what truths were left in the Bible, that if God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body the term 'Heaven', as intended for the Saints' eternal home must include more kingdoms than one.' There is a subtle difference between saying that there are divisions within heaven and saying that there are different heavens, and the Saints had not yet shifted to the latter position. W. W. Phelps felt that the great value of the Vision lay in providing details on the various heavenly mansions. To be sure, those mansions were distinguished as "the great, greater, [and] greatest," but conceptually they all blended into one "heaven." As Joseph Smith put it:

The glory celestial is one like the sun;  
The glory terrestrial is one like the moon;  
The glory telestial is one like the stars,

And all harmonize like the parts of a tune.

"Men are agents unto themselves," declared an early Saint, "and they can prepare for a kingdom of glory, or, for one without glory" -- as much as if to say, though clothed in new terminology, men can prepare for heaven or for hell. Even part of the poem's final quatrain summed up the entire revelation in dualistic terms: "The secret of life is blooming in heaven, and blasting in hell."

Telling evidence that the Vision did not immediately force an abandonment of traditional notions of damnation and hell is manifest in the Mormon reaction to Universalism. Universalism reflected the optimism of the Age of Enlightenment from which it emerged and, as its name implies, taught that all men would ultimately be redeemed, that damnation would be done away, and that the notion of eternal torment in a lake of sulfurous fire was superstition. Modern Mormons might find much that is appealing in such ideas, believing, as they do, that the vast majority of mankind will ultimately receive some degree of salvation. Early Saints, however, did not react this way. When a Universalist preacher came to Kirtland in 1835, Oliver Cowdery withstood him with the same zeal that Gideon did Nehor, a Book of Mormon "Universalist." What incensed Oliver Cowdery was the audacity of asserting, in the face of overwhelming scriptural proof to the contrary, that there would be no damnation: "If no such principle exists as damnation, and that eternal," Oliver exclaimed, "[God] certainly has spoken nonsense and folly."

It must also be remembered that before the late Nauvoo period there was little explanatory discussion of the term unpardonable sin. Therefore, even if the early Saints had talked of damnation coming in its fullest sense only to "sons of perdition," there were then no conceptual restraints limiting that category to apostate Mormons alone. Again we see that circumstances and understandings in the 1830s did not require interpretations of the Vision that undermined the old saved-damned dichotomy.

As for hell itself, Joseph's belief in its reality, and his use of traditional jargon to describe it, is conspicuous as late as his 1843 poem. Whereas in the original scriptural text of the Vision the word hell is found only once, the Prophet uses it six times in his poem. In terms familiar to any evangelical Protestant, he talks of the ungodly suffering "in hell-fire, and vengeance, the doom of the damn'd." No passage, however, is more striking than this quatrain describing the fate of the sons of perdition:

They are they who must go to the great lake of fire,  
Which burneth with brimstone, yet never consumes,  
And dwell with the devil, and angels of his,  
While eternity goes and eternity comes.

If to later Saints a hell that is continually burning but never consumes is a mass of confusion, such was not always the case.

That the Vision is not mentioned in the earliest anti-Mormon works is further evidence that it was not initially seen as subversive to contemporary Protestant thought. Given the tenor of their writings, it is hardly conceivable that such men as Philastus Hurlbut, Origen Bachelier, or La Roy Sunderland would not have eagerly seized the chance to ridicule the Vision had they known about it and perceived its eschatological implications. Yet the earliest I have found mention of the doctrine is in ex-Mormon John Corrill's *A Brief History* published in 1839. Though Corrill had been a leading elder almost from the first, his comments evidence little more than a mere awareness of the revelation. Furthermore, later anti-Mormon commentators like Henry Caswall or J. B. Turner seem only to be borrowing from Corrill. The question that follows, then, is why did all these early anti-Mormons overlook that which would later be stock-in-trade for such polemicists if the Vision's revolutionary significance were widely perceived?

Also significant is the case of former Mormon William Harris. In his expose, he claimed that the Saints felt that their idea of heaven "shows the superiority of their system over all others" and that they "ridicule as

absurd the notion generally entertained of the location and nature of heaven. As a matter of curiosity, then," William Harris continued, ". . . I will here insert a description of the Mormon Paradise." What follows is not a recapitulation of the Vision, as might be expected from his lead-in, but rather an excerpt from Parley P. Pratt's *Voice of Warning* showing heaven would be material, not spiritual, and here on earth, not out in the ethereal blue. This recollection from Harris's seven years in the Church as to what the Saints actually ridiculed about contemporary notions of heaven further confirms the minimal role of the Vision in early LDS thought.

That which persisted, however, eventually began to break up. Just four months after the Prophet versified the Vision, he began to publicly and repeatedly denounce the heaven-hell dichotomy. Wilford Woodruff recorded this comment, for example: "Says one I believe in one hell & one heaven all are equally miserable or equally happy, but St Paul informs us of three glories & three heavens." Later, Joseph reiterated, "I do not believe the methodist doctrine of sending honest men, and noble minded men to hell, along with the murderer and adulterer." In the 1844 King Follet discourse we find the culmination of his latest thinking about salvation and damnation. During recent months hell had been acquiring an explicitly nonphysical dimension, and he here announced, "I have no fear of hell fire, that doesn't exist, but the torment and disappointment of the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone."

If salvation or damnation still revolved around one's reaction to Mormonism, there was now a qualifier attached: "I call upon all men-- priests, sinners and all . . . [to] obey the gospel. For your religion won't save you, and if you do not, you will be damned, but," he added, "I do not say how long." Though the concept of a terminable hell was provided for in revelation received even before the Church was organized (D&C 19), not until Joseph led the way interpretively did others begin describing hell as a purgatory for unrepentant sinners. At the same time, he acknowledged that those who had committed the unpardonable sin "must dwell in hell, worlds without end" and that "they shall rise to that resurrection which is as the lake of fire and brimstone." Only the sons of perdition would be damned in the fullest and most traditional sense. Toward the close of this life, then, Joseph Smith began to emphasize a pluralized, rather than a polarized picture of eternity. He symbolized hell, diminished damnation's domain, and expanded salvation.

The fact that he repeatedly discussed these concepts the last months of his life did not, however, guarantee that they were instantly internalized by the Saints. This is perhaps best illustrated in the case of John Taylor. Throughout this period, John Taylor was closely associated with the Prophet both as editor of the *Times and Seasons* and, from September 1843, as a member of the Anointed Quorum, a select group who had received their temple endowments from the Prophet. John Taylor was thus well exposed not only to Joseph's public but also his private teachings. Yet, in a *Times and Seasons* editorial published less than a year after Joseph's death, John Taylor declared that "hell" is literally "in the midst of the earth, and when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed they sunk down to hell, and the water covered up the unhallowed spot. . . . No wonder we have earthquakes, hot springs and convulsions in the earth," he continued, "if the damned spirits of six thousand years . . . have gone down into the pit. . . . No wonder the earth groans and is in pain to be delivered as saith the prophet."

If a man as intelligent and literate as John Taylor either did not understand or ignored the Prophet, one can imagine to what degree the finer doctrinal subtleties that Joseph was introducing in the late Nauvoo period actually settled into the conscious understanding of the ordinary member. It is a truism that what one who speaks (or writes) intends to convey is not necessarily what the man who hears (or reads) understands. We simply cannot assume that once an idea was revealed or once it was taught by the Prophet the Saints immediately assimilated it into their mental world. "Mormon thought" was the sum total of the thinking of individual Mormons rather than some credal collectivity. Thus it is difficult indeed to assert that the Prophet's ideas or even revealed ideas were "Mormon" ideas equally ascribable to leader and layman alike. As Darrett Rutman pointed out some years ago in his study of the Puritans:

The idea that filters past the preconceptions, values, and particular concerns of the imparter, travels the sound waves or light rays to the recipient, filters past the recipient's own preconceptions, values, and concerns, mixes in the melting pot that constitutes the recipient's mind with all the other notions and impressions stored there.

The point here is that even though Joseph opened the door for a further break with traditional Protestant views, the old saved-damned dichotomy did not die out immediately. If by the 1850s some leading Mormons grasped and elaborated on what the Prophet was saying a decade earlier, it should not be assumed that as of 1844 the entire Church shelved "sectarianisms" in favor of less Calvinistic conceptions of salvation and damnation. Nonetheless, Joseph's late Nauvoo teachings did signal the beginning of the end, even if that end came gradually.

### **Conclusion**

If it is true that the saved-damned dualism persisted, if indeed the Vision was not initially appreciated for its revolutionary significance, then it remains for us to consider briefly two questions: "Why?" and "So what?" In responding to the first question, we can hardly overemphasize the biblicism and literalism of the early Saints. In his study of antebellum Protestant theology, George Marsden discusses the period polarities of exegesis then known as "spiritualist" and "literalist" hermeneutics. For those who applied a strictly literal hermeneutic to the scriptures, the numerous graphic descriptions of the physical destruction of the wicked and a plethora of passages basing salvation on belief and damnation on disbelief had to be taken at face value. There was little interpretive leeway. With early Mormons coming from such a tradition, it would have been almost inconceivable that they would immediately drop their polarized perceptions of life and afterlife because of a single revelation, especially when so many other passages in modern scripture seemed to support the age-old dualisms. As the prophets, however, led out in metaphorical and figurative interpretation of certain portions of the Word of God that had usually been interpreted literally and as they explicitly rejected certain facets of contemporary theology, the people generally began to follow suit.

Furthermore, the early Saints had different notions about latter-day revelation. Calling them "commandments" as often as they called them "revelations" evidences a subtle distinction. They utilized these messages more for their directional rather than for their doctrinal value. The excerpts most frequently cited in the periodical literature dealt with some task to be performed rather than some truth to be taught.

Closely related, and also helpful in explaining our findings, is the manifest millenarianism of the early Church. It was truly "a day of warning, not a day of many words." It was a day for first principles, not far-reaching theology. Even if they had been wont to discuss new and unique doctrines not central to the message of the Restoration, how much could an individual have assimilated in the brief transition from hearer to herald? For it was not uncommon that a man who heard the message of the Restoration one day would be out preaching it the next, and with good reason. They felt the end was imminent. All had to be warned and that warning was to come both "by word and by flight." There simply was no time to extensively catechize prospective converts and no systematic creed with which to do it.

So what is the significance of all this? In the first place, it confirms what Brigham Young later said when reflecting on those early years: "I never could believe like the mass of the Christian world around me; but I did not know how nigh I believed, as they did. I found, however, that I was so nigh, I could shake hands with them any time I wished."

Aside from the core concepts of the message of the Restoration, the early Saints do seem handshakingly close to contemporary Christianity. Realizing their proximity to Protestantism also helps explain why some anti-Mormons could charge that the elders "dwell upon the common topics of Christianity" or that "they preach the doctrines they held in other churches, slightly modified by some of their new notions." Even Joseph Smith himself admitted, "It is often the case that young members in this church, for want of better information, carry along with them their old notions of things and sometimes fall into egregious errors."

More importantly, however, is that we are a step closer to what LDS church historian James B. Allen called for when he said, "Only recently have Mormon historians begun to study in detail the historical development of ideas within the Church but such a study, if complete, could provide valuable insight into why some concepts have changed from generation to generation while others have remained constant as pillars of the faith." Absolutely essential to a proper understanding of Mormon thought is that one recognize the "line-upon-line" principle, that is, the construct which allows for a gradual focusing and refining of doctrine based on both human capacity and divine design. From those who would hamstring us with our history, we have little to fear. The more it is studied, the more we realize the naivete of intersecting our past at any given point in time and expecting to hold the Church accountable for the finality of all views there discovered. Indeed, to pursue Paul's metaphor, the Church is like a body, and all bodies go through successive stages of development from infancy to adulthood. A wise and loving father does not immediately correct all his children's mistaken notions nor attempt to teach them all truth at once. Rather, he closely monitors their development, adding, subtracting, and refining until they reach maturity. Would a perfect Father in Heaven be less wise? Continuous revelation is merely his method, the "light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." For now, however, the Saints must be content to say with Paul:

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (1 Cor. 13:11-12)

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**Many Mansions (Chapter)**

**Life Beyond (Book)**

**Many Mansions (Chapter)**

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. -John 14:2

Even as all die, so all must rise from the dead, each in his own order, each to his own glory. No righteous deed will go unrewarded and no dark act undetected. The just Paymaster will give to each in full measure, rewarding the small and the great according to their works and the desires of their hearts, even to the granting of all that the Father hath. To the meridian Twelve, as they sat at the Last Supper, Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you" (John 14:2). That is to say, if judgment were not by works and the rewards of eternity as diverse as the works and desires of men, it would be so completely contrary to everything that I have taught you, and to everything in the revealed word, that I would be obligated to announce this great inconsistency to you.

Surely the rewards that come from God will be worthy of the majesty and power of God. It would be ungodly to grant to man that for which he was unworthy; it would be less than godlike for the divine Father of us all to refuse to share all that he had with those who had laid their all upon his altar. A theology that refuses God the right to make of his children joint heirs, and yet expects the sacrifice of all things by mere mortals, is a theology which demands of men greater magnanimity than of God from whom the very virtue is to have come. The glory of God, which is manifest in all that he does, is nowhere more evident than in the order and nature of the resurrection and the eternal rewards granted to his children.

**Resurrection**

The Bible can be searched in vain for a definition of resurrection. Once again it is to the revelations of the Restoration that we must turn to part the veil and know of future eternities. And how simple the matter when the Spirit speaks-resurrection is the inseparable union of body and spirit. Amulek stated it thus, "This mortal



body is raised to an immortal body, that is from death, even from the first death unto life, that they can die no more; their spirits uniting with their bodies, never to be divided; thus the whole becoming spiritual and immortal, that they can no more see corruption" (Alma 11:45). Or, as Joseph F. Smith declared in his Vision of the Redemption of the Dead, "Their sleeping dust was to be restored unto its perfect frame, bone to his bone, and the sinews and the flesh upon them, the spirit and the body to be united never again to be divided, that they might receive a fulness of joy" (D&C 138:17).

A loving father does not withhold from his children, he does not seek that they be less than he, nor did he choose to father them for the purpose of their becoming his servants. Our God is a corporeal physical being and in the resurrection it is our privilege to become like him. While body and spirit are separated "man cannot receive a fulness of joy" (D&C 93:34); it is in and through the resurrection that such fulness comes. Alma expressed it beautifully: "The soul shall be restored to the body, and the body to the soul; yea, and every limb and joint shall be restored to its body; yea, even a hair of the head shall not be lost; but all things shall be restored to their proper and perfect frame" (Alma 40:23).

### **The Order of the Resurrections**

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." (1 Cor. 15:22 - 23; italics added.) Though the resurrection is a free gift to all, men come forth from the grave as they have merited the right-from Jesus Christ, the firstfruits, to those who remain filthy still, or from the most righteous to the least righteous, each man in his appointed time and order.

### **The First Resurrection or the Morning of the First Resurrection**

The scriptural phrases first resurrection or morning of the first resurrection (which is common to patriarchal blessings) are frequently used interchangeably. The phrases are descriptive of those once in paradise, those who bore the title "just men made perfect," those referred to as the just (D&C 76:17), meaning that they are justified, ratified, sealed, or approved of God. These are they to whom the promise has been given that they shall be equal with him in power, might, and dominion (see D&C 76:95). Those coming forth in this resurrection will inherit the celestial kingdom and will enjoy eternal life, which is God's life. Thus the first resurrection is a celestial resurrection.

The Book of Mormon speaks of a first resurrection which included the righteous and faithful from the time of Adam to the time that Christ came forth from the grave. Abinadi described it thus: "And there cometh a resurrection, even a first resurrection; yea, even a resurrection of those that have been, and who are, and who shall be, even until the resurrection of Christ-for so shall he be called. And now, the resurrection of all the prophets, and all those that have believed in their words, or all those that have kept the commandments of God, shall come forth in the first resurrection; therefore, they are the first resurrection." (Mosiah 15:21-22.) This first resurrection is not to be confused with the first resurrection spoken of in the Doctrine and Covenants, which has reference to the coming forth from the grave of the faithful Saints from the time of Christ to the time of his second coming (see D&C 88:96-98). Those living in the Millennium are also spoken of as coming forth in a first resurrection, for they too obtain an exaltation (see D&C 132:19).

### **The Afternoon of the First Resurrection**

"And after this [the morning of the first resurrection or the sounding of the first trump] another angel shall sound, which is the second trump; and then cometh the redemption of those who are Christ's at his coming; who have received their part in that prison which is prepared for them, that they might receive the gospel, and be judged according to men in the flesh" (D&C 88:99). These are heirs of the terrestrial kingdom, those who accepted Christ but not in that faith that would have exalted them. Of the time of Christ's coming we read, "Then shall the heathen nations be re deemed, and they that knew no law shall have part in the first resurrection; and it shall be tolerable for them" (D&C 45:54). That redemption that requires "no law" (meaning that they have not accepted the gospel) and extends a reward that is "tolerable" cannot be confused with the blessings associated with the morning of the first resurrection as previously described.

### **The Resurrection of the Unjust**

"And again, another trump shall sound, which is the third trump; and then come the spirits of men who are to be judged, and are found under condemnation; and these are the rest of the dead; and they live not again until the thousand years are ended, neither again, until the end of the earth. And another trump shall sound, which is the fourth trump, saying: There are found among those who are to remain until that great and last day, even the end, who shall remain filthy still." (D&C 88:100-102.) After the celestial and terrestrial resurrections, after the thousand years, or the millennial era, has ended, comes the resurrection of the unjust—those who will inherit the telestial kingdom and those who have become the children of perdition. Order still prevails; the telestial resurrection precedes that of those whose wickedness places them beyond the power of Christ's redemption. Even hell cannot purge the filth of those who, having had a sure witness and knowledge of heaven's secrets, have denied all and actively sought to crucify Christ afresh.

### **The Degrees of Glory**

The Savior promised that he would teach the gospel to those who were dead. "The hour is coming," Christ said, "in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29). It was while Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon pondered the implications of John's statement that there would be a resurrection of life and a resurrection of damnation, that they received the great vision known to us as the Vision of the Glories. Joseph said: "From sundry revelations which had been received, it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of man had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled. It appeared self-evident from what truths were left, that if God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body, the term 'Heaven,' as intended for the Saints' eternal home, must include more kingdoms than one."<sup>1</sup> A series of visions were then opened to the eyes of Joseph and Sidney in which they learned of the division of kingdoms, or the degrees of glory, that will exist in the worlds to come. The highest of these kingdoms was called celestial, and was likened to the glory of the sun; the next was called terrestrial, and was likened to the glory of the moon; and the third, or the lowest of these heavenly glories, was called telestial, and was likened to the glory of the stars. We will briefly describe each.

#### **the Celestial Kingdom**

In a subsequent revelation Joseph Smith learned that the earth was a living entity, having both body and spirit; that it, like man, would yet die and be resurrected; and that in the resurrection it would be "sanctified from all unrighteousness" and become the kingdom upon which those who were to be exalted would live. "For after it hath filled the measure of its creation, it shall be crowned with glory, even with the presence of God the Father; that bodies who are of the celestial kingdom may possess it forever and ever; for, for this intent," the Lord said, "was it made and created, and for this intent are they sanctified." (D&C 88:17-20, 26.) Thus, to obtain the celestial kingdom one must come forth in the morning of the first resurrection and must lay claim in the resurrection to a celestial body. One obtains a celestial body by developing celestial interests, appetites, propensities, desires, attitudes, and inclinations—that is, by living the gospel of Jesus Christ in full. "For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory" (D&C 88:22).

The celestial kingdom is divided into three heavens or degrees, and in order to obtain the highest, one must be married by the power and authority of the priesthood for time and eternity. Only those who are so married and live true to their marriage covenants continue in the marriage and family relationship in the worlds to come. (D&C 131:1-4.) These become "joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17), "into whose hands the Father has given all things—they are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory" (D&C 76:55-56), and indeed "are gods, even the sons of God" (D&C 76:58), for they are to be equal with him in power, might, and dominion (D&C 76:95).

Describing the nature of their society, Joseph Smith stated that the "same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy"

(D&C 130:2). Of the other two degrees, or glories, within the celestial kingdom we know only that their inhabitants did not enter into eternal marriage and thus "remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever" (D&C 132:17).

### **The Terrestrial Kingdom**

The terrestrial or middle kingdom consists of those who come forth in the afternoon of the first resurrection. Four classes of people are given in the Vision of the Glories to represent the nature of souls that will comprise this kingdom. First, there are those who died without the gospel law and obviously did not accept it when it was taught to them in the world of the spirits (v. 72). Second, there are those who had the opportunity to accept the gospel in this life and did not do so, but did when the opportunity came to them the second time in the spirit world (vv. 73-74). Such are not celestial because they rejected the gospel in mortality in circumstances in which they were obligated to accept it; nonetheless, they are blessed by their acceptance of it in the spirit world in that they can inherit the terrestrial kingdom. Third, there are "honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men" (v. 75). As moral and honest people they establish the standard for all that inherit the terrestrial glory and show by way of contrast how much more is expected of those who aspire to be celestial. And fourth, "These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God" (v. 79). To be valiant in testimony is to be courageous, brave, bold, or valorous. By implication, this number will embrace many Latter-day Saints who could stand and bear a powerful testimony but who failed to serve with all their "heart, might, mind and strength," and thus did not "stand blameless" in the day of judgment (D&C 4:2). A testimony of the gospel, independent of faithful service, is not sufficient to save one in the kingdom of God.

### **The Telesial Kingdom**

As baptism is the door through which one enters the earthly kingdom of God and the gate to the heavenly kingdom, so hell is the gate to the telesial world. None will inhabit this kingdom who did not first suffer for their own sins in that part of the spirit prison known to us as hell. Having done so, having "paid the uttermost farthing" (Matt. 5:26), they then come forth clean from sin to the least of the kingdoms of glory, but a kingdom of glory nonetheless. Dramatizing the glory of this, the least of God's kingdoms, the revelation states that it "surpasses all understanding" (v. 89). In so saying, it is not the purpose of the Lord to encourage any to seek after or be satisfied with such a glory, but rather to show again by contrast the marvel of the celestial realm and to indicate the mercies and blessings that the Lord will give even to the wicked. Indeed, all that the God of heaven need do to create a world that surpasses all earthly understanding would be to alleviate death, hunger, pain, and evil. Such a state would surely transcend the imagination of men.

Those inheriting the telesial world constitute two major classes. First, there are those who declare allegiance to false religions, who used their pretended devotion to some principle, cause, or prophet, as an excuse to reject the fulness of the gospel when it was brought to them (vv. 99-101). Had their rejection of the gospel not been the result of their unwillingness to repent of their sins, or because they were honestly deceived, they would have come forth in the terrestrial resurrection. The second class of people comprising the telesial kingdom are "liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie," as well as idolaters and murderers (v. 103; Rev. 21:8; 22:15). These are they of whom Alma said, "They have no part nor portion of the Spirit of the Lord; for behold, they chose evil works rather than good" (Alma 40:13). Of these the revelation declares: "Where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end" (v. 112).

### **Conclusion**

The reader is reminded that everything that we have been able to say about the nature and order of the resurrection has latter-day revelation as its source. The same is true of all that we know of the various degrees of glory; our knowledge of this doctrine is also entirely dependent on modern revelation. On these matters the Bible as it has come to us is either ambiguous or silent. This is a rather surprising thing, in view of the importance of these doctrines as a source of faith, understanding, comfort, and encouragement. It is

even more surprising when it is remembered that the verity of the Christian belief that Jesus is the Christ is fully dependent on the reality of the resurrection. Christianity rises or falls on the doctrine. If there was no resurrection, Jesus of Nazareth was not the Christ and our bodies will be consigned endlessly to mortal dust and our spirits will be forever divorced from the presence of God (see 1 Cor. 15:12-17).

It is also significant that the testimony of the New Testament disciples of Christ's resurrection, like that of our dispensation, was wholly dependent on revelation. The resurrected Christ manifested himself to "above five hundred brethren" (1 Cor. 15:6) in the hills of Galilee (Matt. 28:16-18), along with numerous other appearances in the Old World. "Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly," Peter testified, "not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God" (Acts 10:40-41). The system of testifying of Christ in the New World was the same. Again Christ showed himself openly to a multitude, "and the multitude did see and hear and bear record; and they know that their record is true for they all of them did see and hear, every man for himself; and they were in number about two thousand and five hundred souls; and they did consist of men, women, and children" (3 Ne. 17:25).

From the early hours of that Sunday morning, when Christ first appeared to Mary Magdalene and then the other women, to the time of his return, when he will be attended by "ten thousands of his saints" (Jude 1:14), those men, women, and children who bear a proper testimony of him must testify also of the principle of current revelation. We can know Christ and the doctrines of the afterlife in no other way. Our testimony must be one of the opening of the heavens, the manifestation of Christ, the calling of prophets, the dispensing of revelation, and the granting of the gift of the Holy Ghost; the knowledge of Christ and the nature of the worlds to come can be had in no other way. Such is our testimony. (Robert L. Millet and Joseph Fielding McConkie, *The Life Beyond*, p.129-1,131)

**1987**

**D. Michael Quinn, Former Professor of LDS History**

**“The Vision”**

**Early Mormonism and the Magic World-View**

Notes from Blog: Historian D. Michael Quinn in his book Early Mormonism and the Magic World View, has speculated that various parts of the plan of salvation were taken by Joseph Smith, Jr. from Emanuel Swedenborg's book Heaven and Hell. In the book, Swedenborg wrote that "There are three heavens" that are "entirely distinct from each other."<sup>[citation needed]</sup> He called the highest heaven "the Celestial Kingdom,"<sup>[citation needed]</sup> and stated that the inhabitants of the three heavens corresponded to the "sun, moon and stars."<sup>[citation needed]</sup> Swedenborg's book also mentions a veil, spirit prison and celestial marriage.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

Quinn further argues that the book was available to Smith, and that he was familiar with it. One account claims that Smith told Latter Day Saint convert Edward Hunter that "Emanuel Swedenborg had a view of the world to come, but for daily food he perished."<sup>[citation needed]</sup> Additionally, Quinn asserts that the book was in the Palmyra public library (Joseph Smith's hometown) beginning in 1817, and that "[n]ine miles from Smith's farm, in 1826 the Canandaigua newspaper also advertised Swedenborg's book for sale. The bookstore offered Swedenborg's publications for as little as 37 cents."

**Mormonism and the Magic World View (pp. 172-175)**

Two years after the revelation of Moses, one of the most central revelations of Mormon theology was announced in what was commonly referred to as "The Vision" of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, recorded on 16 February 1832 (D&C 76). The text of this revelation stated that God would save all persons "except those sons of perdition who deny the Son after the Father has revealed him," (D&C 76:43-44), and described those who are saved as they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun" (D&C 76:70), as the terrestrial, whose glory differs even as that of the moon differs from the sun" (D&C 76:71), or as glory of the

stars" (D&C 76:81). More than ten years later Smith added, "In the celestial glory there are [also] three heavens or degrees" (D&C 131:1).

This view of the afterlife challenged traditional Christianity in two ways. First, the 1832 vision propounded a theology of nearly universal salvation; second, it proposed a three-tiered gradation of salvation "glory" which contemporaries in 1832 could have understood only as describing three heavens. For traditional Christians, any concept of universal salvation was a dangerous heresy akin to Universalism and was regarded as undermining the fabric of moral conduct in society. Moreover, for traditional Christians, heaven was a unitary, singular place (E. Chambers 1728, 1:228), despite Paul's reference to "the third heaven" (2 Cor. 12:2).

Consequently, early Mormon converts from denominational Protestantism faced a crisis when they learned of the 1832 vision of the three degrees of glory. Brigham Young's brother Joseph, who had been a Methodist minister prior to converting to Mormonism, reminisced: "Then when I came to read the vision of the different glories of the eternal world, and of the sufferings of the wicked, I could not believe it at first. Why, the Lord was going to save every body!" (Deseret News 7 [18 March 1857]:11). Brigham Young himself recalled: "When God revealed to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon that there was a place prepared for all, according to the light they had received and their rejection of evil and practice of god, it was a great trial to many, and some apostatized because God was not going to send to everlasting punishment heathens and infants, but had a place of salvation, in due time, for all, and would bless the honest and virtuous and truthful, whether they ever belonged to any church or not. It was a new doctrine to this generation, and many stumbled at it" (JD 16:42, emphasis added). The diaries of Orson Pratt and John Murdock from the 1830s record their efforts to reassure Latter-day Saints who questioned the 1832 vision and described the excommunication of Mormons, including branch presidents, who denounced "the degrees of glory" as a revelation from Satan (O. Pratt 1833; John Murdock 1833; Rathbone 1986).

On the other hand, the 1832 vision's description of multiple heavens was compatible with widely published occult views. A multi-volumed encyclopedia noted that the originator of ABRACADABRA believed in "seven Angels who presided over the seven Heavens" (E. Chambers 1728, 1:7), and Sibly's Occult Philosophy (a source for the Smith family's magic parchments) stated in thirteen editions from 1784 to 1826 that "these seven evil angels, before their fall, enjoyed the same places and degrees of glory, that now belong to the seven good angels or genii" (Sibly 1784, 1094, emphasis both original and added). Two Pseudepigraphical works, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* (a forty-third edition published in New York in 1712, with U.S. printings to 1827) and *The Ascent of Isaiah*, presented the Jewish occult view that there were seven heavens (Grosthead 1712, 23; NUC 55:322-24; Laurence 1819, 159-60).

Although this non-traditional belief in seven heavens was not unknown, the only pre-1830 advocate of three heavens was apparently Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg. The apostle Paul had spoken of the "third heaven" (2 Cor. 12:2), but scholars regarded Paul's expression as a reflection of the Jewish mystical belief in seven heavens (Laurence 1819, 159-60). Swedenborg's publications in England since 1784, and in the United States since 1812, affirmed, "There are three heavens," described them as "intirely [sic] distinct from each other," called the first heaven the celestial kingdom," and stated that the inhabitants of the three heavens corresponded to the sun, moon, and stars (1784, nos. 684, 3887, 5377; 1812, 60). These views were summarized in a front-page article of 1808 at Canandaigua, New York, and in a publication that had been in Joseph Smith's hometown library since 1817 (Western Repository, 6 Dec. 1808; H. Adams 1817, 203; Paul 1982, 347). Twelve miles from the Smith farm in 1826, the Canandaigua newspaper also advertised Swedenborg's *A Treatise Concerning Heaven and Hen* for sale (Ontario Repository, 30 Aug. 1826). With an even closer connection to the Smith family, Sibly's *Complete Illustration of the Occult Sciences*, a source for the family's magic parchments, stated, "There are three degrees in man corresponding to the three heavens," as part of its twenty-page summary of Swedenborg's teachings about "spirits and departed souls of men," and heaven and hell (Sibly 1784, 1062-81, esp. 1071n). Early Mormonism's only convert from Swedenborgianism, presiding bishop Edward Hunter, repotted a comment by Smith in 1839 that indicates

Smith was familiar with Swedenborgianism, at least by the late 1830s: "Emanuel Swedenborg had a view of the world to come, but for daily food he perished" (Hunter 1970, 51; see also Meyers 1981).

Despite Swedenborg's condemnation of magic as "merely a perversion" and "abuses of divine order" (1784, nos. 5223, 7296), writers of Joseph Smith's generation tended to regard Swedenborg as an occult theologian (Jon Butler 1983, 71). In 1791, the *English Conjuror's Magazine* included Swedenborg in its article on "Lives of Eminent Magicians" (1 Nov 1791):130). In 1821, the *North American Review* (frequently advertised for sale in the Palmyra area) explained Swedenborg's appeal to converts by observing, "There is still, we believe, among the vulgar, some remnant of belief in witchcraft and divination" ("Swedenborgianism" 1821, 96; *Ontario Repository*, 12 Dec. 1820). For Protestant American clergy, Swedenborg was nothing less than a religious magician. One minister wrote in 1846, "I would not undertake to disprove the authenticity of the stories related of Swedenborg. And why then? In all ages wizards and witches have said and done things seemingly preternatural, and very astonishing." In warning Protestants not to follow Swedenborg, the minister concluded, "And who thinks of yielding himself to a fortune-teller, or a juggler, or a magnetized woman, as a religious guide—a teacher of new doctrines, or new moral precepts" (Woods 1846, 143-44). A decade later, another author characterized Swedenborg as "a Hermetic philosopher" and "an adept in the fullest sense" (Hitchcock 1858, 3, 21, 204, emphasis in original).

The names of the three glories (Celestial, Terrestrial, and Telestial) in Smith's 1832 vision, of which only Celestial corresponds to Swedenborg's theology of three heavens, shared some similarity with angelology. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica's* article on angels stated that in early Jewish theology there were "two kinds of daemons, celestial and terrestrial [sic]" (Smellie 1798, 1:804). Although traditional Christianity divided angels into numerous categories (G. Davidson 1967, 336-37), some of the most frequently cited magic books divided angels and gods into three: celestial, terrestrial, and infernal (Agrippa 1651, 535; Abano 1655, 85; Turner 1657, 73). The popularity of this classification is indicated by its frequent appearance in magic manuscripts (e.g., Abano MS, (33-34); Arsenal MS 2350, f.59; Sloan MS 2731, f.10; Sloan MS 3851, f.107), and Robert Burton's seventeenth-century work on magic observed, "Fiery spirits or devils ... counterfeit suns and moons, stars oftentimes" (1628, 122). This classification was so rare in traditional Christianity that only the 1582 Rheims Bible used the phrase "celestial% terrestrials, and internals" to translate Philippians 2:10. This phrase was absent in the 1525 Tyndale Bible, the 1539 Great Bible, the 1560 Geneva Bible, the 1568 Bishop's Bible, and the 1611 King James Bible (Weigle 1946, 1114-15). The identification of the Telestial glory in Joseph Smith's 1832 revelation as those "who are thrust down to hell" for a period of time, might have contributed to the apparent substitution of Telestial for infernal. Thus the celestial, terrestrial, and infernal of magic literature echoed the Celestial, Terrestrial, and Telestial in Mormon revelation.

**1991**

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**Degrees of Glory: Protestant Doctrines and the Concept of Rewards Hereafter**

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In the sixteenth century, western Christianity divided not over the image of heaven but over getting there'.<sup>1</sup> Such a statement can only be accepted with reservations. It is true that the doctrine of 'eternal life and eternal joys', as Melancthon explained,<sup>2</sup> remained, for the most part, outside the area of debate, or was at least subordinate to the main issues of the controversy. But that very debate, and in particular the Protestant rejection of the merit of works in respect to justification, necessitated a radical revision of the reformed Christian perspective of the hereafter, and it inaugurated a debate which produced some degree of Protestant consensus, but by no means unanimity. Moyses Amyraut, writing in 1646, saw both the importance and the complexity of the debate:

Certainement si les fideles seront inegalement partages en la iouissance de la felicite de la haut, c'est chose qui pourroit meriter vne consideration bien attentive. Et la diuersite des opinions des grands personnages sur ce sujet, monstre bien que les preuues qu'on allegue de part & d'autre, ne sont pas d'abord extremement euidentes.<sup>3</sup>

Such diversity of opinion arose from differing perspectives of the soteriological significance of works. The Protestant rejection of the doctrine of Purgatory, and the concomitant affirmation of the existence of 'only two places' after death,<sup>4</sup> raised questions concerning the intricate Dantean gradations of rewards and punishments envisaged by medieval scholasticism.<sup>6</sup> If works played no part in justification, Protestants would surely find difficulty in speaking in terms of specific or individual rewards after death. If election or reprobation depended solely upon the will of God, good or bad deeds were presumably irrelevant to the ultimate destination of the faithful. On the other hand, some Protestants found it possible to maintain that while justification was a matter of faith, good and bad works could secure various degrees of glory or damnation within the two destinations—heaven and hell—without implying unacceptable notions of merit. Others retained the concept of degrees of reward, but saw them as unrelated to works: God, who showed his favour in election, regardless of works, could presumably further manifest his generous munificence in bestowing upon his elect unearned degrees of glory in the hereafter. The Arminian divine, Thomas Jackson, posed these questions in his treatise of 1615, *Iustifying Faith*: . . . if we affirme . . . righteousness more necessarie after . . . a man is iustified, then before, we should in congruitie grant that workes win heauen, and faith only deliuers from hell: or granting justification to be the passage from death to life eternall, the addition of such workes subsequent, as were not precedent, could be auailable onely to supererogate some excesse of glory; for though wee stood still at the same point where Justification found us, wee should be infallible heires of glorie. Or if faith without workes obtaine justification, having iustified us, shall it degrees of joy that do accompanie it?

Such questions concerning the hereafter were closely linked with the clarification of reformed doctrines of justification. The position frequently adopted by the majority of Protestant theologians who expressed a view on the subject was as follows: It was conceded that there were, indeed, degrees of reward and punishment, and that these degrees were in some way related to our works in this life; but exponents of this position strictly denied that degrees of reward were merited, affirming the gross inequality between the works of which we are capable and the heavenly gift which exceeds our comprehension. That is to say that the Scriptural notion of reward does not imply condign merit; it refers, rather, to God's free gift which he bestows upon us because he has promised so to do. The notion that we can earn any reward, either eternal life itself, or rewards within eternal life, was absolutely rejected by orthodox Protestants.

The large degree of Protestant consensus was due mainly to the abundance of Scriptural references to rewards and punishments hereafter. Rewards and punishments received a prominent place in the Old Testament; the lists of blessings and cursings at the end of Leviticus and Deuteronomy had been interpreted by Philo, who in turn was read by the Fathers, as rewards and punishments.<sup>7</sup>

In the New Testament, the theme recurred, when various rewards were explicitly attached to specific works (cf. Matt. 5). The house of God has 'many mansions' (John 14: 2)—(which may or may not imply a heavenly hierarchy)—and Paul appears to indicate that the elect shall differ from one another—'as one star differeth from another' (1 Cor. 15: 41)—in heavenly glory. Against this concept of degrees it was possible to set the lesson propounded by the parable of the Vineyard (Matt. 20: 1-14)—in which the workers were given equal wages, regardless of the amount of time they had spent labouring—but Christ's retention of the Judaic language of rewards and punishments rendered it very difficult indeed to deny that judgement would be by works.

Added to this Scriptural evidence was the weight of Church tradition; the Church of the fourth century had been quite clear that her doors must remain open to men and women who lived in the world, as well as to ascetics, and recognized that

it is impossible to draw the line that separates the Church from the world, the sheep from the goats, the wheat from the tares, so as to exclude all grades of merit on the one side, and grades of guilt on the other. The moon is not as bright as the sun, but still it shines; silver is not as precious as gold, but it is worth more than base lead. A place had to be found in the Church for virtuous married life—inferior to celibacy if you wish; but still on a wholly different plane from unbridled lust.<sup>8</sup>

From the fourth century, arguments were developed which offered a valid and sure place in the Church for the earnest Christian who could not disentangle himself from worldly affairs, thus cultivating what K. E. Kirk refers to as a 'double moral standard . . . a lower and a higher grade of Christian achievement'—a distinction which reconciled within the Church the otherworldly and the secular—and thereby 'saved Christianity.' The writings of the Fathers were weightily disposed towards the concept of degrees of reward and punishment,<sup>10</sup> and the tradition thus established was continued through the Middle Ages, largely through the agency of Peter Lombard's Sentences,<sup>11</sup> which transmitted the ideas of Augustine on the matter, and was accepted by a Church which tended to think in hierarchic terms.

Men's ideas of a hierarchic heaven seem to have been constructed to reflect social patterns on earth:<sup>12</sup> The notion of an equality of heavenly bliss, or of hellish torments, seems to have played no part in the medieval picture of the hereafter. Jovinian's ideas, that all sins are equal and that there is but one grade of punishment and one of reward in the future states, seem to have been effectively silenced after their condemnation at the synods of Rome and Milan (c.390).

Jerome's refutation of Jovinian had been constructed upon the argument that all sins are not equal, and that degrees of holiness (Jerome referred specifically to chastity and martyrdom) attained in this life, are intimately linked with our future position within the hierarchy of heaven. It seemed self-evident that some sins were graver than others, that a truly evil man would receive severer punishments in the depths of hell than one who had committed sins of a more 'trivial' nature. Hence the Church's division of sins into classes of 'venial' and 'mortal'. 1 John 5: 16—17 appeared to distinguish between pardonable sins and 'that sin which cannot be forgiven', and Christ himself had spoken in terms of lesser or more tolerable punishments (Matt. 10: 15, cf. 11: 24; Mark 6: 11; Luke 10: 12). Once the notion of varying degrees of torment in hell had been accepted, it seemed logical to extend the idea to heaven and to varying degrees of reward, associated with the varying degrees of holiness achieved in this life.

If degrees of glory were attained by good works, the system seemed to allow for a hierarchy of condign merit—of exact rewards and punishments in accordance with man's good or bad deeds in this life. Such a system conflicted with the Lutheran insight—that eternal life can be achieved or merited by no human work; that in the sight of God, all men are sinners and continue to be so after justification, since all sin, 'venial' or 'mortal', deserves damnation; men are saved by the sheer mercy of God—upon which we can but throw ourselves. If eternal life itself is beyond our reach and deserving, the degrees of glory within that kingdom are surely even more unattainable.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of those Protestant theologians who addressed themselves to the issue affirmed the concept of degrees of reward in heaven, and set themselves to prove that although Jesus and early Christians had spoken quite freely of reward, the old Jewish idea of reward had been completely transcended, and its concept of merit radically removed from the teaching of Jesus regarding the love of God:<sup>1</sup> God's justice is not like that of a judge or of an employer who pays a merited recompense; the calculating view of a merited reward is completely ruled out, since God's lavish rewards are incomparable and coram Deo there is no possibility of human achievement. Reward is simply an undeservedly received divine gift.



## **I. Degrees Of Punishment In Hell**

The French cleric Jean Veron,<sup>14</sup> who preached in London in the 1560s, resisted the idea of degrees of reward in heaven, but nevertheless appears to have had no such doubts about degrees of punishment. In his *Overthrow of the Iustification of Workes*, (1561), written in the form of a dialogue, such a diversity is readily granted:

. . . there is adiversity [sic] in the punishementes of the reprobate. And why? Because, that they do by theyr unbeliefe and frutes of the same, deserue those punishementes of hell fyer.<sup>16</sup> The damned shall pay for their sins and be punished according to the gravity of their trespasses.

Theodore Beza, evidently aware of the problems surrounding the doctrine of gradations of punishment of the damned and advising that 'this matter bee to be inquired of very soberly', deems it nevertheless to be worthy of tentative examination within his *Qvaestionum & Responsionum Christianarum Libellus* (1571), which was translated into English and published in 1572. He bases his surmise that degrees of punishment do exist upon the argument that there are varying levels of sin:

Praeterquam enim quod ipsa iustitiae ratio poscit, vt quum peccata omnia inter se paria non sint, nisi quatenus in genere conueniunt, qui grauius peccauit, grauius plectatur: Stoicorum enim est) [sic] non Christianorum paradoxon, quo paria esse peccata statuuntur) id etiam expresse testatur Christus, tolerabiliorem fore dicens Sodomorum conditionem in die iuditij, quam eorum a quibus ipse rejiciebatur [sic].<sup>17</sup>

Thus, although the medieval distinctions between mortal and venial sins had been rejected by Protestant reformers,<sup>17</sup> the notion that distinctions existed between sins was often retained. John White, chaplain in ordinary to James I, clarified this position in his *Way to the True Church*:

We hold all sinne to be mortall of it selfe, and not veniall. And we readily confesse indeed that this distinction in that sence is false, . . . And though we thus reiect this distinction, yet it is not our meaning hereby that all sinnes are equall and of like deformitie, or have the same effects, or stand in one degree of contrarietie to grace . . .<sup>18</sup>

The doctrine of distinctions between the gravity of sins was quite Scriptural. Protestant commentators expounded i John 5: 16-17, 'the sin of death', in the light of such gradations. Thus Tyndale in 1538 defined 'sin to death' as resisting grace, and fighting against mercy, and open blaspheming of the Holy Ghost, affirming that Christ's miracles are done in Beelzebub, and his doctrine to be of the devil.<sup>19</sup>

But the most commonly quoted passage of Scripture in this connection, and the one which Veron cited, was Matt. 10: 15:

It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgement than for that city'.

When the Rhemists' Bible comments that it is 'hereby . . . evident there bee degrees and differences of damnation in Hell fire according to men's deserts', Cartwright, in his *Confutation*, prints a mark beside their annotation to the effect that in this particular instance there is 'nothing materiall in the note to bee suspected'. Cartwright expands upon his concept of degrees of damnation in his annotation on Matt. 5: 23, where he explains that

It shall be dealt with sinners in the iudgment of God, which according unto the staiers whereby they have descended in offending the Lord, shall descended also [sic] (as it were) into the depth of hell fire.<sup>10</sup>

Beza, Veron, and Cartwright apportioned the gradations of punishment according to the grievousness of sin. But good works were also deemed to affect the position of reprobates in hell, by alleviating their punishments. The strictest Protestant was thus able to assign a positive role to good works—if only to the good works of the damned. Thus William Perkins writes that

The reprobate may leade such a life here in this world, that although he cannot attaine to salvation, yet his paynes in hell shall bee lesse; which appeareth, in that our Saviour Christ saith: it shall bee easier for Tyrus & Sydon, for Sodome and Gommorrah; than for Capernaum, and other Cities vnto which hee came, in the day of judgment.<sup>11</sup>

George Abbot, writing in 1600, reiterates that if good works do nothing else, they can relieve punishments in Hell, although one's general destination hereafter has been predestined:

But suppose that thou belong not to him . . . yet flie from sinne, and do moral vertues, . . . that at least shall ease some part of the extremity of those torments, which thou shalt have in hell fire. Although thou gaine no ioy by it, yet thou shalt escape much evill.<sup>12</sup>

Richard Crakanthorpe, formerly a tutor of Thomas Jackson at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, agrees that

even in . . . eternal death, there are diversities and degrees of punishments, for some fewer, for others moe [sic] and more hellish stripes, the more they restraints themselves from sinne, and the more they practice those workes of iustice and temperance . . . their stripes and punishments shall bee farre more easie, then if by their wallowing in sinne, and letting loose the reines to impietie, they had treasured up wrath against the day of wrath.<sup>13</sup>

But although good works on the part of the damned were deemed to alleviate their sufferings, even more emphasis was placed upon their refraining from evil. In a sermon of 1592, Tobie Matthew expounded the notion of the alleviation of torment according to the degree to which the reprobate refrains from evil:

If the reprobate find not himself to be predestinate yet may he not loose the reins to the lusts of concupiscence . . . but rather bridle and restrain both his actions and passions, yea his very affections and perturbations that he receive not . . . deeper damnation . . . and that it may be easier for him in the day of judgment, being ascertained that in the world to come there are degrees as well of torment as reward.<sup>14</sup>

The principle behind this concept is expressed by Abbot:

Thy pain shall be the lesse; not because thou hast done well, but because thou hast less declined from vertue.<sup>16</sup>

Aside from the problems surrounding rewards and their implication of merit, this Augustinian conception of sin as a negative force, i.e. as a falling away from the good, seems to have had some bearing upon Protestant opinion that one's station in the hereafter is determined more by the extent of one's 'declining from vertue' than by one's positive good works.

## **II. The Problem of Merit**

While it was conceded that the position of the damned was determined by the gravity of their sins and, to some extent, by the counteractive force of their good works<sup>27</sup>—upon the basis that punishments are deserved—it was far more awkward, theologically, to maintain similar distinctions in heaven; by doing so it seemed to open the door to unwelcome ideas concerning merit.

Jean Veron, David Pareus, and John Cameron all insisted that an analogy should not be drawn between the unequal punishments in hell and rewards in heaven, which, if they exist at all, are not allotted according to merit.<sup>18</sup> Protestants were divided with regard to their teaching about degrees of reward, some preferring to abandon the concept altogether, although the majority retained the concept, integrating it successfully with reformed soteriological doctrine.

The issue seems first to have been raised within reformed circles in England by exiled members of continental churches. Peter Martyr, expounding 1 Cor. 15: 41, admits that

Patres cum interpretantur hunc locum, eum exponunt, quasi attingatur praemiorum diversitas, ita ut post beatam resurrectionem aliqui futuri sint illustriores alij.<sup>1</sup>

but himself denies that this verse can sustain such an exposition. protesting that he does not define anything certain as to 'whether here be degrees of glory in life everlasting', he appears to lean to the negative opinion. Ten years later, another continental theologian, Jean Veron, the French preacher who had lived in England since about 1536, explicitly rejected the idea of distinctions of heavenly glory. One spokesman in his *Overthrow* asks Sith that

God in giving us unto life everlasting, doeth not respect or regard the dignitie of our good workes: howe can the doctrine of them stande, which do appoint degrees of ioye and felicitie in heaven affirming that we shal there excel one an other in glorie?

Veron feared that by conceding degrees of reward the way was open to doctrines of merit *ex condigno* and he thus set out to prove from Scripture that the saints will have equal reward and status in heaven; he notes that each labourer in the parable of the Vineyard received one penny, regardless of the amount of time he had worked (Matt. 20); that the righteous, i.e. those in heaven, shall all shine like the sun (Matt. 13: 43); he concurs with Calvin's interpretation of 1 Cor. 15: 41, arguing that it refers not to differences in glory among the saints, but rather to the differences between our earthly bodies and those with which we shall be furnished hereafter,<sup>81</sup> and asks 'what diversitie of glorye . . . can there be, when all our bodyes shall be made like unto the glorious bodye of Christ'; he rejects Jerome's interpretation of Dan. 12, insisting that to 'be as the brightness of the firmament' and 'to shine as the stars', implies no difference in status; he refuses to allow that it is possible to argue from 'contraries' that degrees of reward exist in heaven just as degrees of punishment exist in hell;<sup>31</sup> those passages which seem to imply greatness in heaven, Veron refers instead to greatness within the Church Militant; the 'many mansions' of John 14: 2 simply means that 'there is rowme ynoughe for all hys elect and chosen bee they never so manye'; he asserts that the differences between saints in this life are the result of their varying addiction to the flesh, and that once in the land of the living, all corruptions of the flesh shall be abolished, and, with them, all such differences; similarly, the angelic hierarchy, the principalities, dominions, and powers, which are designed to oversee the present temporal order, shall be abolished as superfluous in the Kingdom.<sup>33</sup>

The most detailed refutation of the concept of degrees of heavenly reward came from the pen of John Cameron, the influential Glaswegian Professor of Divinity at the University of Saumur. In his *Praelectiones*, of 1632, he sets out, at some length, fifteen arguments in favour of heavenly degrees of glory, each of which he carefully refutes, and twelve arguments against, which he defends, concluding that the elect in heaven are equal in glory.

These are worth summarizing for the purposes of this article:

He dismisses as specious a number of scripturally based arguments which he sees as attributing to heaven a fallacious diversity of rewards among the saints, whereas the scriptural references, he argues, maintain rather the division between the saved and the damned: Thus, the contrast implied in the statement, 'God returns to

each according to their works', based on Rom. 2: 6 (cf. 2 Cor. 5: 10), does not exist within the assembly of the pious themselves, but distinguishes the pious in heaven from the impious without.

Likewise, he dismisses the notion that the 144,000 virgin followers of the Lamb of Rev. 14: 1-4 imply that there are others who are not of this number and must therefore have less glory: the 144,000 comprise all the elect of God, and the rest are damned; the idea that 2 Cor. 9: 6—'He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully' — implies varying rewards is dismissed in favour of an interpretation which differentiates not between greater and lesser heavenly rewards, but between a reward in heaven and an empty reward in hell; and the idea that punishment is imposed according to merit in hell does not affect the fact that reward for the pious is free (*gratuita*), for nothing stops punishments being unequal, since not all are equally impious, whereas the same rules of merit do not apply to heaven, since the pious do not earn their reward.

Such an idea will not have the unfortunate practical effect of diminishing enthusiasm for good works, since, Cameron believes, those who are not deterred from evil by the love of God or the horrors of hell will not be allured by the hope of differing rewards within heaven.

Cameron rejects a number of scripturally based arguments which appear to indicate varying degrees of reward in heaven by arguing that such passages pertain to this life, rather than to the next. Into this category falls the parable of the Word of God as the seed which produces in some thirtyfold, in some sixtyfold, and in some a hundredfold. Cameron insists that this parable refers to the efficacy of the Word in this life; similarly, the idea contained in Luke 9: 47, that he who makes himself most like a child will be '*maximus in regno coelorum*', is refuted, since Cameron argues that the Apostles understood hereby not heaven '*quale est in coelis*', but '*regnum coelorum, quale est in terris*'; likewise, the Lord's promise that the Apostles would sit in judgement over the twelve tribes of Israel, is referred by Cameron to the Apostles' position within the constitution of the Church, rather than to heavenly status.

With Calvin, Veron, Cartwright, and his colleague Amyraut, Cameron refers 1 Cor. 15:41 to the difference between our earthly bodies and those with which we shall be furnished at the general resurrection, rather than to differences between those resurrected bodies. He refuses to admit any qualitative distinction between the brightness of the stars and the brightness of the firmament of Dan. 12: 3; that there are 'many mansions' in God's house does not prove a distinction of inheritance, but indicates rather the wealth and size of eternal life; he reminds his readers that Matthew's version of the parable of the Talents (Matt. 25: 14—30) tells of an equal reward given to each servant; he counters several arguments which are based upon the necessity of order and hierarchy; we will be similar to the angels, but we, as the limbs of Christ, shall not resemble them in their different ranks; the distinctions which exist among the pious in this life result either from their sins (which will not exist in heaven) or from their varying styles of daily living, which will not pertain to their heavenly existence; those who are equal in love will be endowed with the same dignity in body.<sup>36</sup>

However, the majority of Protestants who expressed convictions on the subject were convinced by the weight of Scriptural evidence which appeared to indicate that there are degrees of reward hereafter, just as there are degrees of punishment. When Calvin rejected the common interpretation of 1 Cor. 15: 41 which applied the verse to the existence of different degrees of honour and glory among the saints, he assures his readers that such a doctrine is nevertheless perfectly true, and is proved by other declarations of Scripture, although it has nothing to do with Paul's objective at this point.<sup>36</sup> Even Cameron seems to believe that equality does not betoken loss of distinction, and goes so far as to suggest that equal rewards and equal happiness and glory do not negate '*ordo*', since rank is not a feature of unequal things but of distinct things; this argument he bases upon Trinitarian theology—maintaining that in the Trinity, where there is '*ordo*', there is no inequality.

Moyse Amyraut, Cameron's colleague at Saumur, suggests that there may be '*prerogative d'honneur reservee*' for the saints, as implied by Paul's addressing the Philippians as 'my joy and my crown' (Phil. 4: 1), although this idea contradicts Cameron's notion of equality based upon 2 Tim. 4: 8, wherein Paul asserts that the

crown of righteousness which he will receive will not be given to him alone, but to 'all them also that love his appearing'. Amyraut is careful to add that

Au lieu que pour en obtenir les plus hauts degres, il luy est plus agreable que nous ne les esperions pas, & pour ce que l'humilite qui nous empesche de les esperer est vne des plus excellentes vertus, moins nous croirons de les obtenir, plus sera t'il certain que nostre humilite en sera remuneree."

At the end of Veron's discussion of the subject it is conceded that there may indeed be a 'higher glory' for the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Apostles and Martyrs, although the subject is relegated to the 'unsearchable iudgements of God, who (if it had been necessary for our salvation) would have certified us of it in his word'. But the proviso is added that

If in the lyfe to come any do excell other in glori, it is not by reason of their workes merites or deservinges, but the same doth altogether come of the mere mercye, grace and goodnesse of God, who doth most liberallye crowne in them hys owne gyftes . . .38

Thus Veron, by using Augustine's oft-quoted formula, maintained his position that works, in that they are not 'ours', cannot be condignly meritorious, although distinctions of glory might possibly be assigned to the saints through the sheer mercy of God.

Thus the debate is shifted from the rewarded to the rewarder; as David Pareus, drawing upon Peter Martyr, commented:

Quando quidem poene quidem inaequales infligentur pro inaequalibus peccatorum meritis: praemia vero magna, vel parva ex nullo operum merito, sed ex mera gratia distribuentur.<sup>38</sup>

Tyndale had assumed a similar line in 1532 when expounding Matt. 5: 12—'. . . your reward is great in heaven':

Though God, when he promiseth to bless our works, do bind us to work if we will obtain the blessing or promise; yet must we beware of this pharisaical pestilence, to think that our works did deserve the promises . . . [which] cometh of the pure mercy of God . . . the promise cometh of the promiser; and not of the deserving of those works, of which God hath no need.<sup>40</sup>

Tyndale's interpretation of God's promise of reward thus avoids any hint of works-righteousness by emphasising that rewards originate with the giver, rather than with the receiver; they are 'given freely of the goodness of the giver, and not of the deserving of the receiver',<sup>41</sup> and are in fact undeservable, since they are manifoldly disproportionate to the works performed. He speaks of the Christian's relationship with God as resembling that which exists between a child and his parents; the child 'is not able to recompense that which it oweth to father and mother by a thousand parts', yet his parents promise gifts 'without ceasing'; these rewards are unconditional and 'cometh of the love, mercy, and truth of the father and mother, as well when the child keepeth the appointment, as when . . . it hath broken the appointment; and not of the deserving of the child'.<sup>41</sup> He sets his discussion of the soteriological significance of works within the context of his concept of covenant, which was in no way contractual, despite the strongly moralistic manner of his presentation.<sup>43</sup>

John Hilsey, in his Primer of 1539, takes up Tyndale's theme of the complete inadequacy of works (and quotes from Tyndale's Matthew those passages of Scripture which can be interpreted as connecting covenant and the notion of reward):

God shall reward not for the dignite or worthines of the worke but for his covenants sake, for the worthyness of the worke doth not receyve such a reward when the rewarde is an hundreth folde

better then the worke in this conuenaunt of Christ; . . . Wherefore yf thou delyte to worke for a reward, be of good chere and cease not to worke, thou shalt haue a rewarde, not for thy merites desertes or worthynes of thy worke . . . but for thy couenauntes sake.<sup>44</sup>

This interpretation of works as irrelevant in respect of the magnitude of the reward, the reward being firmly placed within the scope of the munificence of the benefactor, is echoed by Perkins, who explains that

In this covenant we do not so much offer, or promise any great matter to God, as in a manner onely receive: even as the last will and testament of a man is not for the testators, but for the heires commodity.<sup>46</sup>

Bullinger also employs the language of inheritance, and insists that rewards, in that they are already prepared for the sons of God, precede good works, and therefore cannot be earned:

*Cogitabimus regnum coelorum & praecipua alia Dei dona non esse mercedem seruorum, sed haereditatem filiorum Dei. Quanquam enim multa opera iudex in extremo iudicio enumeraturus sit, propter quae uitam quasi rependere uidetur electis, praemittet tamen omnibus operibus, haec, Venite benedicti patris mei, possidete regnum paratum uobis ab exordio mundi.<sup>47</sup>*

This solution—that rewards do not imply merit but are simply the over-generous wages promised by God—was likewise expounded by Cartwright when dismissing the Rhemists' interpretation of Matt. 5: 12:

The word [reward] signifieth the reward that is due by covenant of him that giveth it, unto him unto whom it is given: whether the paine which he hath taken deserve it or no. If I promise a man as much for making a paire of shooes, as he should deserve in building me a house; yet it is called his reward or hire, that he doth so receive. And that the Scripture doth so use the word, it is manifest of the Parable of the Vine-gardiners, where the peny given to those who had wrought but one onely houre, . . . is as well called by this word of Reward and hire, as the peny given to them which had borne the . . . travell of the whole day. And St Paul declareth that this word of Reward is as well verified of that which is freely given, as of that which is due debt.<sup>47</sup>

Cartwright hereby retains the principle of congruence. Bishop John Buckeridge expounds the notion of congruence in his funeral sermon for Lancelot Andrewes of 1628.

Brass or copper money may be made current by the King's proclamation, but still it is but brass and copper, and wants of the true value of gold and silver; and good works . . . may go for current by God's promise, and receive a reward out of justice, but justice with mercy. For there is *justitia in reddendo*, 'justice in giving' the crown of glory according to His promise; but there is *misericordia in promittendo*, 'mercy' that triumpheth over justice, 'in promising' to give an infinite reward to a finite work, as heaven for a cup of cold water, or bread, or drink, or clothes, and the like; and between the kingdom of heaven and the crown of glory and eternal life which is infinite, and a few crumbs, or drops or rags which are scant so much as finite, there is no equality. *Inter finitum et infinitum nulla est proportio*, 'There is no proportion between that which is finite and that which is infinite'. So that as much as infinite doth exceed that which is finite, so much do God's infinite rewards exceed the best finite works of the best man. And the rule of the school in this is true: God punishes *citra condignum*, 'less than we deserve'—so there is mercy in God's justice and punishments; and God rewards *ultra meritum*, 'beyond our merit or desert', and so eternal life is the grace and free gift of God.<sup>48</sup>

Some Protestants observed the similarity between God's bountiful gifts in this life and his rewards hereafter. Just as God's liberality is variously bestowed here on earth, so are his gifts lavished upon his children in heaven—with no attention paid to merit. William Fulke writes:

As the starres differ in glory, not according to there [sic] merites, but according to Gods gift in there creation: So the bodies of saincts shall differ in glory, not according to there merites, but according to Gods free gift in the resurrection.'

This concept is also expressed by George Downname, who expands upon Augustine's idea that God crowns his gifts in us, and proceeds to support it with some of the same patristic sources that his adversary, Bellarmine, has quoted:

As the merit of Christ is equally imputed to all that beleeve; so the reward in respect of the substance, which is eternall life, shall be equally given to all that beleeve: yet I doubt not, but that whom God in this life hath adorned with greater graces, he will in them crowne his greater graces with greater glory.<sup>60</sup>

John Cameron, however, seems to have found difficulty with this very aspect of the concept of reward—that the inequality of God's gifts should result in an inequality of rewards in eternal life; he noted that the servants of the parable of the Pounds (Luke 19: 11-27) received their rewards in proportion to what they had done with their pounds, although their industry was equally employed, and the only inequality was in the gifts. But he argues that it is absurd to say that it is the actual gifts and not what we do with them that achieve reward in heaven:

Itaque si hoc argumentum aliquid efficeret, hoc efficeret, dona, non vsum donorum, esse que nos reddunt gratos Deo, quod absurdum est.<sup>61</sup>

John Davenant, similarly, strove to maintain some sort of connection between rewards and works by insisting that the proportional relationship between them could be affirmed without the association of merit:

When God . . . bestows an eternal life of happiness upon each of the soldiers of Christ who maintain their conflict bravely; yet, in that eternal life of happiness, bestows on some of them a different and pre-eminent measure of glory, in proportion to the different measure of grace which they have pre-eminently improved, he avoids that respect of persons which the Scriptures put far away from God, and maintains a proportion between the works and the rewards of different individuals: and yet this is no proof that the valour of any, even the most distinguished soldier, is fully equivalent to the reward of a life of blessedness, or to the rank which he holds in that life, if the equality of the one to the other were regarded."

He makes the analogy of soldiers who are rewarded for their military feats by elevation to the peerage—instead of receiving the far more suitable and adequate recompense of knighthood!

### **III. The Danger of Spiritual Commercialism**

Bishop Buckeridge, when expounding the parable of the Talents of Matt. 25: 18 in his funeral sermon for Lancelot Andrewes, expressed his opinions about degrees of reward in terms of usury:

The evil servant of the parable forgot the true and lawful usury, to 'give it to the poor', and so to 'lend it to the Lord', Who would surely have paid both principal and interest also; both the substantial reward of eternal life, and also the accidental degree and measure of glory."

Andrewes himself preached the scriptural concept of laying up treasures in heaven, employing the terminology of finance, suggesting that 'laying up' comprised a system of exchange not unlike that used by the merchants of Europe.<sup>54</sup> Such a use of the language of commercialism within the context of theology raises deep questions concerning the legitimacy of heavenly prizes as a motive for godly living.

The theology of future reward and punishment represents a constant latent propensity of the Christian faith to lapse into formalism, or spiritual commercialism, or legalism, which, in themselves, strike at the very heart of Christian disinterestedness and self-forgetfulness. This mercenary tendency of apocalyptic is described by K. E. Kirk as a 'damnosa hereditas' wherein:

Communion with God, present and future, is relegated into the background; salvation and recompense become the main objects of the Christian's desire . . . the only rationale for obedience . . . [is] the hope of future reward. The law does not carry its sanctions in itself; it makes no appeal to the progressive response of conscience. It is an arbitrary rule set out by an arbitrary ruler, to be obeyed without question, comprehension, or assent, and to be crowned by the promised guerdon . . . Amiable, harmless and even beneficent though the habit of codification may sometimes be, the issue to which it leads if unchecked is wholly un-Christian. In it a defective theology and a defective experience of God combine with an unintelligent misapprehension of the essence of morality and a stereotyped ethical code to undo the entire work of revelation."

C. S. Lewis, in his *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*,<sup>5</sup> observes that Christianity is in constant danger of relapsing into 'theological hedonism'. He cites two periods of English history which witnessed such a descent. The eighteenth century saw Anglicanism reach such a point that Boswell could say that the doctrine of future rewards and punishments comprised the very essence of Christianity; likewise, the Middle Ages saw a similar attitude prevailing. Heaven, hell, and purgatory, Lewis argues, had been 'too long and too vividly presented'. This had led to a spiritual commercialism which expressed itself in a distorted emphasis upon fasts, pilgrimages, penances, and 'treasuries of merits'—a system in which 'the natural and economic man could be as natural and economic about religion as about anything else'.

This tendency to substitute motives of self-interest for the vision of God has always found opponents; among the alleged errors of Eckhardt condemned by Pope John XXII in 1329 was the proposition, 'God is honoured among those who aim neither at property, nor honour, nor expediency, nor inner devotion, nor sanctity, nor reward, nor the kingdom of heaven, but have abjured them all',<sup>67</sup> and the Council of Trent endorsed the hope of heaven and the fear of hell as legitimate motives of right conduct.<sup>68</sup>

Certain reformers of the sixteenth century saw an inherent threat posed to Christian disinterestedness by the theology of rewards and punishments—and went to considerable pains to explain scriptural references to rewards and punishments in the light of their antipathy towards the formalism of the later Middle Ages. One such was Bullinger, who affirmed that

Quanquam Deus humano more praemijs nos alliciat, mercede trahat & in opere bono retineat, praemium tamen & merces non debet in operante bona opera esse praecipuum, ut magis nostram spectemus utilitatem & gloriam, quam amorem & honorem diuinum. Gratis uult Deus coli, gratis amari. Nam ut hilarem datorem requirit: sic filiarem amorem & spiritum spontaneum atque liberalem probat."

Of the early English reformers, William Tyndale was perhaps the most acutely aware of the need for such a corrective. By nature, he perceived, men 'understand not' and 'talk and think of the reward even as they do the work; neither suppose they that a man ought to work, but in respect to the reward';<sup>60</sup> that the profit should be located in the next world makes no difference: 'theological hedonism is still hedonism';<sup>81</sup> whether the man is seeking heaven or a hundred pounds, he can still 'but seek himself'.<sup>62</sup> (Perkins was later to categorize a love of God based upon the benefits bestowed by God as a characteristic of the reprobate.)<sup>83</sup>

Of freedom in its true sense—of spontaneity or disinterestedness, Nature knows nothing; yet such disinterestedness is exactly what the moral law demands. '. . . With all our works,' writes Tyndale, '[we] may not seek our own profit, neither in this world nor in the world to come'; still less are we permitted to seek 'an higher place in heaven', the which presumption should send us 'down far beneath the bottom of hell'.<sup>64</sup>



The solution to this dilemma is provided by the 'transition effected by the gift of faith which immediately passes into love'. Whereas, prior to conversion, a man 'wrought all manner evil and wickedness, not for hell's sake, which is the reward of sin, but because [he] . . . was heir of hell by birth and bondage to the devil', henceforth, a believer has the power 'to love that which before he could not but hate'. The 'fretting' voice of the law is now the will of the Beloved, and is 'graved in [the believer's] heart'. Henceforth, a man could do good works regardless of future rewards and without a business motive, for the sheer love of God. Once the tree had been made good, (by no merit of its own), it would bear good fruit, almost as a by-product—'naturally', 'freely', 'of his own accord', without commandment, 'even of his own nature', and 'not for heaven's sake'.<sup>66</sup>

The problem of the legitimacy of reward as a motive for the works of Christians continued to interest theologians. William Forbes insisted that Protestants, 'even the more rigid', had never denied that it is lawful to do good works with a view to eternal wages, and cites in his favour Bucer, Davenant, and the Remonstrants:

*etsi in bene operando praecipue Deum ejusque gloriam, tanquam ultimum finem, spectare debeamus; quia tamen subordinata non pugnant, et nostra salus cum Dei gloria arctissime conjuncta est, idcirco ad excitandum socordiam nostram, omnino licitum sit etiam mercedem promissam, ut finem secundarium."*

He adds that it is neither slavish nor mercenary that we should be moved by the same arguments which God uses throughout the Scriptures to move and to persuade.

#### **IV. Rewards And Sanctification**

Just as Tyndale and others saw that good works followed naturally upon the unmerited gift of faith, so eternal life and rewards in heaven were judged to follow close upon the heels of good works:

*Likewise as good works naturally follow faith . . . even so naturally doth eternal life follow faith and good living, without seeking for, and is impossible that it should not come, though no man thought thereon.'*<sup>7</sup>

Thus the idea of merit was not only dissociated from reward by placing the latter firmly in the realm of God's gifts and promises, a position expressed by Augustine in his famous dictum— 'God crowns his gifts in us'—but the implication of merit was also avoided by assigning to good works an automatic reward. St

Bernard provided another phrase which was popular with Protestant writers: Works are the 'via regni, non causa regnandi'—or, as Downname expounded this saying, 'the way which leadeth to the kingdome, but not the cause of our coming unto it';<sup>88</sup> there is nothing meritorious in them; reward simply emerges as the effect organically connected with the deed, as its cause or condition, or as the natural consequence of holiness, just as holiness is the natural consequence of faith. Thus for Luther, rewards and punishments follow good and evil actions naturally and necessarily; listing those Scriptural passages which refer to rewards he argued that

*In meritis et praemiis inutiles cogitationes et quaestiones versamus de dignitate, quae nulla est, cum de sola sequela disputandum sit. Manet enim impios infernus et iudicium Dei, necessaria sequela, . . . Ita manet pios regnum . . . iis omnibus nihil probari quam sequelam mercedis et nequaquam meriti dignitatem, Scilicet quod ii qui bona faciunt, non servili et mercenario affectu propter vitam aeternam faciunt, quaerunt autem vitam aeternam, id est, sunt in ea via, qua pervenient et invenient vitam aeternam, ut quaerere sit: studio niti et instanti opera eo conari, quod sequi solet ad bonam vitam.*<sup>70</sup>

Luther defines natural consequence thus:

*Si in aquam mergaris, suffocaberis, si enataveris, salvus eris . . . In merito vel mercede agitur vel de dignitate vel sequela. Si dignitatem spectes, nullum est meritum, nulla merces. Si enim liberum arbitrium se solo non potest velle bonum, per solam vero gratiam vult bonum . . ., quis non videt, solius gratiae esse bonam illam voluntatem, meritum et praemium? . . . Si sequelam spectes, nihil est, sive bonum, sive malum, quod non suam mercedem habeat.*<sup>71</sup>

Luther's concept of reward as natural consequence, and Tyndale's insistence upon the inner working of the Spirit, are echoed by Davenant who writes in 1631 that

*Habitual grace itself is a disposition, not a merit, as regards future glorification; so the works of grace, wrought by the children of God, are means, not merits; prerequisites, not causes, of the reward received.*<sup>71</sup>

In other words, without works man, though saved or justified by the imputation of Christ's merits, cannot attain to heavenly status; sanctification is the only means by which we may approach God.

Calvin, basing his argument on Rom. 8: 30, sees this process in terms of an 'order of sequence':

*Quod vnicuique dicitur redditurus Deus secundum opera [Rom. 2: 6], paruo negotio dissoluitur. Ordinem enim consequentiae magis quam causam indicat locutio. Extra dubium autem est, Dominum his misericordiae suae gradibus salutem nostram consummare dum electos ad se vocat, vocatos iustificat, iustificatos glorificat. Tametsi ergo sola misericordia suos in vitam suscipiat: quia tamen in eius possessionem ipsos deducit, per bonorum operum stadium, vt quo destinavit ordine suum in illis opus impleat: nihil mirum si secundum opera sua dicuntur coronari: quibus haud dubie ad recipiendam immortalitatis coronam praeparantur."*

John White approached the question in a similar manner in his 1613 sermon at the Spittle, in which he reiterated Bernard's words:

*Almes, and mercie, and all good workes, are so commended in the Scripture, and in the Fathers, and have those high titles given unto them, because they are the things which God hath appointed us to walk in for the working out of our salvation.*<sup>74</sup>

The rewards promised by Scripture thus assume the nature of the proverbial carrot; they are the means by which God induces holiness, which is in itself the real or true reward. Tyndale subscribed to this conception of covenant when employing his father-child analogy:

*The scripture speaketh as a father doth to his young son, Do this or that, and then will I love thee; yet the father loveth the son first, and studieth with all his power and wit to overcome his child with love and with kindness, to make him do that which is comely, honest, and good for itself.*<sup>75</sup>

That works received some sort of unmerited recompense hereafter was quite reconcilable with orthodox Protestant doctrines concerning justification, since these doctrines made a systematic distinction between justification (the external act by which God declares the sinner to be righteous) and sanctification or regeneration (the internal process of renewal within man).<sup>76</sup> This notional distinction distinguished Protestant doctrines from medieval and Tridentine doctrines and rendered it quite possible to speak in terms of the relation between rewards and works without implying that the latter had anything to do with the formal cause of justification (i.e. the alien righteousness of Christ).

Hugh Latimer expressed Protestant doctrine with regard to the distinction between initial justification and subsequent sanctification in a succinct formula, which he used on more than one occasion during his preaching:

We must first hear the word of God and know it; and afterward we must believe the same; then we must wrestle and strive with sin and wickedness, as much as it is possible for us, and so live well and godly, and do all manner of good works which God hath commanded us in his holy laws; and then we shall be rewarded in everlasting life, but not with everlasting life; for that everlasting life is a gift of God, a free gift given freely unto men through Christ.<sup>77</sup>

Melanchthon, in his *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* (1531), made this distinction when accounting for the position of works in Lutheran teaching. He retains the word 'merit':

We teach that good works are meritorious—not for the forgiveness of sins, grace, or justification (for we obtain these only by faith) but for other physical and spiritual rewards in this life and in that which is to come, as Paul says (1 Cor. 3: 8), 'Each shall receive his wages according to his labour'. Therefore there will be different rewards for different labours . . . There will be distinctions in the glory of the saints.<sup>78</sup>

William Covell refers to works which 'although not so required of necessity that to leave them undone excludeth from Salvation' are nevertheless 'of so great dignity and acceptance with God, that most ample reward in heaven is laid up for them'.<sup>79</sup> Covell's actions which 'make to the accessory augmentation of our bliss' savoured too much of the Roman doctrine of supererogatory works for his opponents to abide happily. Davenant employs the same distinctions, insisting that the Scriptures, when they deny the meritoriousness of works for receiving reward, have not in view any measures . . . of superadded glory; but that very essential reward, that is, the glory itself.<sup>80</sup>

Although he used the term 'merit', Melanchthon insists that eternal life is a gift of God (cf. Rom. 6: 23) and quotes Augustine's maxim that 'God crowns his gifts in us' to this effect; he argues that the concept of condign merit is a misinterpretation of the word 'reward'—which thereby does 'violence not only to Scripture but also to the very usage of the language'.<sup>81</sup> In 1586 Hooker appealed to the interpretation of the Wittenberg Confession:

The ancient Fathers use meriting for obtaining, and in that sense they of Wittenberg have it in their Confession: 'We teach that good works commanded of God are necessarily to be done, and that by the free kindness of God they merit their certain rewards.'<sup>82</sup>

Bishop Buckeridge interpreted the word 'promeretur' after the same fashion; the Fathers, he argued, used the word in the sense that merit is 'via obtinendi', 'the way and means of obtaining':

To return to the use of the word, *promeretur*. In antiquity I remember St Cyprian useth it not for the dignity and merit of the best work, but only for the way or means of obtaining. For reading that place of St Paul, 'But I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief [1 Tim. 1: 13], he reads it thus *Sed misericordiam merui*, 'But I merited mercy'. What was *merui* in St Cyprian's sense but 'I obtained mercy'? and so the Vulgar reads that place.<sup>83</sup>

The notion of heavenly rewards, in so far as they could be viewed as the natural consequences of good works, or as comprising the fruition of our growth in holiness (since holiness is its own reward) was an integral part of the doctrines of sanctification and glorification. As White explains,

The elect are brought to glorie, not by justification alone, but by vocation and sanctification also . . . though the workes themselves iustifie not, . . . they have their proper use to sanctifie us'.<sup>84</sup>

Sanctification, whereby the inherent holiness of the justified sinner is gradually augmented and enlarged in this lifetime, was the beginning of transformation into the image of the Son of God; glorification comprised the perfect transformation of the saints into that image, which begins in death but is not made perfect until the last day of judgement;<sup>86</sup> but although this process shall be 'made perfect before the last day',<sup>86</sup> and 'God shall be all in all, in all his elect',<sup>87</sup> perfect glorification does not entail equality among the saints.

Sanctification determines the degree to which we are capable of receiving that which God has in store for us; as Amyraut expressed it:

Qu'encore que diuers vaisseaux que Ton plonge dans vne riuere en mesme temps, se remplissent tous egalement, en ce qu'il n'y en a pas vn qui ne prenne de l'eau tout autant que porte l'etendue de sa capacite, si en prennent ils inegalement pourtant, en ce que cette etendue de leur capacite n'est pas egale.<sup>88</sup>

Amyraut here yet again disagrees with his mentor, Cameron, who had written that the elect are not like unequal vases, since they are all by nature the same, and must therefore fill up to the same degree.<sup>89</sup>

George Downname, perceiving that Roman polemic was misdirected in respect to Protestant doctrine concerning good works and rewards,<sup>90</sup> adamantly upholds the idea that there are inequality and degrees of sanctity and of subsequent glorification, and actually throws back at Bellarmine (against whom he writes) the charge that it is rather the Roman doctrine of infused righteousness that implies equality:

All his proofes are to prove the inequality and degrees of sanctity or inherent righteousness; as though we denied the same, or held that paradox, which may in respect of habituall righteousness more justly be imputed to the Papists. For if incipients in Religion, yea, infants in age, be justified or made just, as they teach, with perfect righteousness infused, what difference shall there bee betwixt Baptized infants and the greatest Proficients among them (who dreame of perfection) in regard of habituall righteousness? saving that the infants justice may seeme to bee more pure from actual] concupiscences.<sup>1</sup>

The concept of degrees of glory was part of the process by which Protestant theology retained the idea that individual identity is preserved beyond death; the elect shall all be conformed unto Christ, but shall by no means be subsumed into one amorphous mass. Luther thus interprets i Cor. 15: 41:

Des gleichen sol auch inn leben mancherlen unterscheid sein der klarheit odder herrligkeit und doch alzamal inn einerlen himlischem wesen als ein leib und gelieder Christi, Wie denn auch inn einem naturlichen leib viel und mancherlen gelieder sind, deren iglichs seinen eigen namen und brauch odder ampt hat und doch gleichwol alle einerlen wesen und natur des einigen leibs haben."

Just as heavenly bodies emit varying degrees of light, so shall the risen elect enjoy varying degrees of glory, 'making each nicely distinct from the other'.<sup>93</sup> These differences will be determined by our works in this life-time, or in other words, by our progress in sanctification:

Und sol dennoch also zu gehen, das wir unternander mancherlen unterscheid odder klarheit haben werden, Als Petrus und Paulus eines Apostels, dieser eines Merterers, der ander eines fromen Bisschoffs odder predigers klarheit haben wird, ein iglicher nach seinem werck, das er gethan hat.<sup>84</sup>

Francis White propounds the doctrine of degrees of glory as an alternative to the Roman doctrine of the treasury of merits for the satisfaction of other men's sins, substituting instead the 'treasury of God's eternal memory'. Superabundant satisfaction on earth accrues in Heaven as superabundant glory:

Even as God in this World appointed . . . Afflictions, to be matter and occasion of greater Sanctitie and Vertue in them, and proposed these Persons to be Lights and Examples to others, in their Actions and Sufferings: so likewise he layd vp these things in the Treasurie of his eternall Memorie, that he might crowne and dignifie them about other Saints, with a large augmentation of Glorie and Blisse."

Yet differences in glory do not entail degrees of happiness; in heaven all shall partake of eternal joy and shall want for nothing; all shall behold the face of God and all shall be 'like unto Christ'.<sup>68</sup> All will be completely happy in their station. Augustine, basing himself on i Cor. 15, had argued that degrees of glory did not entail degrees of happiness, since 'love will bring it about that what is possessed by each will be common to all', and that there will thus be no 'envying amid this diversity of brightness'.<sup>97</sup>

Luther also maintains an equality of happiness amid this diversity of glory:

Also das alles sein unterschiedlich und doch nach der person gleich und einerlen wesen, und alle gleiche freude und seligkeit haben werden inn Gott, Eben wie die stern allzumal am himel leuchten und helle sind, ob wol einer mehr, denn ander weniger klarheit odder liecht von sich gibt.<sup>98</sup>

For the majority of Protestant writers who addressed the issue, belief in degrees of reward in heaven thus did not conflict with the Protestant insight of justification freely attained through the merits of Christ, since rewards resulted naturally or automatically from good works, which were part of the elect's sanctification.

Neither did heavenly rewards imply a recurrence of the medieval doctrine of condign merit, since Protestant writers who admitted the concept of degrees of glory hereafter were careful to attribute them not to the merit of works, but rather to the bountiful mercy of God.

The essential Protestant response to the issue of degrees of glory, however, is well expressed by Amyraut, who, having concluded that 'it is difficult to conceive how some shall be more advanced than others' hereafter, when God who is all in all shall fill the faithful with his Spirit, concludes his discussion of the subject with a comment which serves to set the problem in perspective:

Ce n'est pourtant pas mon intention d'en rien decider icy, & il est beaucoup plus a propos de s'exercer a embrasser la Croix de Christ, par laquelle seule nous auons le droit de partager l'heritage des cieux avec luy, que de nous amuser a supputer le nombre de nos belles actions, ou a mesurer les degres de nos vertus, pour voir quelque iour la haut aux cieux si nos recompenses y seront proportionnees."

**Dr. Emma Disley**

**Notes:**

1 C. McDannell and B. Lang, *Heaven: a history* (1988), 150.

2 Philip Melanchthon, *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, xvii; T. G. Tappert, *The Book of Concord* (1959), 224.

3 Moyses Amyraut, *Discours de Vestal des Fideles apres la mart*, Saumur (1646), 171. Cf. Bishop William Forbes of Edinburgh, *Considerationes modestae et pacificae conroversiarum de justificatione, Purgatorio, Invocatione Sanctorum, Christo Mediatore et Eucharistia*, published posthumously in 1658, 297—9, wherein he complains of Protestants who question the doctrine of heavenly rewards, and attributes their opinions to their 'being too fond of novelty'. Uncertainty about the Protestant position on the subject continued throughout the period covered by this article and beyond; in 1692, the writer of *The Glory and Happiness of the Saints in Heaven*, 139-40, accepts the arguments on both sides of the argument, relinquishes the debate, and embraces a position of complete agnosticism with regard to the issue.

4 Reference to 'only two places' after death was a frequent cry of earlier Protestants, who saw no difficulty in referring to heaven and hell as 'places'; cf. John Hoper, *A funerall oratyon made the xiiii day of January 1549*, Parker Society Works, 567—8, and Edmund Grindal, *A Sermon at the funeral solemnitie of the most high and mighty prince Ferdinandus, the late Emperour* (1564), in *P.S. Works*, 25. Milton's concept of heaven and hell as a quality of the mind (cf. *Paradise Lost* (1667), 1668 edition, i. 1. 249) does not seem to have gained currency in early Reformation debates on the subject.

5 Although it had been translated into neither English nor Latin at this period, contemporaries were familiar with Dante's work, occasionally quoting him for his anti-papal stance; criticism of his depiction of Purgatory is lacking and was probably tolerated as poetic license. The anonymous author of *Tarlton's Newel out of Purgatorie* (1590), 2—3, however, argues for the existence of a 'meane betwixt heaven and hel', namely, 'Quoddam tertium, a third place that al our great grandmothers have taJkt of, that Dant hath so learnedly writ of, and that is Purgatorie'. The Roman doctrine of Purgatory might seem to imply equality in heaven, if purged souls are deemed to achieve a uniform purity. Such a notion is touched on by the conservative lawyer, John Rastell, whose *New Boke of Purgatory* (1530) included a long debate linking the idea of degrees of glory with the doctrine of Purgatory; one of his spokesmen argues that the existence of degrees of glory renders unnecessary the doctrine of purgatory, since all levels of purity are accommodated in a hierarchic heaven. This idea is refuted by his advocate of purgatory, who insist that although degrees of purity and joy exist in heaven 'nothyng unpurged and unpure may remayne and abyde in heuen', fos. fir-g2. John Frith, in his refutation of Rastell's book, passes over this argument, commenting only 'let us graunte these degres [in heaven] for Rastels pleasure although the questyon be so dysputable that I am sure he can not defende it', *A Disputacio of Purgatorye* (1530?), fo. C4r.

6 Thomas Jackson, *Justifying Faith, or the faith by which the just do live* (1615), c. 6. 207.

7 Philo, nepi A9Xtov KOU Eitranicov passim.

8 K. E. Kirk, *The Vision of God* (1928 Bampton lectures; published, 1931), 239-40.

9 *Ibid.* 240.

10 Cf. Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucan*, lib. 7, 220; *id.*, *Ep. 42 ad Siridum*; Chrysostom, *Ad Thtdorum Laptum*, I; *id.*, *Homily 41 on 1 Corinthians*, Jerome, *Adversus Jovimanum*, II; Augustine, *De Spiritu et littera*, cc. 41, 48; *id.*, *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, c. 5; *id.*, *Tractatus in Joannis*, 67.2 and 68.3; *id.*, *De Baptismo*, II, 2 and IV, 19; *id.*, *De Cwitate Dei*, XXII, 30; *id.*, *De Sanaa Virginitate*, c. 26; Gregory, *Expositio in Librum lob, sive Moraliu Libri XXV*, lib. iv. 70.

11 Peter Lombard, *Sentences*, iv. dist. 49, c. 1; cf. Aquinas, *Commentary on the Sentences*, dist. 49, q.5, art. 1.

12 Cf. Augustine, *De Cwitate Dei*, and Jerome, who argued that the ecclesiastical hierarchy reflected the heavenly order, *Adversus Jovinianum*, ii; but cf. also Martin Luther, *Das 15. Capitel der 1 Epistel S. Pauli an die Corinther*, see *Werke*, Weimar edition, 36, pp. 568 and 595, on w. 24 and 27—8, wherein he maintains that although male and female shall remain hereafter with regard to nature and person, the married estate, and all that proceeds from it, such as government, subjects, and whatever other estates and offices there may be on earth and which pertain to the government of the world shall be terminated; even the pastor's or preacher's office shall cease. He hereby expresses the opposing tradition—represented, for example, by the fifteenth-century cadaver tombs—of Death the leveller. This notion contradicts the words put into Elizabeth I's mouth by Thomas Bentley, at the end of a long prayer to be used by the Queen in his *Monument of Matrones* (1582), 272, wherein the Queen expects 'with all the holie Patriarches, Judges, Kings and Queenes, yea with

all the Archangels, Angels, Saints, Martyrs, Confessors, Uirgins, and the whole companie of thy celestially and blessed spirits, to reigne with him over spirituall powers and principalities for ever ..."

13 The problem presented by Jesus' teaching about rewards in the Gospels is stated simply by Kirk '. . . assuming disinterestedness to be the Christian ideal, how comes it that the idea of recompense features so largely in the gospels', *The Vision of God*, 140—6 and 143 n.; cf. Baron Friedrich von Hugel's discussion of the subject in *The Mystical Element of Religion as studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa and her friends* ii (1923), 154—8.

14 Cf. P. Denis, 'John Veron: The first known French Protestant in England', *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London* 22 (1970—6), 257—63, and Henry Machyris diary, 1550—1563 (Camden Society 1848), *passim*.

15 Jean Veron, *The Overthrow of the Iustification of Workes and the vain doctrin of the Merits of Men* (1561), fo. 65'.

16 Theodore Beza, *Quaestionum & Responsum Christianarum Libellus* (1571), 85.

17 Cf., for example, Thomas Cartwright, *A Confutation of the Rhemists translation, glosses and annotations on the New Testament* (1618), 25, on Matt. 5: 23: 'All sin deserveth death, as the Apostle saith, and that everlasting . . . all sinne, except that against the Holy Ghost, is veniall in Christ: so without him it is all mortall and deadly . . . away therefore with this filthie distinction, so foolishlie gathered . . .'; cf. also William Guild, *A Compend: Controversies of Religion* (1639), cap. 8, 96—7: '. . . all Sinne is mortall by nature, and none are veniall, but onlie by Grace, to those that are penitent . . . at the day of judgement those sinnes which Papists call Veniall, will proove then Mortall; because they will t<sup>ee</sup> punished with eternall death, seeing no temporall or lighter punishment is to bee then inflicted, or thereafter sustained'.

18 John White, *Way to the True Church* (1624), 130.

19 William Tyndale, *Exposition of the First Epistle of Saint John* (1538) *Parker Society Works* ii (1849), 212; in part, such an exposition of this passage was influenced by the Roman interpretation of the epistle's teaching—i.e. that a 'sin to death' is 'that mortall sin onely, whereof a man is never penitent before his death, or which he continueth until death and dieth in it', cf. *Rhemists' Bible*, annotation on 1 John 5: 16—17, and cannot therefore be said to define mortal sins in general. This interpretation allowed Roman commentators to argue that if we may not pray for those among the dead who sinned unto death, we may, conversely, pray for those among the dead who did not 'sin unto death'. Thus William Fulke, *The text of the New Testament of Jesus Christ, translated out of the vulgar Latine by the Papists of the traiterous seminarie at Rhemes . . . whereunU) is added the translation out of the original Creeke, commonly used in the Church of England, with a confutation of all such arguments, glosses, and annotations, as conteine manifest impietie, etc.* (1589), 45S-456T, and Thomas Cartwright, *A Confutation of the Rhemists translation, glosses and annotations on the New Testament* (1618), 699-700, restrict sin to death to sin against the Holy Ghost referred to in Mark 3: 29; cf. Luke 12: 10.

20 Cartwright, *Confutation*, on Matt. 10: 15 and 5: 23, pp. 48 and 25—6.

21 William Perkins, *Treatise tending unto a declaration whether a man might be in the estate of damnation or in the estate of Grace* (1590?), 14.

22 George Abbot, *An Exposition upon the prophet Jonah* (1600), lecture 25, 532-3-

23 Richard Crakanthorpe, *Sermon of Predestination* (1620), 38—9.

24 Tobie Matthew, cf. 'Two sermons hitherto unpublished, of Dr Tobie Matthew . . .', in *The Christian Observer*, 47 (1847), 728, 777-8; cf. N. Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists* (1987), p. 19 and 19 n., for Matthew and Perkins references.

25 Abbot, *ibid.*

26 Cf. Augustine, *Confessions*, vii. 12; *id.*, *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum*, 11. ii. 12: 'Evil . . . is that which falls away from essence and tends to non-being. It tends to make that which is cease to be'; cf. G. R. Evans, *Augustine on Evil* (1982), 34-5.

27 One dissenter from the generally accepted notion that there are degrees of punishment in hell appears to have been the fifteenth-century common lawyer, Sir John Fortescue, who omits hell from his picture of universal order in his *De Natura Legis Naturae*, cap. LIX, in *Works*, edited by Lord Clermont (1869), i. 175 'Hoc ordine preest angelus angelo, ordo ordini in regno caelorum, homo homini, bestia bestiae, avis avi, et piscis pisci, in terra, aere, et in mari; ut non sit repens ymo vermiculus, celse volans avis, aut profunde natans pisciculus, quern non constringit hujus ordinis series consonantissima armonia. Solum Jnfernus quern tantum peccatores colunl hujus ordinis amplexus vindicat declinare.'

28 Veron, *Overthrow*, fos. 65—6; David Pareus, *Roberti Bellarmini . . . De Justificatiom impiii. lib. V, Explicati et casligati* (1615), iii, c. xvi. 917; John Cameron, *Praelectiones*, ii. (1632), 325—6.

29 Peter Martyr, *In selectistimam S. Pauli Priorem ad Corinth. Epistolam* (1551), 405-

30 Veron, *Overthrow*, fo. 59.

31 Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of St Paul to the Corinthians* (1546); see Calvin Society edition ii. (1848), 48—0; cf. Cartwright, who, in his *Confutation*, 438, concurs with this interpretation of I Cor. 15: 41; cf. also Amyraut, *Exposition du Chapitre xv. de la Premiere Epistre de St Paul aux Corinthiens* (1659), 76, wherein he suggests that '. . . il [St Paul] compare, non les corps des Fideles glorifiez avec les corps des autres Fideles aussi glorifiez, avec quelque notable disparite dans les degrez de leur gloire: mais les corps des Fideles, tels qu'on les seme en la mort, avec eux-mesmes quand ils ressusciteront a la venue du Sauveur du monde'.

32 Cf. Beza, who does argue from 'contraries' in his *Quaestionum Sf Responsionum*, 85.

33 This paragraph summarizes Veron's arguments presented in fos. 59r-60T of his *Overthrow*.

34 Cameron, *Praelectiona*, ii, 326; cf. Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of St Paul to the Corinthians*; Veron, *Overthrow*, fo. 61; Cartwright, *Confutation*, on I Cor. 15: 41; Amyraut, *Exposition dv Chapitre XV. de la Premiere Epistre de St Paul avx Corinthiens*, 74—6.

35 Cameron, *Praelectiones*, ii, 325-34.

36 Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of St Paul to the Corinthians*.

37 Amyraut, *Discours de Vestal des Fideles apres la mart* (1646), 171, 172—3; cf. Cameron, *Pratlectionum*, 332.

38 Veron, *Overthrow*, fo. 72; cf. Augustine, *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, c. 15 and *On the Proceedings of Pelagius*, c. 35.



39 David Pareus, Roberti Bellarmini Politiani Societatis Jesu Theologi Cardinalis, *De Justificatione Impii. libri V, Expicati et Castigati* (1615), lib. I 1 1 , cap. XVI, p. 917; cf. Peter Martyr, *In Selectissimam S. Pavli Priorem ad Corinth, Epistolam* (1551), 424-5; cf. Bellarmine, *De Justificatione*, lib. I 1 1 , c. XVI.

40 Tyndale, *An Exposition uppon the V. VI. VII. Chapters of Matthew* (1532), P.S. Works ii. 30-1.

41 Tyndale, *Parable of the Wicked Mammon* (1527), P.S. Works i (1848), 116; cf. Alexander Nowell's *Catechism* (1570), P.S. (1853), 63: 'Merces ilia non pro dignitate . . . operibus tribuitur, et illis quasi gratia pro mentis refertur, sed Dei benignitate gratis praeter mentum, in nos confertur.'

42 Tyndale, *Exposition uppon . . . Matthew*, P.S. Works ii, 74—5; cf. Heinrich Bullinger, who uses the same analogy in his *Sermonum Decades Quinque, de Potissimis Christianat Religionis Capitibus* (1562), Decad. I 1 1 , Sermo IX, p. 159: 'Imitatur hie Deus benignus, patres secundum carnem, uel in hoc seculo benignos. Donant enim hi quoque liberis suis munera ueluti laboris mercedem, & his ad ampliores uirtutes ipsos prouocant, cum tamen iure haereditatis ad filios omnia pertineant, & uera propriaque caussa mercedis uel recompensationis non sit obedientia filij, sed magis mera parentis gratia.'

43 Cf. M. McGiffert, 'William Tyndale's Conception of Covenant', *JEH* (1951), 167—84. Professor McGiffert's article rescues Tyndale's covenant theology from allegations that his stress on works endangered Reformed theology by positing a conditional covenant; cf. W. A. Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants, 1520—35* (1964), 191, 138, 146, 154; J. G. Moller, 'The beginnings of Puritan covenant theology', *JEH*, xiv (1963), 51—2; D. B. Knox, *The Doctrine of Faith in the Reign of Henry VIII* (1961), 6, 19—20.

44 John Hilsey, *Manual of Prayers* (1539), fo. Gg. ii. r; reprinted in E. Burton, (ed.), *Three Primers put forth in the Reign of Henry VIII* (1834), 43°-i; cf. McGiffert, *ibid.*, 182-3.

45 Perkins, *Works*, i. 70b.

46 Bullinger, *Sermonum Decades*, Decad. I 1 1 , Sermo IX, 159; cf. Matt. 25: 34 and Col. 3: 24; cf. also Fulke, *A Defence of the Sincere and True Translations of the Holy Scriptures into the English Tongue, against the Cavils of Gregory Martin* (1583), P.S. 1843, c. 9, p. 370: 'In the testimony of St Paul, the word of "inheritance" following immediately after the word of "reward" or "retribution", excludeth merits: for the inheritance dependeth of God's free adoption, by which he maketh us his sons, that he may give us that inheritance which we can never deserve.'

47 Cartwright, *Confutation*, 23 on Matt. 5: 12, Cartwright hereby retains the principle of congruence, (cf. late medieval doctrine of 'faciens quod in se est'); cf. Fulke, *A Defence of the Sincere and True Translations of the Holy Scriptures*, c. 9, p. 369: '. . . the full reward is given, according to the most bountiful promise of God, to our good works, of his mere mercy and grace, and not by desert of our works. And the parable of the labourers, whom God hired into his vineyard, declareth most evidently, that the reward is of grace, not of m e r i t . . . he promiseth greater reward to his workmen, a thousand fold and more, than their labour dothdeserve . . . "

48 John Buckeridge, funeral sermon for Lancelot Andrewes (1628), in Andrewes, *Ninety-six sermons*, vol. 5, *Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology* (1843), 282—3. Cf. Robert of Holcot (d. 1349), *In Itbrum Sapientiae Regis Salomonis praelectiones CCXIII*, c. 3, lect. 36, (1586 edition, p. 126): '. . . sicut parua pecunia cupri ex natura sua, siue naturali uigore non ualet tantum, sicut unus panis, sed ex institutione principis tantum ualet.' Also James Ussher, *An Answer to a Challenge made by a lesuite in Ireland* (1624) (1625 edition, pp. 519—20) '. . . our workes haue thisvalue in them, not naturally, as if there were so great goodnesse in the nature or substance of the merit that euerlasting life should bee due vnto it, but legally, in regard of Gods ordinance and appointment. Even as a little peece of Copper of its owne nature or naturali value, is not worth so much as a loafe of Bread; butby the institution of the Prince is worth so much.'

49 William Fulke, *The text of the New Testament . . . translated . . . by the papists . . . at Rhemes . . . with a confutation of all such arguments, glosses, and annotations, as conteine manifest impietie* (1589), on 1 Cor.15: 41, p. 300V.

50 George Downame, *A treatise of Unification* (1632; 1639 edition), lib. 4, c. XIII, II, p. 259; cf. Bellarmine, *De justificatione*, lib. 3, c. XVI, in *Opera omnia*, 4 (1858), 564—6; Cardinal Bellarmine differentiates the position of the Lutherans from that of Jovinian on this matter, by observing that whereas Jovinian taught that all virtues and sins are equal and are therefore equally rewarded, the Lutherans affirmed an inequality of virtues and sins, but nevertheless taught one and the same justification apprehended by faith, the righteousness of Christ being imputed to believers. Thus, he notes, the Lutherans, using different premisses, reached the same conclusion as the heretic, Jovinian. In this respect, Downame either fails to appreciate, or misrepresents Bellarmine's argument: '. . . faine would hee have the world to thinke, that we are like to Iovinian, or the Stoicks, calumniating us against the light of his owne conscience. For he cannot be ignorant, but that wee doe acknowledge degrees of righteousnesse inherent and of the graces of sanctification. . .' He goes on, however, to correct Bellarmine's misrepresentation of Protestant views regarding degrees of reward.

51 Cameron, *Praelectiona*, ii, 328. The proportional rewards of Luke 19 contrast with the equality of rewards implied in Matt. 25.

52 John Davenant, *Dilputatio de iustitia habituali et actuali* ii (1631), (trans. J. Allport, 1844-6), 146-7.

53 Buckeridge, in Andrewes, *Ninety-six sermons* vol. 5, 278.

54 Lancelot Andrewes, *ibid.*, 45-6.

55 Kirk, *The Vision of God*, 138-9.

56 C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (1944 Clark lectures, published, 1954), 187-9.

57 Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* no. 508: Article 8 of the Errors of Eckhardt, examined and condemned in the edict, 'In agro dominico', 1329.

58 *Ibid.*, nos. 804, 836, 841: Session 6 of the Council of Trent (1547), Decree of Justification, c. 11; canon 26—'si quis dixerit justos non debere . . . expectare et sperare aeternam retributionem'; 31—'si quis dixerit justificatum peccare dum intuitu aeternae mercedis bene operatur'.

59 Bullinger, *Sermonum Decades*, Decad. III, Sermo. IX, p. 159'.

60 Tyndale, *Wicked Mammon* (1527), P.S. Works i. 63.

61 Lewis, *English Literature*, 188.

62 Tyndale, *Prologue to Numbers* (1530), P.S. Works i. 435.

63 Perkins, . . . declaration . . . whether a man . . . be in the estate of damnation or . . . of Grace, 14.

64 Tyndale, *Wicked Mammon*, P.S. Works i. 62, 98, 117; cf. *A Pathway into the Holy Scripture* (1525-32), *ibid.* 20.

65 Tyndale, *Pathway*, P.S. Works i. 21-3 and *Wicked Mammon*, *ibid.* 53-5; cf. Lewis, *English Literature*, 188.

66 Forbes, *Considerationcs modestae et pacificae controversiarum de Justificatione* (posthumously published, 1658; Library of Anglo-Catholic theology, 1850), 466-70. Cf. Davenant, *An Exposition of the Epistle of St Paul to the Colossians* (1627) (1831 edition, i, pp. 82—4): 'God himself is the reward promised to the faithful; therefore whilst they expect and regard an eternal reward, they expect nothing but God. But if we understand the reward to be not God himself, but the very act of enjoying God; then it must be answered otherwise, viz. that this reward is not to be so regarded that it should be the end for which we love God, but only that it should be the end of our action, i.e. of our affection and love: And this is allowed; because a less good is lawfully made subordinate to a greater, as to its end; yet the enjoyment itself of God at home is a greater good than faith or the love of God by the way; therefore faith and love are lawfully subordinate to that as to the end.'

67 Tyndale, *Wicked Mammon*, P.S. Works i. 64.

68 Bernard of Clairvaux, *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, XIV, 51; Downname, *A Treatise of Justification* (1639 edition), lib. 2, c. VI, xii, p. 79.

69 Ibid.

70 Martin Luther, *De servo arbitrio* (1525), W.A., 18, 694.

71 Ibid. 693—4; for the clearest modern account of the idea of 'natural consequence', see C. S. Lewis' essay, 'The Weight of Glory', *Theology* (November, 1941).

72 John Davenant, *Disputatio ii*, (trans. J. Allport, 1846) 85. Cf. Francis White, *A replie to Jesuit Fishers anstcere to certain questions propounded by his most gracious Ma<sup>m</sup>: King lames* (1624), 517, wherein he argues that good works 'may be used and referred to life eternal!, as dispositions and causes impetrant, and not as causes properly or condignely meritorious'.

73 Jean Calvin, *Institvtio Chrutianae Religionis* (1559), lib. I 11, c. 18, p p . 295-6.

74 White, *A sermon preached at the Spittle in London. Easter Monday, 1613* (1615), 77-

75 Tyndale, *Wicked Mammon*, P.S. Works i. 107; Bullinger also sees in the promise of reward the means by which God induces holy living: cf. his *Sermonum Decades*, Decad. III, Sermo IX, p. 159: 'Deus humano more praemijs nos alliciat, mercede trahat & in opere bono retineat . . .'

76 Cf. A. E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei ii*, (1986), and E. G. Rupp, *Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition* (1966) c. VIII.

77 Hugh Latimer, *Lincolnshire Sermon* (1552), P.S. 11 Lalimer (1845), 74; cf. his *Grinthorpe sermon* (1553) 140; also P.S., / Latimer (1844) his sixth sermon on the Lord's Prayer (1552), 410.

78 Philip Melanchthon, *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* (1531), iv. 193—4 and 355—6 in *The Book of Concord*, ed. T. G. Tappert, 133 and 161.

79 William Covell, *A Just and Temperate Defence of the five books of ecclesiastical policie* by R. Hooker (1602), in *Hooker, Ecclesiastical Politic and other works ii*, (1830). 493.

80 Davenant, *Disputatio*, ii. 106.

81 Melanchthon, *Apology*, 356—7, in Tappert, *Book ofConcord*, 161—2.

82 Richard Hooker, *A learned discourse of justification, works, and how the foundation of faith is overthrown* (preached, 1586; published, 1612); cf. *Works*, iii. (1830), 396; cf. *Syntagm. Confession*, pars. 106, Gen. 1654; 'Docemus bona opera dwinitus praecepta necessario facienda esse, el mereri gratuita Dei dementia sua quaedam sive corporalia sive spiritualia praemia.' Also Covell, *A Just and Temperate Defence*, in Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity and other works*, ii. 487: '. . . the heathen Masters of the Latin tongue, and the Fathers for antiquity, nearest unto those times, have used the word [merit] far in another sense than that whereunto the violence of some constructions have wrested it at this day. And Aquinas himself understandeth by the name of Merit, not a Work not due, which should deserve a reward; but a Work which mercifully, and by the goodness of God, a reward followeth.'

83 Buckeridge, funeral sermon, in Andrewes, *Ninety-six sermons*, vol. 5, pp. 282 and 286; cf. Cyprian, *Epist.* 73 (AD. 256). The word 'promeretur' is used by the Vulgate at Heb. 13: 16, about which Buckeridge is preaching.

84 White, *The Way to the True Church* (1624), *Workes*, 137.

85 William Perkins, *A Golden Cham* (1600), cc. 38 and 48.

86 *Ibid.*, c. 48.

87 *Ibid.*, c. 50.

88 Amyraut, *Discours de l'estat da Fideles apris la mart*, 230. The writer of *The Glory and Happiness of the Saints in Heaven* (1692) employs the same analogy.

89 Cameron, *Praelectiones*, ii. 331.

90 Cf., for example, William Malone, *A Reply to Mr James Ussher* (1627), 709—10 on Protestant belief in the equality of saints in heaven.

91 Downname, *A treatise of iuitification*, lib. 4, c. XIII. Ill, p. 260; cf. Bellarmine, *De Juitificatione*, lib. 3, c. XVI, *Opera omnia*, vol. 4, pp. 564—6. See n. 50.

92 Luther, *Das 15. Capiul der Ertten Epistel S. Pauli an die Corinther* (1534), W.A. 36, p. 652.

93 *Ibid.* 653.

94 *Ibid.* 653.

95 Francis White, *A Replie to Ietuit Fishers Answere*, 552.

96 Cf. Perkins, *Golden Chain*, c. 50.

97 Augustine, *Tractate 67.2 in Joamtit*, 67.2; cf. Gregory, *Exporitio in Librum lob, sive Moraliu Libri XXV*, lib. IV, 70.

98 Luther, W.A. 36, p. 653.

99 Amyraut, *Discours de l'estat des Fideles apris la mart*, 233—4.

**1992**

**John MacArthur Jr., Evangelical Calvinist Pastor and Scholar**  
**Different Degrees of Reward in Heaven and Punishment in Hell**  
**Tape, GC 70-13, titled "Bible Questions and Answers"**

**Question**

The Bible teaches that as a Christian, when we die we receive different degrees of rewards in heaven. And, I'd like to know if you could expound on those different degrees, but also, if there are different degrees of suffering in Hell?

**Answer**

I think "yes" to both of those questions. There will be varying degrees of reward in heaven. That shouldn't surprise us: there are varying degrees of giftedness even here on earth. To get a good glimpse of what heaven might be like, look at the church. From the moment of your redemption, the Lord put His Holy Spirit within you, and according to I Corinthians 12, He gave you certain spiritual gifts, right? He gave gifts to all of His church. They differ. What are gifts? They are varying capacities for ministry, varying capacities for service to God in His church. And I think the same thing will be true eternally; I think in eternity, we will all be given according to our abilities and according to our faithfulness--varying capacities for glorifying, serving, and worshipping God.

So, I think that it's going to be based upon two things. One would be the sovereignty of God, who will choose to give as He wills, as in I Corinthians 12, as He gives spiritual gifts in this life to the church, in whatever way He chooses to do that--that's a sovereign thing. And secondly, I think there is another component, and that has to do with faithfulness here. I believe our eternal reward will be in some way determined by the level of faithfulness we have had here.

Now, there are a number of reasons why we assume this. One of them was this conversation that Jesus had with the mother of James and John, who said, "My boys want to sit on your right and left hand when you come into the kingdom," and He said, "It's not for Me to give that; it's for my Father to give that." And there He said, there are going to be some people elevated. Somebody's going to be on my right, somebody's going to be on my left, and some others are going to be down the line here--It's not for Me to decide that; It's the Father. But, then He went on to say the criteria by which that is going to be decided is faithfulness unto death. So, I think the greatest reward in the future is awarded for the most faithful people, and that probably plays itself out in those who were faithful unto death: the martyrs, those who gave their life. You could give your life in living, as well as give your life in dying, couldn't you? And you know what I mean by that. You could make the self-sacrifice to the maximum extent even while you're alive, where you sacrifice everything else and be what Paul called a "living sacrifice."

So, I think there is definitely going to be, in heaven, varying levels of service, just as there are with the angels: there are archangels, and there are cherubim and seraphim, and principalities and powers and rulers, and all of those varying levels of angelic hierarchy. I think in eternity, we are all going to be sorted out within that eternal worshipping community and given varying capacities and varying responsibilities, which are determined by the sovereignty of God and our faithfulness here. That's why John says, "Look to yourselves that you lose not the things you have wrought, but that you receive a full reward." It is possible that you could be faithful, and the Lord be ready and prepared to give you a full reward, but by some sin in your life towards the end of your life, you could begin to forfeit and those things would be taken back off the list, added to the "wood, hay, and stubble" kind of thing, and your reward would be less.

What is it? Is it going to be some people with bigger crowns? No. We're not going to be going around saying, "Hah! I got a big one; you got a little one!" It's not going to be that. Whatever we get, I believe in the picture of the 24 elders, we take our crowns and cast them at the feet of the Lord. But, I don't believe they're going to be anything that's visible. I think it's going to be a capacity for serving God fully and completely. I don't think you'll have any sense of loss or any sense of missing anything, because each individual's

capacity will be reached to its maximum. But, I think what we want to do is have the greatest capacity for worshipping God, as His sovereignty would give us and as our faithfulness would warrant.

Now, in terms of the other, there will be degrees of suffering. Hebrews 10 says, "How much greater suffering will come to the one, who has trodden underfoot, the blood of the covenant, and counted it an unholy thing, done despite to the Spirit of grace." To put it simply, it means this: the more people know about the gospel and reject, the greater degree of suffering they will experience--when they trample underfoot the blood of the covenant. That is to say, the pagan who never heard anything about the gospel of Jesus Christ will not suffer the degree that the apostate would, who heard it all, understood it all, and blatantly rejected it all.

**1992**

**Larry E. Dahl, BYU Professor of Religion**  
**Degrees of Glory**  
**Encyclopedia of Mormonism**

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has an optimistic view of the eternal rewards awaiting mankind in the hereafter. Members of the Church believe that there are "many mansions" (John 14:2) and that Christ's Atonement and resurrection will save all mankind from death, and eventually will reclaim from hell all except the sons of perdition (D&C 76:43-44). The saved, however, are not placed into a monolithic state called heaven. In the resurrection of the body, they are assigned to different degrees of glory commensurate with the law they have obeyed. There are three kingdoms of glory: the celestial, the terrestrial, and the telestial. The apostle Paul spoke of three glories, differing from one another as the sun, moon, and stars differ in brilliance. He called the first two glories celestial and terrestrial, but the third is not named in the Bible (1 Cor. 15:40-41; cf. D&C 76:70-81, 96-98.) The word "telestial" is an LDS term, first used by the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon in reporting a vision they received on February 16, 1832 (D&C 76; Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines telestial glory as "the lowest of three Mormon degrees or kingdoms of glory attainable in heaven"; see also Celestial Kingdom; Terrestrial Kingdom; Telestial Kingdom).

At the final judgment, all except the devil, his angels, and those who become sons of perdition during mortal life will be assigned to one of the three kingdoms of glory. The devil and his followers will be assigned a kingdom without glory (D&C 76:25-39;88:24, 32-35).

**LDS Scripture Sources.**

Although the Bible contains references to varying levels of resurrection and heaven (1 Cor. 15:39-58; 2 Cor. 12:2), LDS understanding of the subject comes mainly through revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith. The first revelation dealing directly with this matter was received February 16, 1832, and is called "The Vision" (D&C 76). Concerning the circumstances of receiving this revelation, Joseph Smith explained: Upon my return from Amherst [Ohio] conference, I resumed the translation of the Scriptures. From sundry revelations which had been received, it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of man, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled. It appeared self-evident from what truths were left, that if God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body the term "Heaven," as intended for the Saints' eternal home, must include more kingdoms than one. Accordingly...while translating St. John's Gospel, myself and Elder Rigdon saw the following vision" [HC 1:245: see also Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (JST)].

Later revelations, especially Doctrine and Covenants 88, 131, 132, 137, and 138, have added information on this subject.

**The Celestial Glory.**

The Celestial Kingdom is reserved for those who receive a testimony of Jesus and fully embrace the gospel; that is, they have faith in Jesus Christ, repent of their sins, are baptized by immersion by one having authority, receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, and endure in righteousness. All who attain this kingdom "shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever" (D&C 76:62). There are, however, different privileges and powers within this kingdom. "In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood (meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage); and if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase" (D&C 131:1-4). "Increase" in this instance means the bearing of spirit children after mortal life (see *Eternal Lives, Eternal Increase*). Joseph Smith explained, "Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity...by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection" (TPJS, pp. 300-301). Latter-day Saints believe that those who attain the highest level in the Celestial Kingdom become gods, receive exaltation, and are joint heirs with Christ of all that the Father has (cf. Rom. 8:14-17; D&C 76:50-70;84:33-39;132:19-25).

There is no scriptural explanation of those who go to the two lower categories of the Celestial Kingdom except that they "are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever," ministering servants who "remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity" (D&C 132:16-17).

### **The Terrestrial Glory.**

The inhabitants of the Terrestrial Kingdom are described as the honorable people of the earth who received a testimony of Jesus but were not sufficiently valiant in that testimony to obey all the principles and ordinances of the gospel (D&C 76:71-80). Also, those of "the heathen nations" who "died without law," who are honorable but who do not accept the fulness of the gospel in the postearthly spirit world, are candidates for the terrestrial glory (D&C 45:54;76:72). In the hereafter, they receive the presence of the Son, but not the fulness of the Father. The glory of the Terrestrial Kingdom differs from the celestial as the light we see from the moon differs from that of the sun in glory. There is no mention of different degrees or levels in the Terrestrial Kingdom, but it is reasonable that there, as in the celestial and telestial kingdoms, individuals will differ from one another in glory (see D&C 76:97-98).

### **The Telestial Glory.**

Those who on earth are liars, sorcerers, whoremongers, and adulterers, who receive not the gospel, or the testimony of Jesus, or the prophets, go to the Telestial Kingdom. They are judged unworthy of being resurrected at the second coming of Christ and are given additional time in "hell" to repent and prepare themselves for a later resurrection and placement into a kingdom of lesser glory. During this period, they learn to abide by laws they once rejected. They bow the knee and confess their dependence on Jesus Christ, but they still do not receive the fulness of the gospel. At the end of the Millennium, they are brought out of hell and are resurrected to a telestial glory. There "they shall be servants of the Most High; but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end" (D&C 76:112). However, they do receive "of the Holy Spirit through the ministration of the terrestrial" (verse 86). Though differing in glory from the terrestrial and celestial kingdoms as the light we perceive from the stars differs from that from the moon and the sun, the glory of the Telestial Kingdom still "surpasses all understanding" (verse 89; see D&C 76:81-90, 98-112;88:100-101).

### **Opportunity For All.**

The Church holds that all mankind, except the sons of perdition, will find a place in one of the kingdoms of glory in the hereafter and that they themselves choose the place by the lives they live here on earth and in the post-earthly spirit world. Even the lowest glory surpasses all mortal understanding. Everyone is granted agency (D&C 93:30-32). All have access to the revelatory power of the Light of Christ, which, if followed, will lead them to the truth of the gospel (John 1:1-13; Alma 12:9-11; Moro. 7:14-19; D&C 84:45-48). Everyone will hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, either on earth or in the postearthly spirit world, and have ample opportunity to demonstrate the extent of their acceptance (D&C 138; cf. 1 Pet. 4:6). Those who do not

have a chance to receive the gospel on this earth, but who would have fully accepted it had they been able to hear it, and who therefore do receive it in the spirit world, are heirs of the Celestial Kingdom of God (D&C 137:7-8). They will accept the saving ordinances performed for them by proxy in a temple on the earth (see Salvation of the Dead). Christ, victorious and gracious, grants to all the desires of their hearts, allowing them to choose their eternal reward according to the law they are willing and able to abide.

**1992**

**Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, BYU Professor of Religion, Then CES Coordinator, Irvine, California**

**"Eternity Sketch'd in a Vision": the Poetic Version of Doctrine & Covenants 76**

**The Heavens are Open: 1992 Sperry Symposium on Doctrine and Covenants**

Byron R. Merrill et al., comps., *The Heavens Are Open: The 1992 Sperry Symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants and Church History*, p.141-152

Early 1843 was a busy season for the Prophet as he, along with his clerks William Wines Phelps and Wilford Woodruff, began reading proofs of a second edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. Joseph was also involved in preparing his personal history for publication, portions of which were already appearing serially in the *Times and Seasons*. In particular he was reviewing the period of February and March 1832 for Richards and Phelps as they began to compose this portion of his history. That period was, of course, the time when the Vision (D&C 76) was received in Hiram, Ohio.

The Prophet and his people also had cause at this time for great celebration. An Illinois court had advised Governor Thomas Ford that a writ issued for Joseph Smith's extradition to Missouri was illegal, and a federal district judge discharged the Prophet on 7 January 1843. While accompanying the Prophet home from Springfield, Wilson Law and Willard Richards sang A Jubilee Song in honor of Joseph's newfound freedom. A day of fasting, prayer, and thanksgiving was held in Nauvoo on 17 January to express gratitude for the Prophet's "release and delivery." Next day a group assembled at Joseph's home for "a day of conviviality and rejoicing, and [that] might properly be called a day of jubilee or release." A printed handbill with several songs, including one composed by Eliza R. Snow, was distributed, and the songs were sung to the Prophet. At the end of the festivities, Wilford Woodruff noted, "We returned to our homes rejoicing that [we] could again have the privilege of enjoying the society of our prophet seer." Two days later, W. W. Phelps presented Joseph a poem entitled *Vade-Mecum, or Go with Me*, as part of the jubilee celebration.

It was in this setting in February 1843 that a poetic version of the Vision entitled *The Answer* was first published, under Joseph's name, in the *Times and Seasons* as a rejoinder to Phelps's jubilee poem, *Vade Mecum*. The *History of the Church* states: "In reply to W. W. Phelps's *Vade Mecum, or 'Go with me,'* of 20th of January last [1843], I [Joseph] dictated an answer: [It consisted of the "Revelation known as the Vision of the Three Glories," *Doctrine and Covenants*, section lxxvi, made into verse]."

Naturally, the question of authorship of this poem arises. Did Joseph write it himself, or did someone else write it? Can we be sure the ideas communicated represent the Prophet's own expression?

It is certain that Joseph often depended upon others to produce material under his direction. At one time, he may have simply asked someone to compose an item for him; at another time he may have given someone the main ideas; in other instances, he was involved heavily in the final literary creation. Although Joseph's ideas are present in these documents, the particular literary structure (grammar, punctuation, spelling, and other aspects of style) often depended upon who was writing for him at the time.



Many of the editorials in the Times and Seasons were not Joseph's own words, although he took over as editor of the newspaper in March 1842. The Prophet indicated that only those editorials "having my signature" were those for which he was personally responsible. It is therefore highly significant that the 1843 poem ends, "Joseph Smith, Nauvoo, Feb. 1843." The first-person singular "I, Joseph, the prophet" in stanza 11 of the poem itself also seems to confirm his acceptance of the material, even if it had been drafted by someone else.

John Taylor, a close associate with Joseph at the time and the new editor of the Times and Seasons, indicated that in his most recent legal contest Joseph's defense attorney had made some comments about biblical poetry. For Taylor, the poetic rendition of the Vision was ample proof that "modern Prophets can prophecy in poetry, as well as the ancient prophets and that no difference, even of that kind any longer exists." He believed Joseph was responsible for the poem, and he emphasized "the ideas" as the most significant aspect when he stated in the published introduction to the poem: "The following very curious poetic composition, is at once both novel and interesting; for while the common landmarks of modern poetry are entirely disregarded; there is something so dignified and exalted conveyed in the ideas of this production, that it cannot fail to strike the attention of every superficial observer."

Whether W. W. Phelps, Parley P. Pratt or someone else helped Joseph compose the poetic rendition may be difficult to prove. On the other hand, that Joseph accepted it as representing his own ideas seems a reasonable proposition. It therefore can be argued that the poetic rendition can give us insight into how Joseph understood the implications of the Vision, or alternatively, as he was willing to reveal it to the Saints in 1843.

**The Answer  
to W. W. Phelps, Esq.**

**A Vision**

1. I will go, I will go, to the home of the Saints,  
Where the virtue's the value, and life the reward;  
But before I return to my former estate  
I must fulfil the mission I had from the Lord.
2. Wherefore, hear, O ye heavens, and give ear O ye earth;  
And rejoice ye inhabitants truly again;  
For the Lord he is God, and his life never ends,  
And besides him there ne'er was a Saviour of men.
3. His ways are a wonder; his wisdom is great;  
The extent of his doings, there's none can unveil;  
His purposes fail not; from age unto age  
He still is the same, and his years never fail.
4. His throne is the heavens, his life time is all  
Of eternity now, and eternity then;  
His union is power, and none stays his hand,-  
The Alpha, Omega, for ever: Amen.
5. For thus saith the Lord, in the spirit of truth,  
I am merciful, gracious, and good unto those  
That fear me, and live for the life that's to come;  
My delight is to honor the saints with repose;
6. That serve me in righteousness true to the end;

Eternal's their glory, and great their reward;  
I'll surely reveal all my myst'ries to them,-  
The great hidden myst'ries in my kingdom stor'd-

7. From the council in Kolob, to time on the earth.  
And for ages to come unto them I will show  
My pleasure & will, what my kingdom will do:  
Eternity's wonders they truly shall know.

8. Great things of the future I'll show unto them,  
Yea, things of the vast generations to rise;  
For their wisdom and glory shall be very great,  
And their pure understanding extend to the skies:

9. And before them the wisdom of wise men shall cease,  
And the nice understanding of prudent ones fail!  
For the light of my spirit shall light mine elect,  
And the truth is so mighty 't will ever prevail.

10. And the secrets and plans of my will I'll reveal;  
The sanctified pleasures when earth is renew'd,  
What the eye hath not seen, nor the ear hath yet heard;  
Nor the heart of the natural man ever hath view'd.

11. I, Joseph, the prophet, in spirit beheld,  
And the eyes of the inner man truly did see  
Eternity sketch'd in a vision from God.  
Of what was, and now is, and yet is to be.

12. Those things which the Father ordained of old,  
Before the world was, or a system had run,-  
Through Jesus the Maker and Savior of all;  
The only begotten, (Messiah) his son.

13. Of whom I bear record, as all prophets have,  
And the record I bear is the fulness,-yea even  
The truth of the gospel of Jesus-the Christ,  
With whom I convers'd, in the vision of heav'n.

14. For while in the act of translating his word,  
Which the Lord in his grace had appointed to me,  
I came to the gospel recorded by John,  
Chapter fifth and the twenty ninth verse, which you'll see.  
Which was given as follows:  
"Speaking of the resurrection of the dead,-  
"Concerning those who shall hear the voice of the son of man-  
"And shall come forth:-  
"They who have done good in the resurrection of the just.  
"And they who have done evil in the resurrection of the unjust.

15. I marvel'd at these resurrections, indeed!  
For it came unto me by the spirit direct:-

And while I did meditate what it all meant,  
The Lord touch'd the eyes of my own intellect:-

16. Hosanna forever! they open'd anon,  
And the glory of God shone around where I was;  
And there was the Son, at the Father's right hand,  
In a fulness of glory, and holy applause.

17. I beheld round the throne, holy angels and hosts,  
And sanctified beings from worlds that have been,  
In holiness worshipping God and the Lamb,  
Forever and ever, amen and amen!

18. And now after all of the proofs made of him,  
By witnesses truly, by whom he was known,  
This is mine, last of all, that he lives; yea he lives!  
And sits at the right hand of God, on his throne.

19. And I heard a great voice, bearing record from heav'n,  
He's the Saviour, and only begotten of God-  
By him, of him, and through him, the worlds were all made,  
Even all that career in the heavens so broad,

20. Whose inhabitants, too, from the first to the last,  
Are sav'd by the very same Saviour of ours;  
And, of course, are begotten God's daughters and sons,  
By the very same truths, and the very same pow'rs.

21. And I saw and bear record of warfare in heav'n;  
For an angel of light, in authority great,  
Rebell'd against Jesus, and sought for his pow'r,  
But was thrust down to woe from his Godified state.

22. And the heavens all wept, and the tears drop'd like dew,  
That Lucifer, son of the morning had fell!  
Yea, is fallen! is fall'n, and become, Oh, alas!  
The son of Perdition; the devil of hell!

23. And while I was yet in the spirit of truth,  
The commandment was: write ye the vision all out;  
For Satan, old serpent, the devil's for war,-  
And yet will encompass the saints round about.

24. And I saw, too, the sufficing and mis'ry of those,  
(Overcome by the devil, in warfare and fight,)  
In hell fire, and vengeance, the doom of the damn'd;  
For the Lord said, the vision is further: so write.

25. For thus saith the Lord, now concerning all those  
Who know of my power and partake of the same;  
And suffer themselves, that they be overcome  
By the power of Satan; despising my name:-

26. Defying my power, and denying the truth;-  
They are they-of the world, or of men, most forlorn,  
The Sons of Perdition, of whom, ah! I say,  
'T were better for them had they never been born!

27. They're vessels of wrath, and dishonor to God,  
Doom'd to suffer his wrath, in the regions of woe,  
Through the terrific night of eternity's round,  
With the devil and all of his angels below:

28. Of whom it is said, no forgiveness is giv'n,  
In this world, alas! nor the world that's to come;  
For they have denied the spirit of God.  
After having receiv'd it: and mistry's their doom.

29. And denying the only begotten of God,-  
And crucify him to themselves, as they do,  
And openly put him to shame in their flesh,  
By gospel they cannot repentance renew.

30. They are they, who must go to the great lake of fire,  
Which burneth with brimstone, yet never consumes,  
And dwell with the devil, and angels of his,  
While eternity goes and eternity comes.

31. They are they, who must groan through the great second death,  
And are not redeemed in the time of the Lord;  
While all the rest are, through the triumph of Christ,  
Made partakers of grace, by the power of his word.

32. The myst'ry of Godliness truly is great;-  
The past, and the present, and what is to be;  
And this is the gospel-glad tidings to all,  
Which the voice from the heavens bore record to me:

33. That he came to the world in the middle of time,  
To lay down his life for his friends and his foes,  
And bear away sin as a mission of love;  
And sanctify earth for a blessed repose.

34. 'Tis decreed, that he'll save all the work of his hands,  
And sanctify them by his own precious blood;  
And purify earth for the Sabbath of rest,  
By the agent of fire, as it was by the flood.

35. The Savior will save all his Father did give,  
Even all that he gave in the regions abroad.  
Save the Sons of Perdition: They're lost; ever lost.  
And can never return to the presence of God.

36. They are they, who must reign with the devil in hell,

In eternity now, and eternity then,  
Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quench'd;-  
And the punishment still, is eternal. Amen.

37. And which is the torment apostates receive,  
But the end, or the place where the torment began,  
Save to them who are made to partake of the same,  
Was never, nor will be, revealed unto man.

38. Yet God shows by vision a glimpse of their fate,  
And straightway he closes the scene that was shown:  
So the width, or the depth, or the misery thereof,  
Save to those that partake, is forever unknown.

39. And while I was pondering, the vision was closed;  
And the voice said to me, write the vision: for lo!  
'Tis the end of the scene of the sufferings of those,  
Who remain filthy still in their anguish and woe.

40. And again I bear record of heavenly things,  
Where virtue's the value, above all that's pric'd-  
Of the truth of the gospel concerning the just,  
That rise in the first resurrection of Christ.

41. Who receiv'd and believ'd, and repented likewise,  
And then were baptis'd, as a man always was,  
Who ask'd and receiv'd a remission of sin,  
And honored the kingdom by keeping its laws.

42. Being buried in water, as Jesus had been,  
And keeping the whole of his holy commands,  
They received the gift of the spirit of truth,  
By the ordinance truly of laying on hands.

43. For these overcome, by their faith and their works,  
Being tried in their life-time, as purified gold,  
And seal'd by the spirit of promise, to life,  
By men called of God, as was Aaron of old.

44. They are they, of the church of the first born of God,-  
And unto whose hands he committeth all things;  
For they hold the keys of the kingdom of heav'n,  
And reign with the Savior, as priests, and as kings.

45. They're priests of the order of Melchisedek,  
Like Jesus, (from whom is this highest reward,)  
Receiving a fulness of glory and light; As written:  
They're Gods; even sons of the Lord.

46. So all things are theirs; yea, of life, or of death;  
Yea, whether things now, or to come, all are theirs,  
And they are the Savior's, and he is the Lord's,

Having overcome all, as eternity's heirs.

47. 'Tis wisdom that man never glory in man,  
But give God the glory for all that he hath;  
For the righteous will walk in the presence of God,  
While the wicked are trod under foot in his wrath.

48. Yea, the righteous shall dwell in the presence of God,  
And of Jesus, forever, from earth's second birth-  
For when he comes down in the splendor of heav'n,  
All these he'll bring with him, to reign on the earth.

49. These are they that arise in their bodies of flesh,  
When the trump of the first resurrection shall sound;  
These are they that come up to Mount Zion, in life,  
Where the blessings and gifts of the spirit abound.

50. These are they that have come to the heavenly place;  
To the numberless courses of angels above:  
To the city of God; e'en the holiest of all,  
And to the home of the blessed, the fountain of love:

51. To the church of old Enoch, and of the first born:  
And gen'ral assembly of ancient renown'd.  
Whose names are all kept in the archives of heav'n,  
As chosen and faithful, and fit to be crown'd.

52. These are they that are perfect through Jesus' own blood,  
Whose bodies celestial are mention'd by Paul,  
Where the sun is the typical glory thereof,  
And God, and his Christ, are the true judge of all.

53. Again I beheld the terrestrial world,  
In the order and glory of Jesus, go on;  
'Twas not as the church of the first born of God,  
But shone in its place, as the moon to the sun.

54. Behold, these are they that have died without law;  
The heathen of ages that never had hope,  
And those of the region and shadow of death,  
The spirits in prison, that light has brought up.

55. To spirits in prison the Savior once preach'd,  
And taught them the gospel, with powers afresh;  
And then were the living baptiz'd for their dead,  
That they might be judg'd as if men in the flesh.

56. These are they that are honorable men of the earth;  
Who were blinded and dup'd by the cunning of men:  
They receiv'd not the truth of the Savior at first;  
But did, when they heard it in prison, again.

57. Not valiant for truth, they obtain'd not the crown,  
But are of that glory that's typ'd by the moon:  
They are they, that come into the presence of Christ,  
But not to the fulness of God, on his throne.

58. Again I beheld the telestial, as third,  
The lesser, or starry world, next in its place,  
For the leaven must leaven three measures of meal,  
And every knee bow that is subject to grace.

59. These are they that receiv'd not the gospel of Christ,  
Or evidence, either, that he ever was;  
As the stars are all different in glory and light,  
So differs the glory of these by the laws.

60. These are they that deny not the spirit of God,  
But are thrust down to hell, with the devil, for sins,  
As hypocrites, liars, whoremongers, and thieves,  
And stay 'till the last resurrection begins.

61. 'Till the Lamb shall have finish'd the work he begun;  
Shall have trodden the wine press, in fury alone,  
And overcome all by the pow'r of his might:  
He conquers to conquer, and save all his own.

62. These are they that receive not a fulness of light,  
From Christ, in eternity's world, where they are,  
The terrestrial sends them the Comforter, though;  
And minist'ring angels, to happify there.

63. And so the telestial is minister'd to,  
By ministers from the terrestrial one,  
As terrestrial is, from the celestial throne;  
And the great, greater, greatest, seem's stars, moon, and sun.

64. And thus I beheld, in the vision of heav'n,  
The telestial glory, dominion and bliss,  
Surpassing the great understanding of men,-  
Unknown, save reveal'd, in a world vain as this.

65. And lo, I beheld the terrestrial, too,  
Which excels the telestial in glory and light,  
In splendor, and knowledge, and wisdom, and joy,  
In blessings, and graces, dominion and might.

66. I beheld the celestial, in glory sublime;  
Which is the most excellent kingdom that is,-  
Where God, e'en the Father, in harmony reigns;  
Almighty, supreme, and eternal, in bliss.

67. Where the church of the first born in union reside,  
And they see as they're seen, and they know as they're known;

Being equal in power, dominion and might,  
With a fulness of glory and grace, round his throne.

68. The glory celestial is one like the sun;  
The glory terrestrial is one like the moon;  
The glory telestial is one like the stars,  
And all harmonize like the parts of a tune.

69. As the stars are all different in lustre and size,  
So the telestial region, is mingled in bliss;  
From least unto greatest, and greatest to least,  
The reward is exactly as promis'd in this.

70. These are they that came out for Apollos and Paul;  
For Cephas and Jesus, in all kinds of hope;  
For Enoch and Moses, and Peter, and John;  
For Luther and Calvin, and even the Pope.

71. For they never received the gospel of Christ,  
Nor the prophetic spirit that came from the Lord;  
Nor the covenant neither, which Jacob once had;  
They went their own way, and they have their reward.

72. By the order of God, last of all, these are they,  
That will not be gather'd with saints here below,  
To be caught up to Jesus, and meet in the cloud:-  
In darkness they worshipp'd; to darkness they go.

73. These are they that are sinful, the wicked at large,  
That glutted their passion by meanness or worth;  
All liars, adulterers, sorc'ers, and proud;  
And suffer, as promis'd, God's wrath on the earth.

74. These are they that must suffer the vengeance of hell,  
'Till Christ shall have trodden all enemies down,  
And perfected his work, in the fulness of times:  
And is crown'd on his throne with his glorious crown.

75. The vast multitude of the telestial world-  
As the stars of the skies, or the sands of the sea;-  
The voice of Jehovah echo'd far and wide,  
Ev'ry tongue shall confess, and they all bow the knee.

76. Ev'ry man shall be judg'd by the works of his life,  
And receive a reward in the mansion prepar'd;  
For his judgments are just, and his works never end,  
As his prophets and servants have always declar'd.

77. But the great things of God, which he show'd unto me,  
Unlawful to utter, I dare not declare;  
They surpass all the wisdom and greatness of men,  
And only are seen, as has Paul, where they are.



78. I will go, I will go, while the secret of life,  
Is blooming in heaven, and blasting in hell;  
Is leaving on earth, and a budding in space:-  
I will go, I will go, with you, brother, farewell.

**Joseph Smith**  
**Nauvoo, Feb. 1843.**

A careful study of the poetic rendition of the Vision demonstrates that it is more than a reworking of the message of the 1832 revelation; indeed, it is a one-of-a-kind commentary. Surprisingly, few gospel scholars have explicitly used this poetic writing to help interpret the Vision itself. That the poem did not receive much attention during the last half of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century may be because the early printed sources of the poem were not easily accessible. When the History of the Church was published in 1909, the text of poem was not included, a significant lapse in making the document available to a wider audience in the beginning of this century. It was not until N. B. Lundwall reprinted it in 1951 that the poem generally became available. Several important twentieth century studies neglect the poem altogether. A few more recent works make slight reference to it. A final group reproduce the poem in its entirety as an addendum but do not specifically cite it in their commentary.

The poetic version of Doctrine and Covenants 76 emphasizes several helpful points relating to the premortal experience; the Savior's mission and power; Satan and his kingdom; the telestial, terrestrial, and celestial kingdoms; and Joseph Smith's life and mission.

### **The Premortal Experience**

That individuals existed as premortal spirits either was not known or not understood during the first years after the Church's founding in 1830. Possibly the first hint of such a knowledge came in 1833, when Joseph received a revelation now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 93. Privately, as early as 1839, Joseph began teaching that there was a mother in heaven—the mother of our premortal spirits. By 1841, Joseph publicly declared, "Spirits are eternal." When the Book of Abraham was published in March 1842, the doctrine was further clarified (see Abraham 3:18).

The connection between a foreordained mission and the premortal life is stated positively in the poetic rendition:

I will go, I will go, to the home of the Saints,  
Where the virtue's the value, and life the reward;  
But before I return to my former estate  
I must fulfil the mission I had from the Lord.

(Stanza 1; emphasis added)

Joseph emphasized the doctrine of the premortal existence when he stated on 12 May 1844, "Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world, was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of Heaven before this world was—I suppose that I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council."

The Prophet expanded the Saints' understanding of the importance of Kolob (already known to the Saints as a great governing star—see Abraham 3:1-3) and the connection it had with the premortal council. A great "council in Kolob" was held before the earth was created. He wrote, "From the council in Kolob, to time on the earth" (stanza 7). The implication is, of course, that at least part of the premortal experience occurred in Kolob.

### **The Savior's Mission and Power**

Joseph revealed to the Saints the power of Christ's atonement. In the poetic rendition of Doctrine and Covenants 76, he proclaimed:

Wherefore, hear, O ye heavens, and give ear O ye earth;  
And rejoice ye inhabitants truly again;  
For the Lord he is God, and his life never ends,  
And besides him there ne'er was a Saviour of men.

.....  
... Jesus the Maker and Savior of all;  
The only begotten, (Messiah) his son.  
Of whom I bear record, as all prophets have,  
And the record I bear is the fulness,-yea even  
The truth of the gospel of Jesus-the Christ.

.....  
He's the Saviour, and only begotten of God-  
By him, of him, and through him, the worlds were all made,  
Even all that career in the heavens so broad,  
Whose inhabitants, too, from the first to the last,  
Are sav'd by the very same Saviour of ours;  
And, of course, are begotten God's daughters and sons,  
By the very same truths, and the very same pow'rs.  
(Stanzas 2, 12-13, 19-20; emphasis added)

Joseph Smith taught that the redemption of Christ was not limited to this world nor to a specific period of time. It reached backward in time and forward into the future, and just as it had crossed the oceans and continents during the first century to bless the lives not only of those at Jerusalem but also of the Nephites and Lamanites in America, the Atonement spread across the vastness of space. It was a final act that did not necessitate another sacrifice in the future.

### **Satan and His Kingdom**

One of the most startling passages from the poetic rendition of Doctrine and Covenants 76 is the knowledge revealed concerning Lucifer's position in the premortal life. Joseph wrote:

And I saw and bear record of warfare in heav'n;  
For an angel of light, in authority great,  
Rebell'd against Jesus, and sought for his pow'r,  
But was thrust down to woe from his Godified state.  
And the heavens all wept, and the tears drop'd like dew,  
That Lucifer, son of the morning had fell!  
Yea, is fallen! is fall'n, and become, Oh, alas!  
The son of Perdition; the devil of hell!  
(Stanza 21-22; emphasis added)

The 1842 publication of the Book of Abraham apparently taught that many of the premortal "intelligences" reached a spiritual stature of "godhood" (see Abraham 3-4). That these premortal spirits would eventually take a body was stated by the Prophet just a few months after the publication of the poem. In August 1843 Joseph stated, "But the Holy Ghost is yet a spiritual body and [is] waiting to take to himself a body, as the Savior did or as God did, or the gods before them took bodies."

That Lucifer held a position of prominence in the premortal life is certain, but here and only here does Joseph identify Lucifer's "godified state" before he fell to the earth to become the devil. Shortly after the publication of the poem, Joseph said: "In the other world [spirit world] there is a variety of spirits-some who seek to excel-and this was the case with the devil when he fell, he sought for things which were unlawful, hence he was cast down and it is said he drew away many with him" (some punctuation added).

### **The Kingdoms of Glory**

The central facet of both the poem and the original revelation is the series of visions of the eternal kingdoms of glory. The poem compares the kingdoms in an interesting fashion:

The glory celestial is one like the sun;  
The glory terrestrial is one like the moon;  
The glory telestial is one like the stars,  
And all harmonize like the parts of a tune.

As the stars are all different in lustre and size,  
So the telestial region, is mingled in bliss;  
From least unto greatest, and greatest to least,  
The reward is exactly as promis'd in this.  
(Stanzas 68-69; emphasis added)

### **The Telestial Kingdom**

To emphasize the final results of accepting and believing in creeds of postbiblical Christianity, Joseph noted that the telestial kingdom will include:

These are they that came out for Apollos and Paul;  
For Cephas and Jesus, in all kinds of hope;  
For Enoch and Moses, and Peter, and John;  
For Luther and Calvin, and even the Pope.  
(Stanza 70; emphasis added)

The 1843 poem underscores that the acceptance of creeds instead of covenants is the real issue. Joseph added to the original revelation a significant phrase:

They never received the gospel of Christ  
.....  
Nor the covenant neither, which Jacob once had;  
They went their own way, and they have their reward.  
(Stanza 71; emphasis added)

In addition to those already cited as being those who will inherit telestial glory, the Prophet added "hypocrites" to the list (stanza 60). That seems to refer to those pretending to be religious or believing in a false creed but whose hearts are far away from God. While it is a "lesser, or starry world, next in its place," the telestial kingdom is a place where the Lord sends "the Comforter [Holy Spirit]. . . / And minist'ring angels, to happify there"; it is a kingdom of "glory, dominion and bliss" (stanzas 58, 62).

An often repeated story associated with the telestial kingdom deals with something Joseph Smith was purported to have said: "The telestial kingdom is so great, if we knew what it was like we would kill ourselves to get there." Wilford Woodruff recounted a comment by the Prophet that may be the basis of that apocryphal story. According to Charles Lowell Walker, Wilford Woodruff "referred to a saying of Joseph Smith, which he heard him utter (like this) That if the People knew what was behind the veil, they would try by every means to commit suicide that they might get there, but the Lord in his wisdom had implanted the fear of death in every person that they might cling to life and thus accomplish the designs of their creator." What he may have meant by this statement may never be known, but we do know that the happy state of those who inherit the telestial kingdom is emphasized in the poem.

### **The Terrestrial Kingdom**

Those who receive a terrestrial glory seem to fit into four categories. The first are those "that have died without law"-the gospel law- and did not receive it in the spirit world. The Prophet further noted they are

The heathen of ages that never had hope,  
And those of the region and shadow of death,  
The spirits in prison, that light has brought up.  
(Stanza 54)

Another group is represented by those

. . . spirits in prison the Savior once preach'd,  
And taught them the gospel, with powers afresh;  
And then were the living baptiz'd for their dead,  
That they might be judg'd as if men in the flesh.  
(Stanza 55)

A third group

. . . are they that are hon'able men of the earth;  
Who were blinded and dup'd by the cunning of men:  
They receiv'd not the truth of the Savior at first;  
But did, when they heard it in prison, again.  
(Stanza 56)

The fourth and final category are those

Not valiant for truth, they obtain'd not the crown,  
But are of that glory that's typ'd by the moon:  
They are they, that come into the presence of Christ,  
But not to the fulness of God, on his throne.  
(Stanza 57)

### **The Celestial Kingdom**

By capitalizing the word Gods in stanza 45 of the poetic rendition of Doctrine and Covenants 76, Joseph may have attempted to be more precise regarding the stature of those who obtain the highest degree of the celestial kingdom: "As written: They're Gods; even sons of the Lord." In the original publication of the Vision in 1832, the word gods was not capitalized. Reorganized Latter-Day Saint apologists used the 1832 version, which uses the lowercase gods, during the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century as a means of countering the full implications of the doctrine of eternal glory. Thus, in this poem, which uses the uppercase Gods, Joseph may have attempted to reveal in a plainer fashion his intention.

In 1844 William Law, formerly a counselor in the First Presidency, formed a new church, which accepted the Book of Mormon and the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants as standard works but rejected Joseph Smith, claiming that he was a "fallen Prophet." In their newspaper on 7 June 1844, Law and his associates accused Joseph of teaching "false and damnable doctrines . . . such as plurality of Gods above the God of this universe."

Nine days later, the Prophet responded to their charges: "Oh Apostates did ye never think of this bef[ore] these are the quotations that the apostates take to the scrip[tures]-they swear that they bel[ieve] the Bible [and] the Book of Mormon [and etc.]." Joseph continued, "Go [and] read the vision [Section 76]-there is glory [and] glory- Sun, moon & Stars-& so do they differ in glory & every man who reigns is a God-[and] the text of the Do[ctrine] & Cov[enants]t damns themselves." For Joseph, the doctrine had always been present

since the 1832 revelation was first printed and if the apostates had only just discovered it, then they never truly understood the implications of the Vision.

Although the 1832 revelation used the phrase "kings and priests" to describe celestial beings, the full implications of such titles certainly were not understood by the Saints until Joseph began to reveal the ordinances of the holy endowment to the "Quorum of the Anointed" in 1842. The 1832 revelation indicated that these righteous Saints "are they who are the church of the first-born: They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things: they are they who are priests and kings."

The 1843 poetic rendition clarifies and expands upon several aspects of this description. Joseph indicated that the "church of the firstborn" is "of God." He also indicated what is meant to have the Father place into one's hand "all things" when he said: "For they hold the keys of the kingdom of heav'n" (stanza 44; emphasis added).

As early as April 1842, Joseph began introducing a theme regarding the "keys of the kingdom" in his public and private discourses. During an early Relief Society meeting he "exhorted the sisters always to concentrate their faith and prayers for, and place confidence in, those who God has appointed to honor, who God has placed at the head to lead [Church leaders]-that we should arm them with our prayers- that the keys of the kingdom are about to be given them." The "keys" referred to were given in the endowment, when the term took on greater meaning than before.

The poetic rendition emphasizes the stature of the celestial Saints and indicates that the spirit of promise can be sealed upon an individual by a living agent of God:

For these overcome, by their faith and their works,  
Being tried in their life time, as purified gold.  
And seal'd by the spirit of promise, to life,  
By men called of God, as was Aaron of old.  
(Stanza 43; emphasis added)

While the glorious doctrines of exaltation were being opened to them, Joseph cautioned the Saints:

'Tis wisdom that man never glory in man,  
But give God the glory for all that he hath.  
(Stanza 41)

### **Joseph Smith's Life and Mission**

Just a few days before Joseph published the poem, he stated, "I know what I say; I understand my mission and business. God Almighty is my shield, and what can man do if God is my friend. I shall not be sacrificed until my time comes-then I shall be offered freely." Contemporary sources confirm the Prophet's sense of mission and his knowledge regarding his death. Joseph began his poetic rendition:

I will go, I will go, to the home of the Saints,  
Where the virtue's the value, and life the reward;  
But before I return to my former estate  
I must fulfil the mission I had from the Lord.  
(Stanza 1)

A foreboding feeling is found in the words "I will go, I will go." This theme is emphasized again:

I will go, I will go, while the secret of life,  
Is blooming in heaven, and blasting in hell;

Is leaving on earth, and a budding in space:-  
I will go, I will go, with you, brother, farewell.  
(Stanza 78)

Early in his mission, Joseph felt confident of the protection God had promised him. In Nauvoo, he began to discover for himself and reveal to the Saints his mortal destiny-martyrdom. In two dramatic prophecies, the first dated 9 April 1842 and the second just a few weeks later, on 28 April, Joseph began to prepare the Saints for his early departure. During a funeral address, he reflected upon the sadness of parting prematurely from family and friends. He then stated:

"Some have supposed that Brother Joseph could not die, but this is a mistake. It is true there have been times when I have had the promise of my life to accomplish such and such things, but having accomplished those things I have not at present any lease of my life, and am as liable to die as other men."

The minutes of an early Nauvoo Relief Society noted:

"[Joseph] did not know as he should have many opportunities of teaching them, that they were going to be left to themselves; they would not long have him to instruct them; that the Church would not have his instructions long, and the world would not be troubled with him a great while and would not have his teachings."

These sources, along with many others, demonstrate the Prophet's foreknowledge of his impending death. The poetic version of Section 76 is another contemporary source that details Joseph's own sense of mission and his knowledge concerning his own mortal destiny. That a knowledge of his martyrdom made him somewhat melancholy on occasions is revealed in the emotionally charged phrase, "I will go, I will go, with you, brother, farewell."

### **Additional Insights**

The poem also includes a number of additional insights. For example, the Prophet clarified the phrase, "meridian of time," when it was noted "he [Christ] came to the world in the middle of time" (stanza 33). The destiny of those who had turned from the truth was emphasized in these words:

And which is the torment apostates receive,  
But the end, or the place where the torment began,  
Save to them who are made to partake of the same,  
Was never, nor will be, revealed unto man.  
(Stanza 37)

And the eternal nature of the gospel was reemphasized:

Who receiv'd and believ'd, and repented likewise,  
And then were baptis'd, as a man always was,  
Who ask'd and receiv'd a remission of sin,  
And honored the kingdom by keeping its laws.  
(Stanza 41; emphasis added)

### **Conclusion**

Over the Prophet's signature, a commentary on the Vision was published in Nauvoo. That poetic rendition of Doctrine and Covenants 76 adds to our understanding of the original principles communicated in the revelation as Joseph understood it or, alternatively, as he was willing to reveal it to the Saints in 1843. And, as the poem stated:

I, Joseph, the prophet, in spirit beheld,  
And the eyes of the inner man truly did see  
Eternity sketch'd in a vision from God,  
Of what was, and now is, and yet is to be.  
(Stanza 11)

### Notes

1. See Wilford Woodruff Journal, 1 Feb. 1843, Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives.
2. On 10 February 1843 Joseph reviewed the mobbing of 24 March 1832; see Joseph Smith Diary, 10 Feb. 1843, LDS Church Archives.
3. Joseph Smith Diary, 7 Jan. 1843; Wilson Law's poem, "All hail to our Chief! Who has come back to us in honor" was published in *Times and Seasons*, 4 (15 February 1843): 112.
4. Woodruff Journal, 17 Jan. 1843.
5. In *Times and Seasons*, 4 (1 February 1843): 96.
6. Woodruff Journal, 18 Jan. 1843.
7. See Joseph Smith Diary, 20 Jan. 1843. Following Joseph's death in 1844, Phelps changed the title and added several new stanzas; see Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2d ed. rev., edited by B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 193251), 5:253-54.
8. In *Times and Seasons*, 4 (1 February 1843): 81-82.
9. Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:288; see also "Joseph Smith's History," *Deseret News* (14 May 1856): 1-2. This entry was probably composed by Willard Richards after the Prophet's martyrdom. Exactly what is meant by "I dictated an answer" may be impossible to determine. What is significant, however, is that this date was chosen as the day of composition, not on or before 20 January, the same day Phelps gave Joseph his poem. The *Deseret News* version also included the poem, which B. H. Roberts did not include in the 1909 edition of the *History of the Church*, probably as a result of space constraints.
10. Several individuals have argued for Phelps's authorship; see *A Believing People: Literature of the Latter-day Saints*, ed. Richard H. Cracroft and Neal E. Lambert (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), p. 184; and Bruce A. Van Orden, "William W. Phelps's Service in Nauvoo as Joseph Smith's Political Clerk," *Brigham Young University Studies*, 32 (Winter and Spring 1991): 94.
11. Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:551.
12. John Taylor, "Ancient Poetry," *Times and Seasons*, 4 (1 February 1843): 81.
13. In *Times and Seasons*, 4 (1 February 1843): 82-85.
14. See N. B. Lundwall, comp., *The Vision; or, The Degrees of Glory* (Kaysville, Utah: Inland Printing Co, 1951), pp. 156-64.
15. See Hyrum M. Smith, *The Doctrine and Covenants* (Liverpool: Hyrum M. Smith, 1916), the precursor to the classic 1923 Smith and Sjodahl commentary; Sidney B. Sperry, *Doctrine and Covenants Compendium* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960); Roy W. Doxey, *The Latter-day Prophets and the Doctrine and Covenants*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1964); Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Doctrine and Covenants*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978); and *The Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual* (Religion 324-325) (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981).
16. See L. G. Otten and C. M. Caldwell, *Sacred Truth of the Doctrine and Covenants*, 2 vols. (Springville, Utah: LEMB, 1983), 2:27-28, 34; Richard Cowan, *The Doctrine and Covenants: Our Modern Scripture*, rev. and enl. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1984), p. 115; and Monte Nyman, "Six Visions of Eternity: Section 76," in the proceedings of the 1984 Sperry Symposium, Harken, *O Ye People: Discourses on the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: Randall Book Co., 1984), pp. 105-18.
17. See Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985), pp. 158-66; Michael J. Preece, *Learning to Love the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: MJP Publishing, 1988), pp. 152-63; and Larry E. Dahl, "The Visions of Glory (D&C 76)," in Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson, eds., *The Doctrine and Covenants*, vol. 1 of *Studies in Scripture* (Salt Lake City: Randall Book, 1984), pp. 295-305.

18. William Clayton's Private Book, 5 Jan. 1841, LDS Church Archives, as cited in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1980), p. 60.
19. Thomas Bullock Report, 12 May 1844, LDS Church Archives.
20. When the poem has been cited, it has usually been these two stanzas; see, for example, Edward Wheelock Tullidge, *Life of Joseph the Prophet* (New York: n.p., 1878), p. 361; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), p. 66; Truman G. Madsen, *Eternal Man* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1966), p. 34; L. G. Otten and C. M. Caldwell, *Sacred Truth of the Doctrine and Covenants*, 2:27-28, 34; and Richard Cowan, *The Doctrine and Covenants: Our Modern Scripture*, p. 115.
21. In Eugene England, ed., "George Laub's Nauvoo Journal," *Brigham Young University Studies*, 18 (Winter 1978): 176; see also *George Laub Journal*, 27 Aug. 1843, LDS Church Archives.
22. The phrase "godified state" has been changed to "glorified state" in several twentieth-century versions of the poem; see, for example, Cracroft and Lambert, *A Believing People*, p. 186.
23. *Woodruff Journal*, 14 May 1843.
24. *Diary of Charles Lowell Walker*, ed. A. Karl Larson and Katharine Miles Larson (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1980), p. 465; see also *Charles Lowell Walker Diary*, 19 Aug. 1877, LDS Church Archives.
25. It is evident that the use of uppercase and lowercase for many words was not consistent in manuscript and printed sources of the period, and it would be difficult to determine with certainty whether Joseph was directly responsible for typesetting the 1843 poem for publication. That it was intentional may be argued, however, because of a participant in its publication: Wilford Woodruff. He was working at the Nauvoo printing establishment during this period and two years later used the uppercase Gods for this verse in the first European edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* (1845); see *The Book of Doctrine & Covenants* (Liverpool: James and Woodburn, Printers, 1845), p. 267. This capitalization continued in the next five European editions (1849, 1852, 1854, 1866, and 1869). The 1844 American edition was reprinted in 1845 and 1846, unchanged, from the same plates. Eventually, the third American edition (1876) was prepared for publication by Orson Pratt, under the direction of Brigham Young. This edition changed the word gods to Gods following the lead of Wilford Woodruff's 1845 European edition; see *The Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Office, 1876), p. 248. Later, Pratt prepared a new European edition in 1879, and this edition's plates were used to print an 1880 American edition in Salt Lake City. Pratt retained the capitalization of Gods in both editions. From 1880 to 1920, the Church produced at least twenty-eight printings of this edition. The lowercase gods was reintroduced in the text of the 1921 edition.
26. See *Book of Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Cincinnati: Publishing Committee of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1864), p. 213.
27. *Nauvoo Expositor*, 1 (7 June 1844): 2.
28. *Bullock Report*, 16 June 1844.
29. Variations of this phrase were used by these Saints to describe their group. For a fuller discussion, see Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Jeni Broberg Holzapfel, *Women of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992), chap. 1, n. 9.
30. Section 91, *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints* (Kirtland, Ohio: F. G. Williams & Co., 1835), p. 228.
31. *A Record of the Organization and Proceedings of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo*, 28 April 1842, LDS Church Archives; hereafter cited as *Relief Society Minutes*.
32. *Woodruff Journal*, 22 Jan. 1843.
33. See, for example, Ronald K. Esplin, "Joseph Smith's Mission and Timetable: 'God Will Protect Me until My Work Is Done,'" in Larry C. Porter and Susan Easton Black, eds., *The Prophet Joseph: Essays on the Life and Mission of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1988), pp. 280-319.
34. *Woodruff Journal*, 9 Apr. 1842.
35. *Relief Society Minutes*, 28 Apr. 1842.

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## **Degrees Of Reward In The Kingdom Of Heaven?** **Journal of Evangelical Theological Society (excerpts)**

The lordship-salvation debate rages on. In the recent pages of this Journal, John MacArthur pursues his thesis first laid out in detail in *The Gospel According to Jesus*, considering it now in light of the epistle of James. One of the respondents to the article, Earl Radmacher, declares MacArthur's view to be one of three examples of contemporary evangelicalism's return to a view of authority akin to Roman Catholicism. A more balanced assessment, and one of the finest brief reviews of the debate, appeared already in an article by Darrell Bock.

Whatever else one thinks of arguments against lordship salvation, one ought to acknowledge their commendable concern to preserve a full-orbed Biblical doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone. But ironically it is precisely in those circles—largely but by no means exclusively dispensationalist in heritage—that rightly seek to preserve the strong Reformation tradition of God's freely granted justification apart from any human merit that often a contrary doctrine is also vigorously promoted: the doctrine of degrees of reward in heaven. Believers may enter into God's family entirely apart from their own good works, but the degree to which they will enjoy heaven is said exclusively to depend on how they live out their Christian life—to what extent they obey God's commandments and mature in the faith. In short, though few would put it so baldly one is left with justification by faith and sanctification by works.

In the twenty years of my adult Christian life I have grown progressively more uncomfortable with any formulation that differentiates among believers as regards our eternal rewards. Several recent, lengthy conversations with students and pastors who have been equally troubled about this issue and about some of its very practical consequences in ministry have heightened my concern. Joe Wall's new book, *Going for the Gold: Reward and Loss at the Judgment of Believers*, troubles me greatly. On virtually every major passage he treats concerning the topic of rewards I find his exegesis unconvincing. I will state my thesis at once and then briefly defend it. I do not believe there is a single NT text that, when correctly interpreted, supports the notion that believers will be distinguished one from another for all eternity on the basis of their works as Christians. What is more, I am convinced that when this unfounded doctrine of degrees of reward in heaven is acted upon consistently—though, fortunately, it often is not—it can have highly damaging consequences for the motivation and psychology of living the Christian life.

I begin with the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matt 20:1–16). The story is well known: Employees hired at many different times throughout the day all receive equal pay despite unequal work. I have recently defended in book-length form the hypothesis that many of Jesus' parables make three main points, one per main character. In my study of this passage I conclude:

The three main points which the three groups of characters [in this parable] suggest...all deal with the status of individuals before God at the final judgment. (1) From the earlier groups of workers, one learns that none of God's people will be treated unfairly (cf. v. 4—"whatever is right I will give you"); that is, no one will be shortchanged. (2) From the last group of workers comes the principle that many seemingly less deserving people will be treated generously, due to the sovereign free choice of God. (3) From the unifying role of the master stems the precious truth that all true disciples are equal in God's eyes. "All true disciples are equal in God's eyes."

One does not have to accept my theory for interpreting the parables to find similar statements among commentators on this passage from a wide variety of theological persuasions. Expositors debate whether the different laborers represent people coming to Christ at different times of life, in different eras of world history, or at different stages in Jesus' ministry. They do not agree as to whether those first paid represent Pharisees, who are excluded from the kingdom, or disciples, who are included. But almost everyone agrees that Jesus is teaching about a fundamental equality here among those who are truly his disciples. All are rewarded alike.

Consider the following catena of quotations from disparate sources:

In the parable of Jesus, the labourers who were engaged last show nothing to warrant a claim to a full day's wages;...in this apparently trivial detail lies the difference between two worlds: the world of merit, and the world of grace; the law contrasted with the gospel. To insist, as the parable does, that invitation, not justice, is the way of the kingdom radically subverts the kingdom of God as a reward for a faithful and just life.

The parent-God evidently wishes to relate to all the children with a radical equality...Once individuals and groups of people realize that they have their place in this community and that they can neither lose nor earn more of their acceptance, they begin to be freed from the need to compete with one another for what they most need in life.

Because God is so good, the principle of grace triumphs. The principle in the world is that he who works the longest receives the most pay. That is just. But in the kingdom of God the principles of merit and ability may be set aside so that grace can prevail. It is hard to see how one can take the imagery of the parable in any other way. In fact so clearly does this story demonstrate grace and equality that most nonevangelical commentators dismiss v. 16 at once as a redactional conclusion that misses the whole point of the passage. Yet there are at least three ways of understanding "the last will be first, and the first will be last."

To be sure, this maxim could be an attempt to reinstate a system of ranking people within the kingdom, albeit on a radically new basis. But it may also be a vivid equivalent to the more prosaic truth that all numerical positions are interchangeable. What is more, Jesus has probably repeated this refrain to tie the parable back in with 19:16–30, which concludes with nearly the identical words (v. 30) and in which "the last" are those excluded from the kingdom.

A similar use of this proverb appears even more plainly in Luke 13:30. In any event, no ranking need be seen among genuine believers. The imagery of the laborers in the vineyard also squares well with the more abstract concepts of "grace," "heaven" and "perfection." The vast majority of Scriptural texts that encourage people to prepare for judgment day refer simply to two options: eternal life, or eternal death.

Salvation is consistently said to be by grace, damnation by works (cf. esp. Rom 3:21–5:21 with 1:18–3:20 respectively). There is an important asymmetry here that preserves the sovereignty of God, giving him all the credit for redemption, alongside the accountability of men and women, giving them all the blame for being "lost" (cf. esp. 9:22–24).

There does seem to be Scriptural support for the doctrine of degrees of punishment in hell, according to the extent of one's conscious transgression of God's laws (see esp. Luke 12:47–48; cf. Matt 10:15; 11:22, 24; cf. also possibly Rom 5:13),<sup>15</sup> but precisely by this very lack of symmetry between works and grace we would not expect endless gradations of reward within heaven. And when one reflects soberly on the vast gulf that separates even the most righteous of believers from God's infinitely perfect standards it is hard to see how the differences among Christians that seem to loom so large in this life could figure significantly in God's eternal reckoning. The differences in elevation between Mount Everest and the Mariana Trench seem negligible when the earth is viewed from Mars.

The Biblical data concerning heaven, sparse though they are, seem in concord with these suppositions. The most extensive teaching passage on the topic is Revelation 21–22, and the clearest nonmetaphorical statement in these chapters is 21:4b: "There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain"—absolutely nothing to make one sad. But surely people would live with some unending sense of regret and sadness if they realized that they had not attained to as high a level of enjoyment or privilege in heaven as they might have, had their lives on this earth proved more meritorious. Theologians often sense this problem and dismiss it by assuming that we will not be conscious of such distinctions or that the great happiness of heaven will outweigh whatever small sense of regret remains. But these concessions, unsupportable by any

Biblical texts, give away precisely what the doctrine of degrees of reward is supposed to ensure: a powerful motivation for living a life that pleases God now. If such gradations are not perceptible or do not matter, why introduce them in the first place?

Other inconsistencies abound as theologians try to make sense of a doctrine of varying rewards for Christians. Just what will they involve? Suggestions include capacity for service, added responsibilities, degrees of bliss, an enriched relationship with God. The most honest writers admit they are speculating at this point, as with Millard Erickson, who nevertheless goes on to ask: “May it not be that the difference in the rewards lies not in the external or objective circumstances, but in the subjective awareness or appreciation of those circumstances?” In other words, heaven is really the same for everyone, but not everyone experiences it equally well. This explanation stands on its head the more popular view noted above that, subjectively, we all equally appreciate differing objective realities. One cannot have it both ways—though Erickson, no doubt unwittingly, tries, when he goes on to add that no one will be aware of these subjective differences anyway.

A final logical question could be asked: If the heavenly aspect of eternal life represents perfection, is it not fundamentally self-contradictory to speak of degrees of perfection? Surely theologians ought to reconsider a doctrine that involves an elementary lexical and conceptual fallacy.

But what of the Scriptural data? 1 Corinthians 3:11–15 clearly distinguishes between the qualities of believers’ works and their rewards on judgment day. Five key passages speak of believers’ crowns (1 Cor 9:25; 1 Thess 2:19; 2 Tim 4:8; Jas 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4) and are often interpreted to mean that some Christians will receive more of them than others. Revelation 4:10 seems to pick up on this imagery, depicting the twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God’s throne. Various texts identify people who are “least” or “greatest” in the kingdom (e.g. Matt 5:19; 11:11; 18:4; Mark 9:34–35; Luke 9:48). And numerous other passages are often cited. Does not Scripture itself force one to believe in eternal differentiations among Christ’s followers?

The crowns are most easily dispensed with. A majority of commentators agrees in each of the five instances that our texts are not at all talking about degrees of reward in heaven but simply about eternal life. In 1 Cor 9:25, Paul compares our perseverance to the athlete striving after an Olympic crown. But unlike a race on a track in which there can be only one winner, “we” [Christians] all should compete for “the crown that will last forever.” This “crown” is the same as the “prize” of vv. 24, 27, which one fails to receive if one is “disqualified” (*adokimos*). Paul is not concerned to compare first place with second or third but to contrast finishing the race with not finishing at all. In the words of Gordon Fee, the crown “is not some specific aspect of the goal but the eschatological victory itself.” Being declared “approved” (*dokimos*) or “not approved” (*adokimos*) is also the imagery of pottery fired in kilns to see if it will survive or not. Eternal life and death are at stake here, not gradations of reward.

A too simplistic understanding of “eternal security” has probably led many Christians to doubt that Paul could have seriously considered not “making it to heaven.” But true Reformed doctrine recognizes that saints are those who persevere. No Biblical text offers assurance of salvation for people who flagrantly repudiate Christ without subsequent repentance. Anthony Hoekema captures the sense of 1 Cor 9:26–27 quite well: “Only as he thus continued to discipline himself did Paul feel justified in claiming his spiritual security in Christ. He did not dare to claim this blessing while being careless and indolent in his daily battle against sin. And neither may we.”

“The crown of boasting” of 1 Thess 2:19 proves no different. It appears in synonymous parallelism with the “hope” and “joy” of eternal life itself, the pleasure of unending fellowship with other believers whom we have played some role in helping to nurture. As Howard Marshall explains, the expression is a Hebraism (cf. Prov 16:31), equivalent to “a crown to boast of” or rather “a crown to exult in”; from what Paul says elsewhere about the impossibility of men boasting of their own achievements before God (Rom. 3:27; 1 C.

1:29) it may be taken for granted that Paul is not looking forward here to any sort of proud display of his apostolic achievements before the Lord Jesus, but is rather thinking of the joyful exultation which he will be able to feel when the work which God has done through him (1 C. 15:10) is recognized. All true believers will experience some such exultation, no doubt in varying ways, but the passage says nothing of different crowns for different quantities of joy.

In 2 Tim 4:8 commentators debate whether *dikaiosyns* in the expression “crown of righteousness” is an appositional genitive or ablative of source. But either way it can hardly be a reward that distinguishes one believer from another, in view of the conclusion of the verse: “which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.” Surely one who has never wished for Christ’s return cannot have truly been his disciple.

In Jas 1:12 the “crown of life” almost certainly employs an appositional genitive, inasmuch as it applies to those who have persevered under trial, who are in turn taken to equal all who love God. Again, although not all believers always respond properly to God or to trials, all do so sometimes. In the larger context of James it seems clear that such predicates refer to all Christians, not just to some specific category of them (cf. 1:2–4; 2:5; 3:17–18; 5:7–11).

1 Peter 5:4 leaves fewer contextual clues to help us interpret the “crown of glory that will never fade away,” which faithful elders receive. But in view of the recurring pattern in the previous four passages it is probably most natural to take this crown too as a metaphor for eternal life. Every other reference to believers’ “glory” in 1 Peter confirms this presumption (1:7; 4:13–14; 5:10), so that the elders’ crown is nothing other than that which “all who share in the Christian hope” can expect.

The twenty-four elders who cast their crowns before God’s throne probably remain irrelevant to the topic at hand. The most likely interpretation of Revelation’s symbolism at this point takes must carry over to the latter. And both of these texts speak only of judgment day, not of an everlasting hierarchy in heaven.

There remain those passages that speak of individuals who are “least” or “greatest” in God’s kingdom. The crucial question here, however, is this: Which of the two temporal aspects of the kingdom is in view—present, or future? In Matt 11:11 (par. Luke 7:28) only the present aspect of the kingdom makes any sense. If “among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist,” and “yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he,” it cannot be because every Christian who has ever lived, however carnal, has proved more virtuous than John the Baptist. Rather, Jesus must mean that John, despite being the greatest of prophets of the OT age, lost out on an incredible privilege by not living long enough to see the new covenant inaugurated with the complex of events including Christ’s death, resurrection, exaltation and sending of the Spirit at Pentecost. Matthew 11:11 should thus be allowed to influence our understanding of similar sayings of our Lord.

In 5:19, those who practice and teach God’s commands are “great” in the kingdom while those who break them and teach others to do likewise are “least.” As an isolated saying this could be taken to refer to rewards in the eschaton, but it is at least equally appropriately interpreted as referring to those whom God deems more or less pleasing to himself now in this life even as they perform their teaching ministries. A careful reading of 18:4 in context confirms this suggestion. There Jesus declares that “whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” But in the previous verse he has stated equally forcefully that “unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” So the criterion for greatness is precisely the criterion for entrance. *Meiz\_n* is clearly a superlative used as an elative, as was common in Hellenistic Greek. The present tense “is” probably also is significant. As in the partial parallel in Luke 9:48 (“Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all—he is greatest”), it is status within the present aspect of the kingdom that Jesus has in mind (so also in Mark 9:34–35). Whereas the

world glorifies those who exhibit the character traits of machismo, God deems most worthy, now in this same world, those who remain humble and unassuming (cf. Matt 5:3, 10; cf. vv. 4–9).

Numerous other texts might be cited in defense of rewards, but none bears the weight of the doctrine. Matthew 19:28 promises the twelve that they will judge the tribes of Israel, but 1 Cor 6:2–3 reminds even the carnal Corinthians that they will judge the whole world and even angels.

It is hard to see the apostles' "privilege" as any greater honor, if indeed it is even limited to the twelve. The final Matthean beatitude promises a great reward in heaven to those who endure persecution (Matt 5:12), but this text simply repeats the theme of v. 10 in which the blessing for endurance is "the kingdom of heaven." The "great reward" of v. 12 must therefore refer to the kingdom itself rather than some special status within it. What is more, in the context of the beatitudes God's reward is more a promise of "future recompense for a present condition of persecution and reproach" than a response to piety.

The same must be said of the other Matthean "reward" passages. The reward that those who do their "acts of righteousness" before men, to be seen by them" (6:1) fail to acquire, in view of the parallel with hypocrites and pagans (in vv. 5, 7), must be heaven itself. The reward that those who appropriately minister to prophets, righteous people, and "little ones" (10:41–42) receive is reception by God (v. 40; cf. also Mark 9:41).

"Treasures in heaven" (Matt 6:20; par. Luke 12:33; Matt 19:21) appears in synonymous parallelism with "getting eternal life" (Matt 19:16) and "entering the kingdom of heaven" (19:23). In 1 Tim 6:19, those who "lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age" are coterminous with those who "take hold of the life that is truly life."

Several NT texts warn believers that they must give an accounting to the Lord for every deed performed (Rom 2:6; Rev 22:12) and word uttered (Matt 12:36; Luke 12:2–3), but nothing in the contexts of any of those passages suggests varying degrees of reward or the perpetuating of distinctions beyond the Day of the Lord. The purpose of Christians' standing before God's bar of justice is to declare them acquitted, not to embarrass them before the entire cosmos for all their failings (Rom 2:7; Rev 22:14; Matt 12:37a).

The contrast in each of these three passages is between the saved and the lost, not between two or more different kinds of believers.

In Matt 10:35–45 and parallels, James and John ask Jesus if they may sit at his right and left hands when he comes into his glory. Undoubtedly, in view of the standard Jewish doctrine of rewards they were hoping for the highest status possible in the coming age, though in view of conventional Jewish messianic expectation they may well have conceived of an earthly kingdom and temporal glory. Jesus' reply in 10:40 leaves the door open for some people to receive such a higher status, but tellingly Christ refuses to discuss that option, redirecting his disciples' attention to servanthood instead and employing the language of present rather than future greatness (vv. 43–44) already observed in Luke 9:48.

If I am wrong and the typical evangelical doctrine of reward is correct, that doctrine still may not be used as a motivation for "empirebuilding."

But fresh on the heels of the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (cf. the sequence of passages in Matt 20:1–16, 20–28) it is hard to imagine that Jesus is here reinstating heavenly hierarchies at all. The shorter parallel in Luke 22:26–27 seems more clearly to limit differentiation of status to the present age: "The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves." This synonymous parallelism identifies "the greatest" as those who are currently ruling over God's people with appropriate servant-leadership.

The parables of the talents (Matt 25:14–30) and the pounds (Luke 19:11–27) are often cited as teaching the doctrine of varying heavenly rewards. But this is to press the imagery of the parables beyond what even a controlled allegorization warrants. In each passage three servants appear. Two reflect faithful stewardship, one depicts gross negligence. In each case the solitary talent or pound is taken from the faithless servant and given to the first of the two faithful investors. But Jesus has drawn such careful parallelism between each of the first two servants, having their master praise them with identical language (Matt 25:21, 23), that it is impossible to conceive of the extra talent/pound as a reward that distinguishes the one faithful servant from the other. Either the economy of parabolic narrative has prevented Jesus (or the evangelists in their reporting) from repeating the same reward verbatim for the second servant, or else this detail is not to be allegorized at all but viewed simply as a necessary part of the story line in which the master must continue to keep his money distributed among those charged with its oversight.

And if the reward of a talent or pound may not be allegorized, then logically neither may the imagery of ruling over cities, which functions in the parable in the identical way as the master's redistribution of his money. The contrast in both Matthew and Luke is between the two faithful servants on the one hand and the unfaithful servant on the other—that is, between believers and unbelievers. No distinctions between categories of believers are introduced. To argue with Wall that the “darkness” of Matt 25:30, which is “outside” and in which there is “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” is simply a less desirable compartment in heaven defies all credulity.

Matthew uniformly applies such language elsewhere to hell (8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51). One might continue at some length. 1 Corinthians 4:5 talks of each person receiving his or her “praise from God” when the Lord returns. But “praise” more naturally suggests a temporary response than permanent differences in status. Philippians 3:14 finds Paul pressing on “toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” But in context that prize is no more or less than “to attain to the resurrection from the dead” (v. 11). As in 1 Corinthians 9, Paul wants to make sure that he perseveres in his faith so that he does indeed receive eternal life.

2 John 8 warns against losing “what you have worked for,” so that “you [or, more probably, “we”] may be rewarded fully.” The better textual reading, “we,” by itself cautions against a doctrine of individual rewards. John is anticipating the same reward as the Ephesian Christians. But even if “you” be accepted and interpreted as a distributive rather than collective plural (also less likely), the reward in context can be nothing other than seeing the work of the ministry at Ephesus endure against false, gnostic teachers.

From several angles the same conclusion recurs again and again. There is no unambiguous NT doctrine of varying eternal rewards for believers.

But it is time to conclude and to discuss some of the significance of this study. We live in a culture that grows ever more performance-centered with each passing year. Competition infects children's spirits from far too early an age—in sports, in school, at play. Adults face longer hours on the job with less job security and more performance-based evaluation (merit pay, commission, pressures for promotion, and the like) than was ever anticipated a generation ago when labor-saving devices were being heralded as ushering in the age of the thirty-hour work week with manifold opportunities for leisure and recreation. Not surprisingly—but nevertheless tragically—the spirit of competition, comparison with one another, and rewards on the basis of merit have overwhelmed many aspects of Christian living as well, both corporately and personally.

The NT manifesto of grace stands out in stark contrast, calling believers to exhibit the countercultural character traits of living apart from the basis of varying rewards, to provide much-needed relief from the symptoms of a sick society. Far too many Christians whom I have personally encountered think that God relates to them just like the taskmasters they have known in their families and at their work. If only they can be a little more obedient today, God will like them more and deal with them more favorably. Conversely, when they fail, especially when repeated failures plague them over a short period of time, they are convinced

that God will be quick to punish them. Even a cursory survey of Christian counselors and psychologists reveals how endemic this problem remains in North America.

The good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ ought to liberate believers from all such performance-centered conceptions of the Christian life. An important step in that direction would be to jettison this misguided and discouraging doctrine of eternal rewards that distinguish one believer from another. The important counterquestion may then be posed: What motivation remains for obeying any of God's commandments? Why not become a Christian and then expend as little effort as possible serving Christ? The very fact that the counterquestion follows naturally encourages us that we are on the right track: It is the very question Paul himself anticipated in Rom 6:1 after he articulated his theology of justification by faith.

The correct answer would seem to have at least two prongs to it. First, to continue following closely Paul's own train of thought, the person who comes to such a conclusion demonstrates that he or she has not truly appreciated or appropriated salvation at all. In other words, one of the main reasons for trying to live as good a Christian life as possible is to make sure that we do in fact persevere, so that we do not lose out on eternal life altogether (as in 1 Cor 9:24–27; Phil 3:10–14, discussed above).

Second, and even more fundamentally, proper Christian motivation for pleasing God should stem from a profound sense of gratitude for what Christ has already done for us. The complete salvation that he has already acquired for us leaves no room for further human merit. The person rescued from near drowning does not need to be given additional reasons for expressing deep and heartfelt thanks to his or her rescuer. Children who fully appreciate the sacrifices their parents have made to give them an expensive education or a secure inheritance will want to please them even apart from the promise of further gifts. In the language of the conclusion to the parable of the unprofitable servant: "So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty'" (Luke 17:10).

Nothing we could ever offer to God could begin to repay him for the immense gift of forgiveness he has wrought on our behalf through the death of his dear Son. John Donahue nicely encapsulates this truth:

cGod's justice is different from human justice. It forgives unpayable debts and summons the disciples to live a life of forgiveness to others as an expression of gratitude. To do otherwise is to risk the ultimate (i.e., eschatological) judgment pronounced on the unmerciful servant. God's justice is also not to be limited by human conceptions of a strict mathematical judgment where reward is in exact proportion to merit. Mercy and goodness challenge us, as in the Laborers in the Vineyard, to move beyond justice, even though they do not exist at the expense of justice.

God's ways are not human ways. Why then do we hear so little of the full-orbed Biblical doctrine of grace? I suspect it is because grace offends the sensibilities of the "natural man" that remain deeply imbedded in all of us. Grace by definition is not fair. As Donahue concluded, "God's ways are not human ways." If one of the primary uniquenesses of Biblical Christianity vis-à-vis other world religions is salvation by grace rather than works, then it is not surprising that even within Christianity the biggest danger to keeping the faith pure would be a reinstatement of works-righteousness, even if more subtly disguised under the garb of "sanctification by works."

As one of my students aptly phrased it, in most of the conservative Christian circles of which he had been a part the Christian life was like a free, trial membership to an elite country club: The first year is wonderful, but after that you pay through the nose.

There is at least one evangelical tradition, however, in which grace without any variation according to merit remains deeply imbedded. That tradition is the Lutheran tradition. Martin Luther often shied away from speaking of Christians even standing before God's judgment seat, preferring instead to call it his mercy seat.

It was a bar of judgment only for unbelievers. In his sermon on “The Sum of the Christian Life” preached in Wörlitz on November 24, 1532, Luther declared:

If we are ever to stand before God with a right and uncolored faith, we must come to the point where we learn clearly to distinguish between ourselves, our life, and Christ the mercy seat... The man who can do this will be the justified man. All the others operate with a feigned faith. They talk a lot about faith but they mix things together, as a barkeeper mixes water and wine, by saying if you live in such and such a way God will be gracious to you, and they turn the mercy seat into a judgment seat and the judgment seat into a mercy seat... Therefore, keep these two widely separated from each other, as widely as ever you can, so that neither can approach the other. See, if that is the way faith were preached, men would be justified and all the rest; a pure heart and good conscience through genuine, perfect love, would follow. For the man who through faith is sure in his heart that he has a gracious God, who is not angry with him, though he deserves wrath, that man goes out and does everything joyfully. Moreover, he can live this way before men also, loving and doing good to all, even though they are not worthy of love... This is the highest security, the head and foundation of our salvation.

No doubt Luther has overstated himself. This study has surveyed numerous texts in which the mercy seat is also a judgment seat for Christians. But it agrees with Luther’s profound insights concerning the motivation for Christian living. Judgment for true believers poses no threat for them precisely because whatever shame they variously experience at the great assize is then over and done with and does not persist into the new heavens and the new earth. The only threat is that one’s profession of faith might prove entirely vacuous so that one is excluded altogether from the company of the redeemed.

Here is the crucial contribution of those who today advocate lordship salvation. Ironically, those who seek most strenuously to preserve justification by grace may lead professing believers to think they are saved when in fact they are not. Grace will have been preserved—but not justification. God assures salvation only to those who presently believe in Jesus as Son of God (1 John 5:13). Claims of commitment, long since abandoned, may not be salvaged by any appeal to a category of “carnal Christian,” though Paul does use that term for those who continue to believe but remain unduly immature in their faith (1 Cor 3:3).

The major spokespersons for historic Calvinism and Arminianism agree that people commit apostasy and are lost for all eternity. They merely disagree as to what that proves about their prior state (cf. e.g. 1 John 2:19 with Heb 6:4–6). The greatest danger of the doctrine of degrees of reward in heaven is that it has misled many people into thinking that the very nominal professions that they or their friends have at one time made will be sufficient to save them, even if they fail to receive as high a status in heaven as they might have.

This is in no way to argue for works-righteousness. It is merely to remind us of the consistent Biblical theme that true, saving faith does over time lead to visible transformations in lifestyle and to growth in holiness (Matt 7:15–27; Gal 5:6, 19–24; Jas 2:14–26; 1 John 3:4–10). Without such evidence that God’s Spirit has truly taken up residence and begun to work within a person, Biblical Christianity is absent. But even with the help of God’s Spirit, no believers ever so approach the standards of God’s holiness that it would make sense to eternally reward them differently from their Christian peers.

May all evangelicals recover this precious legacy of the Protestant Reformation and do away with the depressing and damaging notion of eternal degrees of reward in heaven once and for all.

**1993**

**J. I. Packer, Calvinist Evangelical Professor of Religion**

**There Will Be Different Degrees Of Blessedness And Reward In Heaven**

**Mortality; Judgement; Heaven: hell**



**from “Concise Theology”**

There will be different degrees of blessedness and reward in heaven. All will be blessed up to the limit of what they can receive, but capacities will vary just as they do in this world. As for rewards (an area in which present irresponsibility can bring permanent future loss: 1 Cor. 3:10-15), two points must be grasped. The first is that when God rewards our works he is crowning his own gifts, for it was only by grace that those works were done. The second is that essence of the reward in each case will be more of what the Christian desires most, namely, a deepening of his or her love-relationship with the Savior, which is the reality to which all the biblical imagery of honorific crowns and robes and feasts is pointing. The reward is parallel to the reward of courtship, which is the enriching of the love-relationship itself through marriage.

**1993**

**Alister McGrath, Calvinist Evangelical Professor of Religion**  
**Whether There Are Relative Grades Or Ranks Among Those In Heaven**  
**Christian Theology: An Introduction**

**p. 484**

Other debates include the question of whether there are relative grades or ranks among those in heaven. The fifth century writer Theodoret of Cyrrihus argued that, since there are many rooms in the Father’s house (John 14:2) it followed that the relative fortunes and privileges of those in heaven are determined by their achievements during their lives. This doctrine of “status by merit” was continued in the writings of Ambrose, and echoed in medieval theology.

At the time of the reformation, this doctrine came into disrepute, partly due to the Protestant dislike of the idea “merit” in general. However, the notion of various degrees of blessedness seems to have lingered on in the Puritan devotional writings of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Thus in 1589 William Fulke recognized a variation of degrees in glory in heaven, but put this down to God’s gracious ordering, rather than any merit on the parts of those specially favored: “As the stars differ in their glory not according to their merits, but according to God’s gifts in their creation, so the bodies of the saints shall differ in glory, not according to their merits, but according to God’s free gifts in the resurrection.”

**1994**

**Wayne A. Grudem, Calvinist Evangelical Theologian**  
**Degrees of Reward in Heaven**  
**Systematic theology: an introduction to biblical doctrine**

p. 506:

**What Happens when we Sin as Christians?**

Moreover, when we sin as Christians we suffer a loss of heavenly reward. A person who has built on the work of the church not with gold, silver, and precious stones, but with “wood, hay, stubble”(1 Cor. 3:12) will have his work “burned up” on the day of Judgment and “he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire” (1 Cor. 3:15). Paul realizes that “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body” (2 Cor. 5:10). Paul implies that there are degrees of reward in heaven, and that sin has negative consequences in terms of loss of heavenly reward.

P 1110:

According to the amillennialist position, the present church age will continue until the time of Christ's return. Believers will also stand before the judgment seat of Christ, but this judgment will only determine degrees of reward in heaven, for unbelievers will be condemned eternally.

pp. 1143-1145:

### **The Nature of the Final Judgment**

#### **1. Jesus Christ will be the Judge.**

Paul speaks of "Jesus Christ who is to judge the living and the dead" (2 Tim. 4:1). Peter says that Jesus Christ "is the one ordained by God to be the judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:42; compare 17:3; Matt. 25:31-33) This right to act as judge over the whole universe is something that the Father has given to the Son: "The Father has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man" (John 5:26-27).

#### **2. Unbelievers will be judged.**

It is clear that all unbelievers will stand before Christ for judgment, for this judgment includes "The dead, great and small" (Rev. 20:12), and Paul says that "on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed," "he will render to every man according to his works ... for those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury" (Rom: 2:5-7)

This judgment of unbelievers will include degrees of punishment, for we read that the dead were judged "by what they had done" (Rev. 20:12-13), and this judgment according to what people have done must therefore involve an evaluation of the works that people have done. [Note: The fact that there will be degrees of punishment for unbelievers according to their works does not mean that unbelievers can ever do enough good to merit God's approval or earn salvation, for salvation from sin only comes as a free gift to those who trust in Christ: "He who believes in Him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the Only Son of God" (John 3:18).]

Similarly, Jesus says:

And that servant who knew his master's will, but did not make ready or act according to his will, shall receive a severe beating. But he who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, shall receive a light beating (Luke 12:47-48).

When Jesus says to the cities of Chorazim and Bethsaida, "It shall be more tolerable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you" (Matt. 11:22; compare v. 24), or when he says that the scribes "will receive the greater condemnation" (Luke 20:47), he implies that there will be degrees of punishment on the last day. In fact, every wrong deed done will be remembered, and taken account of in the punishment that is meted out on that day, because "on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter" (Matt. 12:34). Every word spoken, every deed done will be brought to light and receive judgment: "For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil" (Eccl 12:14).

As these verses indicate, on the Day of Judgment the secrets of people's hearts will be revealed and made public. Paul speaks of the day when "God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus" (Rom 2:16; compare Luke 8:17). "Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops" (Luke 12:2-3)

#### **Believers will be judged.**

In writing to Christians Paul says, "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of God ... Each of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10, 12). He also tells the Corinthians, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10; cf. Rom. 2:6-7; Rev. 20:12, 15) In addition, the picture of the

final judgment in Matthew 15: 31-46 includes Christ separating the sheep from the goats, and rewarding those who receive his blessing.

It is important to realize that this judgment of believers will be a judgment to evaluate and bestow various degrees of reward (see below), but the fact that they will face such a judgment should never cause believers to fear that they will be eternally condemned. Jesus says, “He who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life” (John 5:24). Here “judgment” must be understood in the sense of eternal condemnation and death, since it is contrasted with passing from death into life. At the day of final judgment more than at any other time, it is of utmost importance that “there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). Thus the Day of Judgment can be portrayed as one in which believers are rewarded and unbelievers are punished:

The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, for rewarding your servants the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name (Rev. 11:18).

Will all the secret words and deeds of believers, and all their sins, also be revealed on that last day? It seems that this is so, because in writing to believers about the Day of Judgment, he says that when the Lord comes he will “bring to light the things now hidden in darkness, and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then every man will receive his recommendation from God.” (1 Cor. 4:5, compare Col. 3:25). Certainly this fact should provide a motive for Godly living, and Paul uses it that way in 2 Cor. 5:9-10: “We make it our aim to please him for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.”

But it should not cause terror or alarm on the part of believers, because even sins that are made public on that day will be made public as sins that have been forgiven, and therefore they will be the occasion for giving glory to God for the richness of His grace.

Scripture also teaches that there will be degrees of reward for believers. Paul encourages the Corinthians to be careful how they build on the church on the foundation that has already been laid ... Jesus Christ himself:

If anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will be made manifest; for the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of works each one has done. IF the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire” (1 Cor. 3:12-15).

Paul similarly says of Christians that “we must all appear before the judgment –seat of Christ, that each one may receive that which is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad” (2 Cor.5:10)., again implying degrees of reward for what we have done in this life.

Likewise, in the parable of the pounds, the one who made ten pounds more was told, “You shall have authority over ten cities,” and the one whose pound had made five pounds more was told, “and you are to be over five cities” (Luke 19:17, 19). Many other passages likewise teach or imply degrees of reward for believers at the final judgment. [Note: see also Dan. 12:2; Matt. 6:20-21; 19:21; Luke 6:22-23; 12:18-21,32, 42-48; 14:13-14; 1 Cor. 3:8; 9:18; 13:3; 15:19, 29-32, 58; Gal. 6:9-10; Eph. 6:7-8; Col. 3:23-24; 1 Tim. 6:18; Heb. 10:34, 35; 11:1, 14-16, 26, 35; 1 Pet. 1:4; 2 John 8; Rev. 11:18; 22:12; cf. also Matt. 5:46; 6:2-6, 16-18, 24; Luke 6:35.]

But5 we must guard against misunderstanding here: even though there will be degrees of reward in heaven, the joy of each person will be full and complete for eternity. If we ask how this can be when there are different degrees of reward, it simply shows that our perception of happiness is based on the assumption that happiness depends on what we possess or the status or power that we have. In actuality, however, our true happiness consists in delighting in God and rejoicing in the status and recognition that he has given us. The

foolishness of thinking that only those who have been highly rewarded and given great status will be fully happy in heaven, is seen when we realize that, no matter how great a reward we are given, there will always be those with greater rewards, or who have higher status and authority, including the Apostles, the heavenly creatures, and Jesus Christ and God Himself. Therefore, if high status were essential for people to be fully happy, no one but God would be fully happy in heaven, which is certainly an incorrect idea.

Moreover, those with greater reward and honor in heaven, those nearest the throne of God, delight not in their status, but only in the privilege of falling down before God's throne to worship him (see Rev. 4:10-11).

It would be morally and spiritually beneficial for us to have a greater consciousness of this clear New Testament teaching on degrees of heavenly reward. Rather than making us competitive with one another, it would cause us to help and encourage one another, that all may increase our heavenly reward; for God has an infinite capacity to bring blessings to us all and we are all members of one another (cf. 1 Cor:12:26-27). We would more eagerly heed the admonition of the author of Hebrews: "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love ad good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more ass you see the day drawing near" (Heb. 10:24-25). Moreover, in our own lives, a heartfelt seeking of future heavenly reward would motivate us to work wholehearted for the Lord at whatever tasks he calls us to, whether great or small, paid ore unpaid. It would also make use long for his approval rather than for wealth or success. It would motivate us to work at building up the church on the one foundation, Jesus Christ (1Cor. 3:10-15).

**1994**

**John Brooke, Non-LDS Professor of Religious Studies**

**Chapter 8: The Mysteries Defined (Including Section 76)**

**The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644-1844**

**Chapter 8: The Mysteries Defined**

They are they who are the church of the Firstborn. They are they into whose hands that Father has given all things - They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory; And are priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son. Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God —Vision of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon at Hiram, Ohio, February 16, 1831

In the spring of 1830, Joseph Smith offered himself to the people of the Burned-over District as a prophet of a new dispensation. He was restoring not only the true church but the age of miracles, an age that orthodox religion assumed lay closed in the antiquity of the prophets. In this assertion, Smith not only placed himself in the same posture toward orthodoxy taken by earlier radical and hermetic sectarians but began to replicate the core of their doctrine. Mormonism powerfully rearticulated the fusion of hermetic divinization and millenarian restoration first forged in the fires of the Radical Reformation and the English Revolution.

The restoration of a miraculous connection between heaven and earth, between spirit and matter, was the most powerful attraction drawing adherents to Smith's new church. But miraculous, spiritual powers were a dangerous commodity, constantly in danger of slipping out of control. The first nine years of the history of the Mormon church brought important doctrinal developments, as Joseph Smith began to institutionalize the Mormon path to the divine mysteries. It also brought explosive episodes of conflict and dissent, as people attracted to a church of miracles demanded the right to directly experience the numinous connection between spirit and matter. During the 1830s, periods of relative calm and doctrinal development were twice disrupted by strife—reminiscent of the dyadic conflicts of Nephites and

Lamanites in the Book of Mormon—ending in the near dissolution of the Mormon movement in Missouri in 1839.

This chapter and the next detail the emergence of Mormon doctrine over this decade, looking in sequence at what may be called purities and dangers, against the background of the political strife buffeting the new church. The following two chapters carry the story through a final cycle of doctrinal construction, again moving from purity to danger, with the framing of a classic Mormon cosmology of plural marriage and ritual divinization at Nauvoo, Illinois, between 1841 and the Mormon exodus for the Great Basin in 1846.

The miraculous was very much on Joseph Smith's mind in the final months of the transcribing of the Book of Mormon. In the Third Book of Nephi Christ is described as a master alchemist in powerful imagery drawn from the Book of Malachi: "Like a refiner's fire," he would "purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver."<sup>2</sup> After the climactic battle at the Hill Cumorah, the surviving prophet, Moroni, spoke in similar language of the righteous surviving "the fiery furnace" and the final day when "the elements shall melt with fervent heat." He also spoke of "a God of miracles" continuing to act in palpable ways in the world. "And who shall say that Jesus Christ did not do many mighty miracles? .. And if there were miracles wrought then, why has God ceased to be a God of miracles and yet be an unchangeable Being?" Smith's God conformed to a uniformitarian principle; his powers in the present day were no different than in distant antiquity. And one of his powers was that of acting through human intermediaries. As promised in the biblical Book of Mark, righteous believers would "cast out devils" and "speak with new tongues"; they would "take up serpents" and "lay hands on the sick."<sup>3</sup>

The miraculous was also central in Joseph Smith's imagination when, on March 26, 1830, between notices of state lotteries, bank payments, and canal tolls, he advertised the Book of Mormon in the *Wayne Sentinel*. The book was "written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of Prophecy and Revelation"; it was "to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel how great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever." The Lord spoke through the Book of Mormon.<sup>4</sup>

This God of miracles would set the immediate agenda for the early Mormon church. News of miraculous events spurred conversion among a distinctly prepared people, hungering for a religion of immanent divine presence. The first miracle was the witnessing of the Golden Plates, the Urim and Thummim, the sword of Laban, and the directors that Smith had found in the Hill Cumorah. In June 1819 Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery moved from Pennsylvania to the town of Fayette in Seneca County, where on the Whitmer family farm they finished translating the Book of Mormon. During this summer Smith saw the necessity of sharing his charisma with a selection of his growing audience. The first witnesses were Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. After fervent prayer, Cowdery and Whitmer believed they saw an angel descend on a light bearing the plates, and confirming the authenticity of their translation. Harris did not claim to have had the vision but accepted that Smith had seen the angel. Several days later eight men, four Whitmer brothers and their brother-in-law Hiram Page, with Joseph Smith Sr. and his sons Hyrum and Samuel, were shown the plates, which they "did handle with our hands." "Seen and hefted," the plates were taken up to heaven by an angel.<sup>9</sup>

The account of Smith's visions and the revelations of the Book of Mormon, supported by the testimony of the witnesses, worked to bring conversions in the Whitmers' circle in Fayette and among the money-digging families in Manchester. These early believers assembled at the Whitmers' farm on April 6, 1830, to participate in the formal organization of the church. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had baptized each other in the Susquehanna River in May 1829; they and other Smiths, the Whitmers, Martin Harris, and Orrin Porter Rockwell, a close friend of Joseph's among the money-diggers, were baptized on April 6, followed by a dozen others on subsequent Sundays."

Another miracle would bring conversions in Colesville, on the Susquehanna River, when Joseph Smith returned the next month to the scene of his divining adventures of t 8z6. Gathering prayer meetings at Joseph Knight's, Smith's preaching had a powerful effect on Knight's son Newell. Under the stress of these meetings, Newell "began to feel uneasy" and, returning to his house, fell into convulsions. "His visage and limbs were distorted and twisted in every shape and appearance possible to imagine; and finally he was caught up off the floor and tossed about most fearfully." Smith was called to "cast the devil out of him," which immediately happened; Newell later testified in court that he saw the devil leave him, "a spiritual sight and spiritually discerned." With this miraculous exorcism Newell began to have visions; he and many witnesses claimed that he was levitated by "the Spirit of the Lord" off the floor to the beams of the dwelling house. Many in the Knight neighborhood — including Aaron Culver, nephew of the visionary Nathan—were converted to the new faith in the following days and weeks.<sup>7</sup>

The exorcism and levitation of Newell Knight would be the first of many miraculous manifestations of divine power in Mormon lore." The core of Smith's message was that of a restoration, hut Smith was restoring not simply the apostolic church but the spiritual powers of ancient prophets to men acting as divine agents in a Kingdom of God. Smith's God was a God of miracles, but so too were his agents, his priests, men of miracles. Spiritual power descended from the heavens, hut it was directed through divinely anointed humans, bearing powers not far removed from the diviner's touch. Here the supernatural powers of the pre-Reformation Catholic church — and the Muggletonian prophets — were being restored, conditioning and deflecting the power of the Calvinist God of the orthodox churches. In the years to come this conditioning of divine power would be amplified greatly, as Mormon priests assumed higher and higher powers.

A church of miracles attracted a particular kind of convert. As in Vermont, hermetic culture provided an important background for the New York converts. More than half came from towns with Masonic lodges or divining histories, and about a third came from towns with Methodist societies." Unlike in Vermont, settlement in Seneca County from Pennsylvania meant that the large body of converts from Fayette (at least twenty-one people) were exposed to Pennsylvania German culture, institutionalized in four German churches, including the Zion church that the Whitmers had attended.[<sup>1</sup> Diedrich Willers, the minister of this church, noted that the Whitmers had moved between German Reformed services and the Mennonites, Methodists, and Baptists. In a summary of the Mormon converts — who were calling themselves "The True Followers of Christ" — he noted that most "were apparently General Baptists," a comment that carries us back to the sectarian axis linking southeast New England and southeast Pennsylvania." This may have been more of a broad disposition rather than an institutional presence in the Burned-over District, but the General Baptist notion of a universal redemption comported well with subsequent Mormon doctrine.

As we have seen, many of the Mormon converts had long been involved in the magical spiritualism of divining and exposed to belief in witchcraft. Certainly they were hostile to the Calvinist doctrine of election and to the doctrine of original sin advanced by Calvinists and Methodists alike. They often came from families of "Seekers" spinning off from sectarian communities, refusing to accept the authority and legitimacy of existing denominations, hopeful for the restoration of the "ancient order of things." Often they came from experiences of poverty and hardship, finding release and empowerment in a message of millenarian restoration and in a church where there would be no educated and salaried ministry.<sup>12</sup> Smith's visions, his translated text, his witnesses, and his miracles all provided the seal of prophetic authority." Many of these early followers, however, had quite different visions of the restoration than did the prophet, visions much closer to biblical sources than Smith's divergences." Such converts would not be easy for a young prophet to control. His followers were not content to leave spiritual power in his hands alone; they demanded the right to touch the world of spirit. For the next decade Smith would have to struggle with his people over his authority and the terms of a broader sharing of charismatic power.)

The first explicit challenge came in July 1830, when Oliver Cowdery and the Whitmers objected that one of his revelations governing admission to baptism contradicted the Book of Mormon and came close to the orthodox requirement of relating an experience of grace to a minister. By the following September Cowdery and the Whitmers were beginning to accept revelations made by Hiram Page through the use of a seer-stone and written out on "a roll of papers." But if anyone with a seer-stone could claim the power of revelation, the church was doomed to chaos and dissolution. At a conference called later that month, with Newell Knight at his side, Smith questioned Page's authority to receive revelation and managed to assert his own supreme authority. After considerable debate, the conference announced that Smith alone was "to receive and write Revelations and Commandments for this Church." The vote was confirmed by a revelation that God had given Smith "the keys to the mysteries, and the revelations which are sealed." Page renounced his stone, just as Smith had set aside his stone, and all claims to the Urim and Thummim, a year before. Rather than from magic artifacts, revelation would rise from prophetic authority. With this break with the popular magic of Mormon beginnings, an authority structure began to take shape in the church.<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, Smith announced new doctrines that served to deflect attention from the challenge of the seer-stone dissenters. A few days before the conference he produced a powerfully worded revelation on the imminence of the millennium, a revelation that ended with the comforting universalist note that children were innocent of original sin. Within months he would totally abandon the doctrine of original sin, contradicting passages in the Book of Mormon.<sup>17</sup> But in the fall of 1830 the millennial thrust was most important, establishing the westward dynamic of Mormon history for decades to come: the restored kingdom was their refuge from a coming millennial destruction.<sup>16</sup> The July revelation on the "keys to the mysteries" also ordered Oliver Cowdery and Hiram Page, later replaced by David Whitmer, to begin a western missionary journey to convert the Lamanites (the Indians) and it announced that the millennial city of Zion, the New Jerusalem, would be built "on the borders by the Lamanites."<sup>19</sup>

The journey of the western missionaries would open a new chapter in Mormon history, that centering on Kirtland, Ohio. The missionaries set out in October, with western Missouri as their intended goal. But on the

way they were diverted to northeast Ohio, where one of the missionaries, Parley Pratt, knew they would find a prepared people. Pratt, born in a Baptist neighborhood in Canaan, New York, had spent several years in the frontier settlements, in search of work, a competency, and the true primitive gospel. Settling in Ohio, he found this gospel in the summer of 1829 in the preaching of Sidney Rigdon of Mentor. Once a Baptist preacher, and then a Campbellite restorationist, Rigdon broke with Alexander Campbell in the fall of 1830, holding that a restoration involved not only the apostolic church but "supernatural gifts and miracles." In August 1830 Pratt had journeyed east and had been converted by the Mormon bible; three months later he led the missionaries back to Mentor to see Rigdon. Impressed by their announcement of the miracles of the Mormon emergence, Rigdon visited the Smith household in Manchester, New York, that December and was converted. With anti-Mormon sentiment rising in New York, Rigdon offered the opportunity to move the Mormon communities west to Ohio, where he had established his former Campbellite following into a communal society based in Mentor and Kirtland. The following January the first westward Mormon exodus began.<sup>20</sup>

The conversion of Sidney Rigdon was of critical importance to the new movement. Rigdon became a close associate of Smith, and he offered both a field of hundreds of potential converts among the restorationists of Ohio's Western Reserve and property upon which to build a new start. The new start began almost immediately, with the emigration of the New York Saints to Ohio and the conversion of many of Rigdon's followers. Once again Smith faced challenges to his monopoly over charismatic power. During the spring of 1831 many among the new Ohio converts experienced spiritual events, seeing "wonderful lights in the air and on the ground," falling into fits, speaking in tongues, and claiming revelations and visions. In May 1831 Smith was able to suppress these "false spirits" with a new revelation, but the problem of an orderly sharing of charisma remained to be solved.<sup>21</sup>

The eventual success of Mormonism lay in the embedding of a shared charisma in the institutional fabric of the church. Joseph Smith would not maintain an absolute monopoly over spiritual power but rather doled it out in an evolving system of inclusive priesthoods, governed by an increasingly elaborate hierarchy. Church institutions began to take shape in 1829 and grew in complexity over the early 1830s both as membership grew and as Smith negotiated his way through a series of political crises. In May 1829, when John the Baptist appeared to Smith and Cowdery, they received divine appointments as First and Second Elders of the new church. Smith's authority as Seer and Revelator was announced in April 1830 and confirmed in September. In February and March 1831, Smith issued a Series of revelations that began to establish sacramental and institutional structures, including the collective economy called the United Order of Enoch, or the Law of Consecration. The following January Smith was named President of the High Priesthood, and in March 1833 a First Presidency was established, including the president and two counselors. Stake councils were established in Kirtland and in Missouri in 1834, in a reorganization that saw the suspension of the communal United Order. The Council of Twelve Apostles was established in February 1835, and a month later a Quorum of Seventies was organized.<sup>22</sup>

These various offices met both the governance needs of the church and the political requirements of sharing responsibility with an often unruly band of leading followers. As did the collective economy of the United Order, this hierarchy of offices had parallels in other millenarian groups such as the Ephrata celibates and the Shakers, for whom collective order represented life in the Kingdom of God. Hierarchy and collectivity had been features of the millennialist sects of the Radical Reformation, most notably the Munster Anabaptists.<sup>23</sup> But the most interesting parallel was with the priestly hierarchy of the sixteenth-century Familists' House of Love, in which an Oldest Elder in Holy Understanding presided over ranks of Old Elders, Priests of the Throne of God, and four orders of lesser priests, the lowest of which included the entire membership.<sup>24</sup> In the Mormon hierarchy, this lowest, most inclusive rank was the Aaronic Priesthood, through which the Mormon believer would pass before entering the more powerful and charismatic Priesthood of Melchizedek. Institutionalizing the



anticlericalism of his following, Smith established the ideal of universal priesthood among the believing men of the church, sharing charismatic power and organizational responsibility while retaining prophetic authority.

After their mutual baptism in May 18/9 Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery claimed that John the Baptist had conferred on them the Levitical, or Aaronic, Priesthood. Conferred on "every worthy male member," eventually starting with boys of twelve years of age, these offices provided the semblance of an equalitarian order for white males in the church. Ranked as deacons, teachers, and priests, the Aaronic Priesthood held "the keys of the ministering of angels"; they were to watch over the church, teach the gospel, and perform baptisms.<sup>25</sup>

Some doubt exists as to the conception of this Aaronic Priesthood in the early years, and even more doubt exists about the timing of the announcement of the higher Melchizedek Priesthood. Smith claimed that the restoration of the Melchizedek was announced in May 18/9 by the appearance of the archangels Peter, James, and John, following the type of Christ's vision of Moses and Elias. But the first references to these angels in Mormon texts did not come until T 835, and it appears that the high priesthood was not actually established until June 1831, as Smith was building his authority over the Kirtland settlements.<sup>26</sup>

If the high priesthood was not actually a reality before the summer of 1831, it certainly was implied in Smith's revelations. For the next fifteen years the key to the attraction of early Mormonism — and to the survival of Smith as a prophet — lay in his promises of the future revelation of the secret workings of God's Kingdom. In ten revelations issued between the summer of 18/8 and February 1831, Smith promised that "the mysteries of God shall be unfolded," leading to "eternal life." In January 1831 he tied this promise to the call to "gather a righteous people" in Ohio: it was in this cause I gave unto you the commandment that ye should go to the Ohio; and there I will give unto you my law; and there you shall be endowed with power from on high."<sup>27</sup>

On June 3, 1831, at a General Conference in Kirtland, twenty-three men were ordained into the high priesthood, which that November was identified with the biblical Priesthood of Melchizedek. Where the Aaronic Priesthood was limited to "outward ordinances," the Melchizedek Priesthood would hold "the key to the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God." Unlike the lower priesthood, the high priests were to "administer in spiritual things," in a specific sharing of spiritual power with the prophets

This diffusion of spiritual powers coincided with more miraculous events. Sometime during the summer of 1831 Smith succeeded in healing the lame arm of an elderly Mrs. Mary Johnson, whose family soon joined the church. And at the June 3 Kirtland conference, when "false spirits" stopped the voices of several of his new high priests, Smith drove them out, though according to one account he then failed in efforts to heal a crippled hand and a lame leg and to revive a child from death.<sup>29</sup> The high priests would be capable of "wonderful works" of exorcism, faith-healing, resistance to poisons, and handling snakes. Certainly the high priests used these powers: Newell Knight — before and after his ordination—drove out evil spirits and healed the sick, and missionaries in northern Vermont and New York drew converts with stories of their healing powers.<sup>30</sup>

Such healing powers clearly had biblical antecedents (specifically in Christ's address to his apostles) that would have been familiar to primitivists searching the Bible for signs and miracles:<sup>31</sup> But the greatest powers of the high priesthood lay in their sharing in the "keys to the mysteries," previously granted only to Joseph the Prophet. Smith first articulated these powers in October 1831, at a General Conference meeting in Orange, Ohio. "The order of the

High-priesthood," he announced at the Orange conference, "is that they have power given them to seal up the Saints unto Eternal Life." He repeated this language in a revelation the next month. In effect, Mormon high priests were given the authority to grant salvation through a ritual — an authority that orthodox Christians reserved to God, working through grace.<sup>32</sup> This idea of an earthly sealing was first introduced in the Book of Mormon, when Nephi was granted powers of salvation and damnation: "Whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."<sup>33</sup>

Here, then, was a fundamental theological departure, clearly inspired by the experience of magic. The Mormon high priests would in effect be magi, with powers extending up from the visible world on earth to the invisible world of the heavens, controlling and delimiting the power of a God whom the Calvinist tradition had made omnipotent. The next step, an even more fundamental departure, would be to join that limited God in divinity. Hinting at this promise in the early 1830s, Smith would not establish this path to divinization until 1843, at Nauvoo, Illinois. But the groundwork for this departure was laid in Ohio in a description of a new cosmos emerging in parallel with the new priesthood. Both had common roots reaching back into the hermetic tradition of the primal divine Adam.

The Old Testament Priesthood of the Melchizedek, endowed with great, magus-like powers and identified with Christ in the Book of Hebrews, was not unique to the emerging Mormon theology. Ninety years before the high priesthood ceremony at Kirtland in 1830, the celibate choirs at Ephrata sang of the restoration of the Melchizedek, as well as the unity of the primal Adam. More recently Shaker Benjamin Youngs, in his 1808 Testimony of Christ's Second Coming, had invoked the Melchizedek order in his account of a hermaphrodite Christ, and in 1814 George Rapp of the German Harmonist Society settled in southern Ohio and saw in the Melchizedek the model for millennial, communitarian selflessness. In 1840 Orestes Brownson, another son of Royalton, Vermont, in his second essay on the "Laboring Classes," demanded the replacement of human priesthoods with a divinely ordained "order of Melchizedec." Six years later Brownson's brother Oran joined the Mormons.<sup>34</sup>

But the most widely diffused use of the Melchizedek was in the ritual of Royal Arch Freemasonry, which, as we have already seen, was of great significance in the framing of early Mormonism. In the ceremonies installing the High Priests of the Royal Arch, the Masonic manuals uniformly borrowed from Hebrews 5:6 to tell the candidate that "thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedec."<sup>35</sup> Just as the Royal Arch tale of Enoch's treasures appears to have had a formative influence on Smith's account of the discovery of the Golden Plates, so too, this mythology had powerful resonances in the new Mormon cosmology sketched between 1830 and 1833, in over a hundred revelations and a revision of the biblical Book of Genesis. A spiritually powerful high priesthood, a concern for a primal language, and a plan for the construction of temples were the underpinnings of this cosmic system, the realization that the Mormon faithful would be "endowed with power from on high."

The central statements of this cosmology were first laid out in Smith's revision of Genesis, the Book of Moses, and in revelations on the priesthood and temples. Smith wrote his revision of Genesis between June 1830 and February 1831, and his key revelations date from November 1831 to May 1833. From December 1830 Smith worked closely with Sidney Rigdon, the former Campbellite, who served as his scribe and confidant. Rigdon, renowned throughout the Western Reserve for his command of the Bible, was thought to have had a decisive influence on Smith in these years. (Rigdon had Masonic connections of his own, becoming a Mason later in life. His cousins Thomas and John Rigdon were both Campbellite ministers and Thomas was a Royal Arch Mason.)<sup>36</sup> David Whitmer, later a dissenter, claimed that Rigdon "soon worked himself deep into Brother Joseph's affections," and that it was at his

"instigation" that the high priesthood was adopted. Perhaps that was so, but certainly Smith had the idea of the Melchizedek Priesthood in mind at least since the summer of 1819, when he — with Oliver Cowdery — wrote the priesthood into the Book of Alma .<sup>37</sup>

Many of the most important sections of the Book of Moses were written before Rigdon arrived in New York in December 1830, but Rigdon was with Smith when he wrote passages that had direct analogues to the mythology of a pure primitive Freemasonry. In the sixth and seventh chapters of the Book of Moses the prophet Enoch had a long vision of the days of Adam and of the future. Adam was described as having been "after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity." This was the order of Melchizedek, as identified with Christ; this connection of Adam with Christ had long been an important dimension of radical universalism. Looking into the future, Enoch was shown the "seed of Adam" and the "seed of Cain," echoing hermetic and Masonic references to the two seeds.<sup>38</sup> And at the beginning of the sixth chapter of Moses, the descendants of Seth began to keep "a book of remembrance" written in "the language of Adam," which was equated with the priesthood: "And by them their children were taught to read and write, having a language which was pure and undefiled. Now this was the same Priesthood, which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also?" The book of remembrance, written in the primal "language of Adam," in this account was passed down to the prophet Enoch; in September 1831 Smith claimed to have heard the "pure Adamic language" for the first time, when Brigham Young spoke in tongues at their first meeting. That same September Smith traced by revelation the lineage of the priesthood back from the sons of Moses to Melchizedek, Noah, Enoch, Abel, and eventually to "Adam, the first man."<sup>40</sup>

Thus, with Rigdon at his side, Smith added themes to the Genesis story that were directly analogous to Masonic myths describing priestly genealogies running back to Adam. The references to Adamic language were equally important, pointing to another critical link with the intellectual world of seventeenth-century hermeticism. At the core of the magic beliefs about correspondences lay the dream of a universal language, capturing the signature or inner essence of all things, understandable to all people if the key to its grammar could be discovered. The inspiration for ideas about this language lay in the second chapter of Genesis (repeated verbatim in the third chapter of Smith's Moses) where Adam gave names to the animals that God paraded before him.<sup>41</sup> Preserved after the Adamic exile from Eden, this language had been lost at the Tower of Babel. Cabalists and hermetic philosophers hoped to recover this natural, or Adamic, language through magical manipulations of Hebrew letters and Egyptian hieroglyphics. In the world of the English revolutionary Instauration, Jan Comenius and Samuel Hartlib, following Francis Bacon, led the search for a universal language. In the wake of the revolutionary epoch, John Webster's hope that Jacob Boehme's mysticism would provide the key to the universal language was scorned by men of science connected with the Royal Society. And — just as it became the repository of other fragments of hermetic lore — eighteenth-century Freemasonry was reputed to be hiding the secrets of this "universal language." Closer at hand, newspapers in Palmyra in 1819 and 1823 reported efforts to translate hieroglyphic inscriptions found on rocks in Pompey, New York, east along the Erie Canal in Onondaga County, and in Dighton, in Massachusetts's Bristol County.<sup>42</sup>

From 1817 into the 1840s, Joseph Smith was vitally interested in ancient languages. The Golden Plates were supposed to have been covered with ancient writing, which Smith translated into the published Book of Mormon; at the end of the Book of Mormon, Smith identified this language as a "reformed

Egyptian," which had been "handed down and altered" among the Nephites.<sup>43</sup> This passage was written in the summer of 1828, over a year after Smith had sent Martin Harris all the way to New York City to consult with two learned professors, Samuel L. Mitchell and Charles Anthon, on the origins of a list of figures that Smith had copied from the plates. As one historian has argued, the failure of these famous scholars, and the success of an unschooled Smith, in translating these supposed ancient records with his seer-stone and the Urim and Thummim, fulfilled a prophecy in Isaiah.<sup>44</sup> Magical implements were critical to the translation process because the ancient language had been "altered"; they were described as God's "means for the interpretation" of the "reformed Egyptian."<sup>45</sup> These concerns with language were repeated in the subsequent Book of Ether, where the family of Jared escapes from the destruction of the Tower of Babel with their primal language "not confounded." Later in the story God "confounded" their written language but left interpreter-stones so that men of spirit might eventually decode their engraved plates.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, in his advertisement in the *Wayne Sentinel* in March 1830, Smith emphasized that the Book of Mormon included this record of the Jaredites, "scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people when they were building a tower to get to Heaven." This attention to sacred language resonated among the converted Ohio restorationists in the spring of 1831. In common with both earlier perfectionists and later Mormons, some of them spoke "in tongues," while others claimed to see gold, lighted letters, written by angels, showering down on the fields around Kirtland.<sup>47</sup>

These, then, were the broader connotations and contexts for Smith's attention to a "pure and undefiled" language of Adam in his revelation of Enoch, written out in the winter of 1830 to 1831. The concept of an Adamic language was central to the hermetic quest for perfect knowledge, it was the essence of the pure Freemasonry handed down from Adam, and it was certainly on Joseph Smith's mind throughout this period. Quite simply, the Adamic language was the royal road to perfection, the "key to the mysteries." Equated with the priesthood in Moses 6:6-7, the Adamic language was given ecclesiastical form in the priestly order of the Melchizedek.

Language was a central theme in Smith's emerging theology, and so too were temples. The restored Kingdom would not only save the Adamic language, but it would have a temple, rebuilt at a revealed location on the type of Solomon's temple, the Hebrew house of the Lord. Here the boundary between spirit and matter, heaven and earth, would be definitively transcended: "the glory of God" would "fill the house."<sup>48</sup> God would materialize among his saints in his tabernacle, achieving the union of all things that the Mormon Kingdom promised. By 1831 the Old Testament priesthoods of Aaron and Melchizedek had been restored; now a temple was needed to provide an architectural and ritual focus for their authority. And, just as these priesthoods had Masonic equivalents, the most widely was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son." Raised to the celestial kingdom, the Mormon Priesthood of the Melchizedek would rank as gods.

Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God —Wherefore, all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's. And they shall overcome all things.<sup>61</sup>

Smith's theology thus promised a radical departure from traditional Protestant Christianity. The Mormon cosmos announced universal salvation for humanity and promised divinity to the Mormon faithful. Human salvation and Mormon divinity would be structured in a radically new configuration of the invisible world, three ascending kingdoms replacing the duality of heaven and hell.

This challenge to traditional Christianity was not easy to swallow. Many in the Mormon ranks resisted the new doctrine, and in this resistance lay the seeds of later dissent. Some seceded from the church in the spring of 1832, and a month after they had their vision, Smith and Rigdon were attacked by a mob in Hiram, including the Johnson brothers, with whose family they had been staying. This mobbing was not directly related to the Smith—Rigdon vision, but that vision did nothing to deter the rioters, and it took months of exhortation before doubts about the new revelation began to subside.<sup>62</sup>

These doubts about the Hiram vision focused on its most highly elaborated element, the restructuring of the invisible world into three kingdoms, telestial, terrestrial, and celestial. Smith's promise of divinity did not receive the same attention; perhaps it was more oblique, and it was based on canonical language in the Bible, specifically in the Book of Psalms and the Gospel of St. John.<sup>63</sup> But the three Mormon heavens would ultimately only provide the backdrop for Mormon godhood, which gradually would emerge as the central theme of the new theology. It would be here that Mormonism would offer the same restoration of the godlike powers of the primal Adam that hermeticism offered as the reward to the true adept. This doctrine of eventual divinity would not be fully spelled out to the Mormon rank and file until April 1844, in Joseph Smith's funeral oration for King Follett, following two years of doctrinal and ritual development among the Nauvoo Mormon elite that incontrovertibly demonstrates the hermetic contributions to Mormon theology. But the hermeticism of the Nauvoo theology was anticipated by and grounded upon the early revelations in Ohio, that at Hiram in 1832, and another at Kirtland in 1833.

Smith's 1833 Kirtland revelation came at a juncture of great stress and turmoil. Finding the Missouri settlement threatened by armed attack by hostile opponents in April 1832, Smith abandoned hopes for a quick establishment of a unified Mormon stronghold on the frontier. He turned his attention to Kirtland, declaring it a "Stake" of the Mormon tent, and began to take measures to strengthen it, which by the spring of 1833 included the construction of a temple. The Ohio Mormons were scattered through towns around Kirtland, and Smith proposed to bring them together in a new city established on the hilltop farm of Frederick G. Williams, a recent convert who would rise to high position in the church. After a very slow start, work began on a new temple at the center of the site on May 4, 1833, and two days later Smith issued another doctrinally central revelation.

The language of the February 1832 Smith—Rigdon vision at Hiram had equated Adam (the "Firstborn") and Christ (the "Only Begotten Son"). In the May 1833 Kirtland revelation, this equation became a fused Adam—Christ figure (again the "Beloved Son" and the "Firstborn") appearing in a vision to Saint John.<sup>65</sup> This Adam—Christ figure announced himself to be "the Firstborn" and all of his descendants to be "the church of the Firstborn." Most importantly, both he and his descendants "were in the beginning with the Father."

These phrases became the core of the Mormon doctrine of preexistent souls: human spirits were not created but eternal, coexistent with the divinity.<sup>66</sup> This doctrine of a pre-Creation existence was reinforced several verses later.

Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence.<sup>67</sup>

Human spirits had coexisted with God as a primal intelligence for eternity, rather than being created from nothing at a biblical beginning. This spirit was integrally connected to matter, the elements, and this connection was at the epicenter of the Mormon project of temple building.

For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy. And when separated, man cannot receive a fulness of joy. The elements are the tabernacle of God; yea, man is the tabernacle of God, even temples; and whatsoever temple is defiled, God shall destroy that temple. The glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth 6s

Ten years later he would restate this thesis more plainly, as he sketched out the doctrinal basis for the covenant of celestial marriage, or polygamy: "There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All Spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure."<sup>69</sup>

These doctrines were anticipated in Smith's Book of Moses, in which he describes two creations, one spiritual and one material. God had "created all things ... spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth?" But the Kirtland revelation was more developed than the Book of Moses: in one a God was still creating both spiritual and material things; in the other, spirit and matter were both eternal substances, present through eternity and at "the Beginning."

Thus, by the spring of 1833, Joseph Smith had arrived at the most critical themes of hermetic theology. Clearly he had been influenced by hermetic culture throughout his life, but with the Hiram and Kirtland revelations he arrived at the essence of the hermetic divergence from orthodox Christianity. All things were dually spiritual and material, a concept that would have emerged naturally from an immersion in divining magic, where stones grew alchemically into silver and gold, to be buried in the ground and protected by volatile spirits. God had not created the world and humanity from nothing, *ex nihilo*, but from preexisting substances. If the new Mormon creation story did not quite match the hermetic ideal of *creatio ex deo*, creation from a division of divinity itself, it came quite close, arriving at a *creatio ex materia*, certainly within the conceptual bounds of the hermetic notion of a *prima materia*. In an exaggeration of hermeticism, humans were turned into gods, and God's power was diminished from infinite to finite. Spirit and matter were pervasively linked rather than divided by a chasm negotiated only by grace and atonement')

In effect, Smith had arrived at the outlines of the Egyptian Genesis of the "Pimander," the central text of the Corpus Hermeticum. Both versions of Genesis diverged fundamentally from the Mosaic Genesis in positing a harmony between matter and spirit — and the restoration of divine powers to humanity. And they both centered on the mediating figure of Adam and his fortunate Fall.

Orthodox Christianity in one form or another interpreted Adam as the source of all evil in the human condition — his original sin in eating of the Tree of Knowledge brought sin, sorrow, and death to successive generations. But in Mormon theology Adam was the revered "father of all, prince of all, the ancient of days"; he was the archangel Michael.<sup>72</sup> As in the "Pimander," his Fall from Paradise was — if not voluntary — then fortunate. The Hermetic Adam by his own choice leaves heaven to mate with Nature. Given this Fall, the spiritually aware of later generations might recover the knowledge and powers of their inherited divine essences, as descendants of Adam.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, Smith had changed the story of the Fall in his biblical revision in 1830: it was both fortunate and forgiven. Spelling out a hint of the future coming of Christ (Genesis 3:15),

Smith introduces the promise of Christ's redemption with the Fall from Paradise. Smith has Adam and Eve offer animal sacrifices to God; an angel tells them that this is a "similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father." Then "the Only Begotten of the Father" (Christ) in the form of the Holy Ghost envelops Adam, telling him that he and all humanity will be redeemed. Adam and Eve rejoice in their fortunate Fall, Adam "because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God," Eve because "were it not for our transgression we should never have seed, and never should have known good and evil."<sup>74</sup>

The Mormon Fall is fortunate, and it was forgiven. The Lord reminds Adam that "I have forgiven thee thy transgression in the Garden of Eden." Eventually Adam is baptized, in which he "was born of the spirit, ... quickened in the inner man," made one of the order of Melchizedek, and made "a son of God" — with the promise of the same for all his posterity. In effect, Christ's atonement for Adam's original sin begins not at Calvary but in Genesis: the children of Adam were free of original sin, "whole from the foundation of the world."<sup>75</sup> In his 1833 Kirtland temple revelation, Smith reiterated this theme of a liberation from original sin. "Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again, in their infant state, innocent before God."<sup>76</sup>

The obvious corollary to such a theology of a limited God and an innocent humanity, untouched by primal sin and progressing toward divinity, was the devaluation of the doctrine of grace. Mormonism was indeed moving in this direction. In its final form the Mormon doctrine of salvation made the gift of grace through faith in Christ's atonement a necessary condition for salvation but not a sufficient condition. Salvation — admitting all but the "sons of perdition" to at least the lowest, telestial kingdom — was made possible by divine grace and Christ's sacrificial atonement and earned by personal merit. But mere salvation, offered to all humanity, was not the ultimate Mormon priority. Exaltation to godhood in the celestial kingdom would be fundamentally based on merit, rooted in a firm advocacy of moral free will. The faithful Mormon, inheriting an innocent condition from Adam, was to remain sin free — and to obey the sacred ordinances of the church." This obedience to law — not the free gift of grace—would be the deciding factor in the soul's entry into the celestial kingdom. And Mormon ordinances were to be administered by the Priesthood of Melchizedek, who Smith announced in October 1831 had "power given them to seal up the Saints unto Eternal life."<sup>78</sup>

The changing language of the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants provides a rather precise view of the shifting ground of Mormon with brute pre-Adamites that were slowly transformed by divine emanations into a perfect Adamic race in Paradise, from whence they fell. Sometime in the late 1830s Joseph Smith is reported to have admitted his knowledge of Swedenborg, telling a Mormon

convert from Swedenborgianism that "Emanuel Swedenborg had a view of things to come, but for daily food he perished."

Smith's use of the term "intelligence" for the untreated spiritual material — a central hermetic theme running back literally to the "Pimander" — could have come from Thomas Dick or Emmanuel Swedenborg, but it could also have come from Andrew Michael Ramsay. Certainly Ramsay would have been an excellent source for the concept of a spiritual preexistence.

Shaped by the hermetic culture of the Philadelphian Society, as was his contemporary Conrad Beissel of Ephrata, Andrew Ramsay became both the theoretician of high-degree Freemasonry and an ardent defender of revealed religion. In two long texts, Ramsay attempted — in classic Masonic fashion — to demonstrate the compatibility of Christian revelation and ancient mystery religions. The first, *The Travels of Cyrus*, was published in 1738 and republished in Boston and New Jersey in the 1790s, and was available to the Smiths at a library in Manchester, New York, and before that at a bookstore in Hanover, New Hampshire. Ramsay's *Travels* described the fictional conversations of King Cyrus of Persia with a host of ancient magi and theologians, from Egyptian priests who told him of Hermes Trismegistus, to Zoroaster and Pythagoras, and to Eleazer and Daniel at the court of Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. Along the way Cyrus learns about the primal ether and solid matter, the alchemical secrets of the "occult sciences," the primal fallen angel Typhon, who "broke through the egg of the world" to spread evil and death, and Hermes Trismegistus's concealing of "the mysteries of religion under hieroglyphics and allegories." From Eleazer he learns a theory of preexistence, in which lesser fallen angels are reincarnated in human bodies, which "were all shut up in that of Adam." Eleazer also describes the Messiah, "the head, and conductor of all intelligent natures, the first-born of all creatures," whose body serves as a tabernacle — "a portion of matter" — for the divinity. In his own summation of his work, Ramsay announced the hermetic doctrine that "Mankind are all but one family of an immense republic of intelligences of which God is the common father." Each soul "is as a ray of light separated from its source," enduring a mortal existence until "it becomes like a subtle vapour reascending to the superior regions from whence it fell." Ramsay's posthumously published *The Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion* includes long discussions of the ethereal fluid, of two Creations (spiritual and material), and of the scriptural basis of a doctrine of spiritual preexistence."

These sophisticated texts from the eighteenth-century resynthesis of the hermetic tradition could have contributed to Smith's new cosmology. There are some hints in the evidence, however, suggesting that it was Sidney Rigdon, and not Joseph Smith, who was more conversant with such texts.

Smith, although certainly possessed of great powers of intellect and persuasion, did not have unlimited resources at his command in the 1820s. His family was poor and struggling, without much money to spare on expensive volumes of theology. None of the Smiths or their circle were members of the Manchester Library, so it is unlikely that they could have used its resources." Rigdon, on the other hand, was a sophisticated biblical scholar and had a wide experience in theological questions. He had debated Alexander Campbell, and he knew the details of the communal order of Harmonists, a German hermetic sect settled in western Pennsylvania, whose leader, George Rapp, was a practicing alchemical philosopher. It was Rigdon who quoted Thomas Dick on material heavens in 1836." And on a number of critical theological points, including the Fall, predestination, the role of grace, and the account of the millennium, Smith's position in the Book of Mormon differed significantly from that developed between 1831 and 1833 in the Doctrine and Covenants.<sup>89</sup>

With the arrival of Rigdon late in 1830 there seems to be a subtle change in the focus of the revelations, with the "mysteries" being fleshed out with detail about priesthoods and temples, and a



new language of sealing, binding, purity, and "fulness" becoming more and more pronounced. It may be simple coincidence, but it is interesting that it was the Kirtland converts, and not the New York Saints, who saw golden letters falling from the hands of angels, suggesting that ideas about the Cabala may have circulated in Rigdon's "Family?" As of T830, if anyone had read Andrew Michael Ramsay's *The Philosophical Principles* (published in Glasgow), with its detailed defense of the doctrines of preexistence and of an ethereal fluid as the essence of life, it would have been Rigdon and not Smith. It is very interesting that it was Parley Pratt, the conduit between Smith and Rigdon, who in his *Key to the Science of Theology*, first published in T 855, used the language of a "spiritual fluid," a "heavenly fluid," or a "holy fluid" to describe the "essence" of spirit diffused among the elements, giving them "life, light, power, and principle." The references to "life and light" resonate with passages in the Gospel of John, but they also have a hermetic history running back to the "Pimander," and much of Pratt's text is strikingly similar to Ramsay's language, both in the *The Philosophical Principles* and in *The Travels of Cyrus*. Of course, by 1855, popular Mesmerism had swept across the United States, and Pratt could have been drawing on that tradition, as strongly suggested in his reference to the "modern magnetic term" of "communication." But Pratt had dwelt on the conquest of Babylon by King Cyrus of Persia in his millennial tract *A Voice of Warning*, and in his *Autobiography* he announced that "the characters of a Daniel and a Cyrus were wonderfully blended" in the prophet Joseph Smith.<sup>9</sup>

Certainly Joseph Smith was predisposed to a hermetic interpretation of sacred history and processes from his boyhood in New York's Ontario County. But it may well be that David Whitmer was not far off when he complained that it was Rigdon who provided much of the marrow of the mysteries "sealed . . . from the foundation of the world" that Smith began to unfold in the early 1830s.<sup>92</sup>

In less than three years, between September 1830 and May 1833, an outpouring of revelation framed the broad scheme of the Mormon restoration. Mormons were endowed with the assurance of being sealed to eternal life by spiritually powerful priesthoods, they were offered the promise of the opening of the keys to ancient sacred mysteries, they were given a new map of the invisible world, and they were ordered to build the literal meeting place of God and humanity. They were also promised the hermetic dream of divinity and given a sketch of a hermetic conception of the origins and future of the earth and the universe. Priesthoods, announcements of keys, kingdoms, and temples: these were the stuff of Mormonism in the early 1830s. Human divinity, and its hermetic sources, was a much more obscure area, easily overlooked by the Mormon rank and file. A series of factors mitigated against the ordinary Mormon having a full conception of the new theological directions that Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were exploring. First, much of the new doctrine was not widely available: the Kirtland revelation was not published until 1835 and the *Book of Moses* was not published until 1851. And second, despite the experience in treasure-hunting and Freemasonry of many early Mormons, their frame of reference was overwhelmingly traditional and biblical. The hermetic implications of his theology may not even have been clear to Smith himself in 1833. And the rush of events overwhelmed any coherent presentation of doctrine. Particularly over the next five and a half years, the pace of new revelation would slow, as Joseph Smith and the young church struggled to survive in the face of external hostility and internal dispute, and as the boundaries between purity and danger began to collapse.

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**Joseph Smith, W. W. Phelps, and the Poetic Paraphrase of "The Vision"**

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Recently, an unusual text has emerged in the Joseph Smith canon—a seventy-eight stanza poem which paraphrases Doctrine and Covenants 76, originally known as "the Vision: because it recounted the vision of the three degrees of glory received by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon. First published in 1843 over Smith's signature, the poem was almost forgotten for more than a century. During the last two decades, however, it has achieved considerable attention, being reprinted in anthologies and scriptural commentaries, and cited in dissertations, articles, and conference papers.<sup>1</sup> Those sources seldom question its attribution to Smith.

But to assess the poem's authenticity, we must consider its cultural context—the literary habits of early Mormons, their methods for producing poems, and this poem's specific background. We must also scrutinize the structure and diction of the poem. Does it ring true to Joseph's already established voice? Finally, we must sift through whatever manuscript sources might answer a fundamental question: did Joseph have both the occasion and the ability to write the poem? As it turns out, virtually all of the evidence in these matters weighs against Joseph Smith as the poem's author and points instead to W. W. Phelps.<sup>2</sup>

### I

Nineteenth-century American poetry was seldom written by "poets." Like most arts in the New World, poetry was a democratic enterprise. Homespun, didactic, and sometimes ungainly, vernacular poetry crowded into the pages of letters, diaries, newspapers, and primers. For many Americans, making a poem to teach a principle was like making a wash to clean clothes—common, necessary, quick, and only slightly premeditated. Either read or sung, as the occasion dictated, much of this poetry consisted of rhymed reworkings of scriptures or revisions of already popular poems and songs. To understand the poetic paraphrase of "The Vision," we need to understand two popular nineteenth-century genres—scriptural versification and song adaptation.

Many Protestant sects believed that a Christian should sing nothing but God's word. Thus, they needed paraphrases of biblical verses to fit musical meters; most of the earliest specimens of poetry produced in the United States were actually metrical paraphrases of psalms.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, hymn-writers often based their narrative texts on scriptural stories. A good example is John Newton's versification of the story of Joseph of Egypt meeting his siblings during the famine. It began:

When Joseph his brethren beheld,  
Afflicted and trembling with fear,  
His heart with compassion was fill'd,  
From weeping he could not forbear.

Latter-day Saints understood and imitated this method of creating sacred poem/song texts. They included "When Joseph His Brethren Beheld" in the first Mormon hymnbook and made their own poetic paraphrases of the prodigal son story and Isaiah 60. 4 Moreover, the Saints had a special form of sacred versification, which they called "Songs of Zion." These consisted of songs sung in tongues and interpreted, with the interpretation coming either in rhyming verses or in prose that was later paraphrased into rhyme. 5 One of the best examples is a song about Enoch sung in tongues in the Kirtland Temple, interpreted, versified (probably by Phelps), and published In The Evening and the Morning Star. 6 These passages show the process:

### **Kirtland Revelation Book**

and with his finger he [God] touched his eyes and he saw heaven, he gazed on eternity  
and sang an angelic song

Hosanna! To God who dwells above the sky Hosanna! The sound of the trump! around the throne of  
God

echoed and echoed again and rang and re-echoed until eternity was filled with his voice.

### **Poetic Paraphrase**

With finger end God touch'd his eyes  
That he might gaze within the skies:  
His voice he raised to God on high,  
Who heard his groans and drew him nigh.

Hosanna, he aloud did cry,

Again, Hosanna did resound  
Among the heavenly hosts around.  
His voice he rais'd in higher strains,  
Echo'd and re-echo'd again,  
Till heaven and earth his voice did hear;  
Eternity did record bear.

Another way of creating sacred poem/song texts was to adapt an existing one, by changing the words either to fit a particular doctrine or to suit a special occasion. Many songs that appeared in hymnbooks and in secular songsters had long lives, reappearing in numerous adapted forms. One well-known song, for example, began "This world is all a fleeting show / For man's illusions given," and ended every verse with the line "There's nothing true but heaven." Revivalists created many variants, including a direct response. "This world's not all a fleeting show / For man's illusions given ... There's something here of heaven." 7 Early Mormons continued the adaptation. Phelps took "There's nothing true but heaven" as the basis for his "Adam-on-di-Ahman" ("This world was once a garden place / with an her glories common" 8), which other Mormon writers then adapted and readapted ("This land was once a glorious place / With all its verdure common"; "This earth shall be a blessed place / To saints celestial given"; and so forth). 9

Such Mormon adaptations followed a well-established pattern in Christendom. They also corresponded to the Saints'

strong sense of community—their desire to conceive of their works as efforts of the group rather than of individual members. Fellowship and common consent were among the highest values in the Church, The Mormon law of consecration allowed the community to absorb goods from all of its members and reassign them to the needy. Mormons also believed in an investiture of authority, by which one person could be ordained to do a work in someone's behalf or speak as the voice of another. All told, intellectual property in early Mormonism was an almost unheard of commodity. Any sort of text might be made by many and belong to all.

Joseph Smith was often the beneficiary of the community's Literary talents. Throughout his career, he depended on scribes who edited and refined his manuscripts. Seminal Joseph Smith documents like the "Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ" and the "Articles of Faith" apparently were based on earlier drafts by Others.<sup>10</sup> The dedicatory prayer for the Kirtland Temple, published under Joseph's name, appears to have been written by a committee.<sup>11</sup> Howard Corey recalled that, in writing Joseph Smith's personal history, Smith was to “furnish all the materials; and our business, was not only to combine, and arrange in chronological order, but to spread out or amplify not a little.”<sup>12</sup> During the last two years of his life, Joseph increasingly attached his name to documents written largely by others. As fame, legal battles, and the growing population of the Church threatened to drain all of his time, literary delegation became crucial. The presence of his name on any document from his last years is not an answer but a question.

## II

On the day after Christmas 1842, Smith was arrested and taken to Springfield, Illinois, on a charge of conspiring to murder Missouri governor Lilburn Boggs. Twelve days later, having won his petition of habeas corpus, he was released, His release reminded Wilson Law and Willard Richards of the Scottish song "Nae Luck About the House," whose chorus opined, “there's nae luck and little pleasure in the house / When our goodman's awa'!” Its first verse began:

And are ye sure the news is true?  
And are ye sure he's well?  
Is this a time to tawk of wark?  
Make haste! set by your wheel! 13

The presence Law and Richards wrote an adaptation of the song, calling it “The Mormon Jubilee.” It began:

And are you sure the news is true?  
And are you sure he's free?  
Then let us join with one accord  
And have a jubilee! 14

This adapted song set the tone for a series of celebrations of the Prophet's return —public meetings on Tuesday, 17 January, and an invitation-only feast at the Mansion House the following day. For the feast Eliza Snow produced her own adaptation of "Nae Luck." Both it and the Law-Richards version were printed on cards, distributed to the guests at the feast, and published in Nauvoo newspapers.<sup>15</sup>

W. W. Phelps was not invited to the feast. Phelps had had a difficult relationship with the Prophet, who needed Phelps's talents and experience but scorned his pride. He assigned Phelps many tasks and exploited Phelps's skills in writing, editing, and publishing but privately joked about his eccentricities and never allowed him past the fringes of his social life. <sup>16</sup> Phelps, like many other Saints, aspired to closer intimacy with his leader. One method he used was to compose and present unsolicited poetic thoughts to the Prophet, sometimes even calling them 'revelations' for added authority. 17

When Smith visited Phelps two days after the feast, Phelps presented him with yet another tribute on his release, adapted from a song specifically about imprisonment and homecoming. Purporting to be a paraphrase of the words of Chief Black Hawk to his captors, "The Indian Hunter" began and ended every verse with a plea to "let me go" to his home "in the west ... [where] the bright waters flow ... where parents will greet me ... Let me go to my father [and] dear mother whose heart will o'er flow at the sight of her child [and] to my own dark-eyed maid who taught me to love in my early days."<sup>18</sup> As the textual model for the poem Phelps would present to the Prophet, "The Indian Hunter" fit the situation well,

But Phelps thoroughly rewrote "The Indian Hunter." He changed the leitmotif from "let me go" to "go with me," transforming "The Indian Hunter" into an invitation from the narrator (an idealized Phelps) for the Prophet to accompany him to "the next, better world. where the righteous reside in the Joys of a vast paradise," free from "tyrants [and] mobbers," where "the system is perfect." There in "the mansions above," "the bliss and the knowledge, the light and the love, and the glory of God [will] eternally be."

Although poetry generally was published on the back page of the Times and Seasons, this poem appeared on the front page. It was one of a set of three items that opened the 1 February 1843 issue (1) an essay entitled "Ancient Poetry," credited to the editor, John Taylor, (2) Phelps's four-stanza poem, labeled "From W. W. Phelps to Joseph Smith: The Prophet" titled "Vade Mecum," (Translated.) "Go With Me," and dated (at its end) "Nauvoo, January, 1843"; and (3) a 312-line poem labeled "The Answer. To W. W. Phelps, Esq.," titled (in italics) "A Vision" signed "Joseph Smith" and dated "Nauvoo, Feb. 1843."

"A Vision" was by far the longest poem ever published in a Latter-day Saint newspaper and the only rhyming poem ever published over Joseph Smith's name. It was in some respects a song adaptation: it picked up where "Go With Me" left off, continuing the theme in the same dactylic meter, although, unlike the Phelps, the number of syllables per line occasionally varied: usually eleven, It was sometimes ten or twelve. But it was also a scriptural paraphrase, a metrical version of the revelation commonly called "The Vision."<sup>19</sup> Here is a sample of the paraphrase technique:

### **"The Vision"**

For thus sayeth the Lord —  
I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those

Who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

Great shall be their reward and Eternal shall be their glory.  
And to them will I reveal all mysteries, Yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom.

### **Poetic Paraphrase**

For thus sayeth the Lord, in the spirit of truth;  
I am merciful, gracious, and good unto those  
That fear me, and live for the life that's to come;  
My delight is to honor the Saints with repose;

That serve me in righteousness, true to the end.

Eternal's their glory, and great their reward;  
I'll surely reveal all my myst'ries to them —  
The great hidden myst'ries in my kingdom stor'd.

The paraphrase expanded on some points in the original revelation, but omitted other points. Generally, the poem elaborated on the prose in its earlier parts, but did so progressively less as it wore on. By its final stanzas, the poem actually skipped over much of the prose. Thus, the poem devoted nine full stanza (nos. 2-10 as published) to the first ten verses of "The Vision," but only four stanzas (nos. 74-77) to the last fifteen verses. 20 Perhaps the poem's most obvious departure from the prose was the change of its point of view. While "The Vision" always spoke in the first person plural, from the perspective of both Smith and Rigdon, the poem was entirely in the singular, speaking as Joseph alone. Thus:

### **Prose Vision**

Of [Christ] we bear record; and the record which we bear is the fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who Is the son, whom we saw and with whom we conversed in the heavenly vision.

### **Poetic Paraphrase**

Of [Christ] I bear record, as all prophets have,  
And the record I bear is the fullness—yea, even  
The truth of the gospel of Jesus—the Christ,  
With whom I conversed in the vision of heav'n.

Prefacing both poems, the essay entitled "Ancient Poetry" tried to explain "the following very curious poetic composition." The article explained that, although "the common landmarks of modern poetry are entirely disregarded" in what followed, "there is something so dignified and exalted conveyed in the ideas of this production, that it cannot fail to strike the attention of every superficial observer." The article went on to extol the ideas—though not particularly the style—displayed by "our poet." It explained that what followed was typical of ancient poetic prophecy. Imagery, insight, and vision distinguished it, not the "dry forms, and simple jingling of poetry, alone."

In its final paragraph, "Ancient Poetry" took an interesting turn, suggesting a reason for the whole presentation: "Whatever may have been the preconceived opinion of Justin Butterfield Esq., we are persuaded [sic] that he will now be convinced that the modern Prophets can prophecy in poetry, as well as the ancient prophets; and that no difference, even of that kind any longer exists." Justin Butterfield was the attorney who represented Smith at his recent trial. 21 During breaks in the proceedings, Butterfield, Smith, and others discussed the nature of prophets and prophecy. Perhaps as a result of these discussions, Butterfield observed to the court that "if there is a difference between [Joseph Smith] and other men, it Is that this people believe in prophecy, and others do not" But, for some unknown reason, he added: "The old prophets prophesied in poetry and the modern In prose." 22 The "poetic composition" that accompanied the editorialized explanation was thus intended to refute Butterfield's assertion.

## **III**

Anyone who had read Joseph Smith's letters or heard him speak knew that he had a gift for crisp images and pithy turns of phrase. But there is only slight evidence that he ever wrote poetry; virtually nothing foreshadows a massive poetic paraphrase like "The Vision." In a 1903 letter, Benjamin Johnson reported that Joseph loved to engage in pastimes such as "Jokes, Rebuses, Matching Cuplets to Rhymes &c." 23 In a personal entry in the "Book of the Law of the Lord" 23 August 1842, Joseph wrote two passages—the first

on his father and the second on his brother, Alvin—that, while not actually metered or arranged in lines, contain clear rhyme schemes:

**Joseph Sr.**

Sacred to me is his dust, and the spot where he is laid.  
Sacred to me is the tomb I have made to encircle o'er his head.

Let the memory of my father eternally live.  
Let his soul, or the spirit my follies forgive.

With him may I reign one day, in the mansions above;  
and tune up the Lyre of anthems, of the eternal Jove....

**Alvin**

In [Alvin] there was no guile.  
He lived without spot from the time he was a child.

From the time of his birth,  
he never knew mirth,

He was candid and sober and never would play;  
and minded his father. and mother, in toiling all day. 24

The only Other known example of Smith's writing purposeful poetry is a stanza in the autograph book of Barbara Neff, dating from May 1844. Curiously, the stanza is a response to W. W. Phelps, who had first written this quatrain for Neff:

Two things will beautify a youth  
That is Let virtue decorate the truth  
and so you know; every little helps.  
Yours-W. W. Phelps

Smith responded:

The truth and virtue both are good  
When rightly understood  
But Charity is better Miss  
That takes us home to bliss  
and so forthwith  
remember Joseph Smith

During the early 1840s, W. W. Phelps was Joseph's most prolific ghostwriter. In 1842 he took on what he called "the largest amount of business that I have ever undertaken, since I have been in the Church: it is to write and compile the history of br. Joseph embracing the entire history of the church & it will occupy my time and talents for a long time, should nothing intervene."<sup>26</sup> According to his diary, he did not actually begin writing until the day after Smith's January 1843 feast and the day before he presented "Come with Me" to Smith.<sup>27</sup> As Smith ventured into national politics, Phelps also began to author some of his letters, speeches, and pamphlets, including Smith's official "platform" document, "Views on the Powers and Policy of the Government of the United States."<sup>28</sup> Phelps had many occasions to accustom himself to writing in Joseph Smith's voice.

Phelps was simultaneously honing his skills at poetic paraphrases of the scriptures. Just after the 19 January 1843 entry in his diary, Phelps drafted a metrical version of the Lord's Prayer, published later that year, and several unrhymed passages from Isaiah, revised into florid prose. 29 Evidence from later years shows that Phelps continued this practice to some degree for the rest of his life.<sup>30</sup> If it was unique for Joseph Smith to write a poetic paraphrase of scripture, it was not at all unusual for Phelps, who in early 1843 was also helping Joseph compile a new edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps not surprisingly, the poetic paraphrase of "The Vision" contains many passages that read more like Phelps than Smith.<sup>32</sup> Consider the following points:

1. The prose version of "The Vision" refers to terrestrial inhabitants as those "who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus,; while the poem changes the reference to those who were "not valiant for truth." It is hard to imagine Joseph would have changed the original wording here, since he was very particular about the phrase the testimony of Jesus.<sup>33</sup>

2. The poem (stanza 58) alludes to the parable of the leaven (Matt 13:33), likening the "three measures of meal" to the three kingdoms of glory. Joseph Smith, however, always interpreted the "three measures" as referring to the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon or to the three members of the First Presidency.<sup>34</sup>

3. The seventh stanza refers to "the council in Kolob." Except for his translation of the Book of Abraham, no record exists that Smith ever alluded to Kolob as the site of the heavenly "council." Phelps, however, had an abiding interest in this subject, as with other arcane ideas linked to his work on the so-called "Kirtland Egyptian Papers." (His well-known poem that begins "if you could hie to Kolob" is a good example.)

The twelfth stanza refers to a time "before the world was or a system had run." The allusion here to a cosmic/planetary system differs from every other instance of Smith's use of that word, which he reserved for religious and political systems. Phelps, however, used system frequently to denote cosmic things. In his poem "The Sky," for example, he observes that "there [in the sky] systems roll in endless light"; in his funeral sermon for Joseph and Hyrum Smith he speaks of the souls of men passing "from system to system"; and in an 1844 letter to William Smith he mentions having gleaned from Joseph's Egyptian documents the precise age of "this system, (not this world)."<sup>36</sup>

The poetic paraphrase is filled with characteristically Phelpsian usages and constructions: the exclamatory "alas!" inserted twice in the text (stanzas 22 and 28), phrases such as "eternity's heirs" (46) and "the archives of heaven" (51), and parallelisms such as "eternity goes and eternity comes" (30) or "in darkness they worshipp'd; to darkness they go" (72).

In the poem's last stanza, the poet writes:

I will go, I will go, while the secret of life  
Is blooming in heaven, and blasting in hell;  
Is leaving on earth, and a budding in space:  
I will go, I will go, with you brother, farewell.

Not only is the floral imagery more compatible with Phelps's style than Smith's, but the use of the word "space" is peculiar. While Phelps often used the word to denote universal space, Smith never did in any of his available writings and speeches. He reserved it for its more mundane applications—a space in which to put something, or a space of time.

Finally, the poem contains two similar references to virtue, the first in stanza 1 ("virtue's the value, and life the reward", and the second in stanza 40 ("virtues the value, above all that's priced"). Not only did Phelps



use the word “virtue” in his essays and letters far more than Smith, but also, in his autograph book response to Phelps, Smith made it clear he thought virtue something less than “the value above all that's priced”—charity was greater.<sup>37</sup>

There are two other considerations: meter and point of view. The strict meter of “Vade Mecum” differs slightly from the somewhat freer meter of the poetic paraphrase of “The Vision.” At least one scholar has proposed that the practicing poet Phelps would naturally be more scrupulous in his attention to meter, accent, and syllabification than the fledgling poet Joseph Smith. <sup>38</sup>

But in the Neff autographs, Smith's poem is a quatrain in common meter (8-6-8-6), while Phelps's is quite irregular (8-10-9, with a rhyming signature of 4, 6). In fact, except for hymns, which had to fit a tune, metrical freedom characterized most of Phelps's work. Thus, the metrical raggedness of the poetic paraphrase of “The Vision” cannot argue for Smith's authorship.

Although the vision of degrees of glory was an experience jointly experienced and recounted by Smith and Rigdon and is thus recorded as “we Saw,” etc., the poetic paraphrase uses first person singular (“I saw,” etc.) throughout. The change may be due to the rhetorical context of the poem: if it were published specifically to vindicate his prowess as a bona fide post-biblical prophet, its voice might well be that of Smith alone. Some might also see the change as a reflection of the strain that had arisen between Smith and Rigdon. Much of that strain, however, seems to have been overestimated.<sup>39</sup> In any case, on 11 February 1843, Smith and Rigdon were fully reconciled. According to Smith's diary, he “had been conversing with Elder Rigdon and he and his family were willing to be saved. Good feelings prevailed and we have shaken hands together.”<sup>40</sup> Thus, bitterness should not have been a factor in excising Rigdon from the verse account, particularly if Smith “dictated” the poem on 24 February 1843, as the official History of the Church claims. (See discussion below.)

Another reason why such an excision seems unlikely is Smith's scrupulousness about testimony regarding supernatural events, in part because he accepted the scriptural law of “two or three witnesses.”<sup>41</sup> Like most Mormon leaders, he appealed to multiple witnesses of religious phenomena whenever possible. The prose account of Smith and Rigdon's vision even alludes to “the many testimonies which have been given” of Christ, calling their own testimony the “last of all” (D&C 76:22). Because this revelation was hugely an expansion and clarification of the apostle Paul's discussion of the resurrection, their statement clearly is an addendum to the catalogue of witnesses Paul enumerates (1 Cor 15:5-8, where he lists his own testimony as “last of all”). So it seems doubtful that Smith would have negated an additional testimony of the vision by removing all reference to Rigdon in a poetic version.<sup>42</sup>

Unfortunately, no manuscript version of the poem in Smith's or Phelps's hand has been found. Smith's papers include a holograph of the two poems, but the two run continuously one to the other, suggesting that this version is a copy from other sources.<sup>43</sup> The exact date of composition is also blurry. Willard Richards kept Smith's diary during this period, filling it with accounts of mundane happenings or notes on sermons. He recorded the entire “Mormon Jubilee” text that he had co-written with William Law, but the only mention of “Come with Me” is the entry for 20 January 1843: “Phelps presented some poetry to Joseph Smith the Prophet—‘Will you go with me in.’”<sup>44</sup> (The garbling of the first line suggests that Richards did not read the poem closely.) There is no mention in the diary that Smith ever composed a poem in response, let alone one so vast as “The Vision”

The diary Richards kept for Joseph Smith provided the basis for the corresponding passages in the official “History of Joseph Smith,” serialized in the *Deseret News* and the *Millennial Star*, and later published as the *History of the Church*. The rough draft of this history for the date 20 January 1843 originally read “Bro Phelps presented me with the following,” after which was a citation to the *Times and Seasons* publication of “Go With Me.” The introductory words were later crossed out and inexplicably replaced by: “I received the following communication.” For the date of 24 February 1843, however, the published history made a crucial

emendation. The diary entry closed after mentioning that the Prophet “walked a way with Elder Young at about 3 P.M.” The printed version of the history added: “in reply to W. W. Phelps' Vade Mecum, or 'Go with me,' of 20th of January last, I dictated the following answer,” after which appeared the entire text of the poetic paraphrase.<sup>46</sup> No plausible basis has been found for this emendation, apparently intended as a correction by one of the workers in the Church Historian's Office.

Willard Richards seems an unlikely source. He had kept the original diary himself, contemporaneously recording the receipt of a poem from Phelps, the production of a poem by Eliza Snow, and the entire text of his own co-written poem, Would he have neglected to mention Smith's composition of a very long poem, one probably requiring a great deal of time to compose, and one contributing new and unique doctrine? And if Smith simply “dictated” it in the Late afternoon or evening of a single day, that would have been a feat rivalling his dictation of prose revelations. Far less significant literary endeavors received attention in the diary and far more humdrum matters were dutifully noted (such as the reference to Smith “walking a way” with Brigham Young). Why not the poem?

Several points, then, argue for Phelps's authorship of the poem. First, much of the poem's diction and imagery is more characteristic of Phelps than Smith. Second, the poem seems to deny Rigdon his irrevocable place as a witness to the vision. Third, Smith's diary inexplicably makes no mention of his creation of so weighty a document. Fourth, Phelps was authorized to write for Smith. Fifth, he was practiced in poetic paraphrases of scripture.

How and why did the poem probably come to be? The Phelps “Go With me” is scarcely a self-contained work. Rather, it seems little more than a pretext for the poetic paraphrase of “The Vision.” Although Phelps might have given “Go With Me” to Smith, expecting him to respond in kind, it is unlikely. Phelps, of all people, knew well the demands on the Prophet's time: Smith needed Phelps to write for him, not the other way around. It is more plausible that the poem presented to Joseph Smith on 10 January 1843 and mentioned in his diary was already in two parts—the invitation and the response. This scenario is even implied by “Ancient Poetry,” which consistently refers only to a “poetic composition” (not compositions) authored by “our poet” (not “poets”).<sup>47</sup> This two-part poetic composition would have arisen from Phelps's affection for the Prophet, his joy at Smith's release, his renewed interest in scriptural paraphrase, his assignment as Smith's ghostwriter, and his work on the new edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.

## Epilogue

Shortly after Smith's death, Phelps revised “Go With Me” from a plea to the Prophet into a plea from the Prophet. The revision (with four new stanzas added) was called “A Voice from the Prophet: Come to Me.” A rather strange invitation to join Smith in the spirit world (presumably by dying), it was published as a song on the back page of the Times and Seasons and the Nauvoo Neighbor. “Come to Me” included a note that the words were to be sung to the tune of “The Indian Hunter,” but made no reference to its earlier incarnation as “Go With Me.”

Like most songs linked to Smith's martyrdom, “Come to Me” became a sentimental favorite. Many Saints copied it into their journals or fashioned their own homespun adaptations of the song. Eliza Snow wrote at least two versions. One was an exhortation to flee to the West, ending with the stanza:

Let us go, let us go to the far western shore,  
Where the blood-thirsty Christians will hunt us no more;  
Where the waves of the ocean will echo the sound,  
And the shout of salvation extend the world round.<sup>48</sup>

The second version celebrated the return of Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball to the Salt Lake Valley in 1848 (“You have come, you have come to the valley once more.”)<sup>49</sup> Levi Hancock wrote a version to his

children, a plea for them to visit him (“Come to me, will you come, all my children forlorn”).<sup>50</sup> From 1849 to 1927 Phelps's “Come to me” appeared in Mormon hymnbooks. Specially composed musical settings of the text were featured in the Latter-day Saints' Psalmody of 1889 (#298) and in Latter-day Saint Hymns of 1927 (#157). In 1905 the Improvement Era published four verses of the text under the heading “Voice from Joseph.”

But unlike “Come to Me,” the poetic paraphrase or “The Vision,” never fully captured the Saints' affection. There are perhaps two reasons for this. One is that “The Vision” itself remained for many years a troublesome doctrinal statement for the Saints.<sup>52</sup> Another reason may be found in the mediocrity of the poetry. Consider the reception of the poem in Great Britain. Six months after the Times and Seasons printing of “Ancient Poetry” and its accompanying poems, all three items appeared in the Millennial Star. The editor, Thomas Ward, took occasion to comment:

We have thought fit to publish the Piece entitled “Ancient Poetry,” from the pen of our beloved president Joseph Smith, because of the intrinsic merit of the subject matter, the glorious doctrines and sublime truths which it comprises. We are well aware that the construction of the verse may be subject to criticism, but we should certainly pity the Individual who would make the inequalities of measure, or whatever else he may deem faults, an extinguisher of the rare and sublime doctrines it contains.<sup>53</sup>

Thirty-five years later, Mormon writer Edward Tullidge similarly criticized the poem while in the process of defending it. In his life of Joseph the Prophet, he noted that Smith had expanded “the Messianic subject, not only to the including of a host of nations, but a host of worlds!” He then cited Smith's “poem, vast in compass of idea, if not strictly artistic in versification,” and quoted three and a half stanzas to bolster his point. After the quotation, however, he felt compelled to reiterate his criticism: “Whatever may be said of the versification, the subject is infinitely vast.”<sup>54</sup>

B. H. Roberts was even less kind to the poem. In his multi-volume collation of the History of the Church (1902), for the date of 24 February 1843, Roberts altered the statement that had appeared in the Deseret News and Millennial Star publications of the “History of Joseph Smith.” He included the words “in reply to W. W. Phelps' Vade Mecum, or 'Go with me; of 20th of January last, I dictated” but changed “the following” to “an answer.” He then omitted the entire poem, noting in brackets, “It consisted of the 'Revelation known as the Vision of the Three Glories,' Doctrine and Covenants, section Lxxvi, made into verse.” He gave no further information for the reader who might be interested in reading it.<sup>55</sup> So deliberate an omission suggests that Roberts considered the poem unrepresentative, embarrassing, or both. His annotated copy of the Millennial Stars “History of Joseph Smith” gives no indication of why he might cut the poem. He even marked two stanzas (19-20), as though with approbation, probably because of one unique doctrine there: all inhabitants of the universe, “from the first to the last, /Are sav'd by the very same Saviour of ours.” It is clear from the body of his work, however, that Roberts revered the Prophet and would never have omitted anything he thought Smith himself had authored. He also had little tolerance for the more loquacious contributions of Phelps, which he exposed wherever he could. He chided Phelps's ghostwriting for its “displays of pedantry ... in no way germane to the subjects of which they treat,” insisting that they “mar” the Prophet's work.<sup>57</sup>

Except for Roberts's edition of History of the Church, the poem received no mention in all of the standard biographies of Joseph Smith through the mid-twentieth century. In the 1930s I. B. Ball published essays in the Improvement Era on poetry in Joseph Smith's writings, but did not cite the poetic paraphrase of “The Vision.”<sup>58</sup> It was not until 1951 that the poem was reprinted, in Nels Lundwall's book entitled The Vision.<sup>59</sup> In 1958 Bruce R. McConkie quoted four stanzas in his popular Mormon Doctrine under the heading “Atonement of Christ.” He called it an “explanation” of Smith's and Rigdon's vision in Doctrine and Covenants 76.<sup>60</sup> In 1967 a facsimile reprint of the Times and Seasons made the poem more accessible to

students of Mormon history and literature. Since then, it has received more attention than in all the years since its first publication. But the question of authorship seemed to have become moot.

Authorship should not be an insignificant question to those who want to understand the legacy of Joseph Smith. If he wrote the poem, then it would indeed be an important text. It would show the Prophet endeavoring to expand his literary powers into a new genre. It would feature some new word patterns and interpretations that may impinge on other texts of the period. It would connote a radical and very public change in his attitude toward shared visionary experience. It would also cast some doubt on the reliability of his diary concerning what he did and when he did it. But Phelps's probable authorship of the poem, and Smith's tacit acceptance of it as his own, raise additional questions. Why would Smith allow it to be published over his name? How vague did he want the boundaries of his written canon to be? Did he actually welcome the creation of an apocrypha around his name? The authorship of the poetic paraphrase of "The Vision" is another piece in the puzzle of Joseph Smith—who he was, how he worked, what he aspired to be, and how he hoped to be remembered.

#### Notes:

1. see Richard H. Cracroft and Neil E. Lambert, *A Believing People: Literature of the Latter-day Saints* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1974), 258-66; Robert 3. Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants," 3 vols. (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1974), 2:933-34; Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: Seventy's Mission Bookstore, 1981), 158-66; Roger K. Petersen, "Joseph Smith Prophet-Poet; A literary Analysis of Writings Commonly Associated with His Name" (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1981), 151-52; Karl Best, "Changes in the Revelations," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 2S (Spring 1992): 106; Richard N. Holzapfel, "Joseph Smith's Psalm: The Poetic Version of Doctrine and Covenants Section 76," paper read at the Sperry Symposium, 26 September 1992, Brigham Young University and published with considerable revision as "Eternity Sketch'd in a Vision: The Poetic Version of Doctrine and Covenants 76," in *The Heavens Are Open: The 1992 Sperry Symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants and Church History*, compiled by hymn R. Merrill et. al. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book 1993), 141-62. The Merrill volume also cites other recent references to the poem.
2. At least two scholars have already informally come to this conclusion. Cracroft, *A Believing People*, 258 note, writes: "Close textual comparisons ... lead one to suspect that W. W. Phelps was the author;" Bruce A. Van Orden, "William W. Phelps's Service as Joseph Smith's Political Clerk," *Brigham Young University Studies* 32 (Winter/Spring 1991): 94 note 29. concludes, "I strongly suspect that it was Phelps who wrote 'The Answer' himself."
3. For more on the History of psalmodies In the New World, see Alburt Christ-Janer, et. al., *American Hymns Old and New* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1980), 3-16.
4. These appeared In *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (November 1837), 8, and *Elders' Journal of the Church of Latter Day Saints I* (November 1837): 31-32, and the *Elders Journal, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter -day Saints*, 1, (November 1837), 31-32, respectively. The former, entitled "The Younger Son," Is labeled "Selected hymn;" a designation that usually suggests a borrowing from a Protestant source. But certain aspects of the text suggest it is indigenous Mormon. Also, a search of the massive microfilm set "Dictionary of American Hymnology First Line Index (New York: University Music Editions. 1984) reveals no hymn with an identical or similar first line ("Behold the Son that Went Away")
5. See my *Mormonism and Music A History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989). 35-38. Other examples of "Songs of Zion" with that connotation may be found in the Thomas Bullock Papers, Historical Department Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives).
6. The prose version of what follows may be found in Fred Collier, comp., *Unpublished Revelations of the Prophets and Presidents of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Saints* (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing

Co. (1981), 61-63. The poetic version is published under the rubric of "Songs of Zion" in *The Evening and the Morning Star*, May 1833. I am indebted to Lynn Carson for showing me the connection between the two.

7. Other adaptations went "The faithless world promiscuous flows / Enwrapp'd in fancy's vision ... There is a brighter haven", and "There is an hour of peaceful rest / To mourning wand'ers given ... 'Tis found above in heaven;" "There's nothing true but heaven" appears in Charles Warren's *The Missouri Harmony* (1836). The variants cited are from, respectively, from William Walker's *The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion* (1835). 110 and 24; and *The Baptist Harmony*, 433. My thanks to Cheryl Christensen for providing this source. Because the meter of the basic text (8,7,8,8,7) is unique among hymn texts, it is relatively easy to trace the adaptations.

8. "This world," as originally published in *Latter Day Saint Messenger and Advocate* 1 (June 1835): 144; it was changed to "this earth" in all later publications. For a broader study of the phenomenon of Mormon song adaptation, see my "Poetic Borrowing in Early Mormonism" in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18 (Spring 1985): 132-42.

9. The first variant given is from Brigham Young et al., comps, *A Collection of Sacred Hymns for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Europe* (Manchester, Eng., W. R. Thomas, 1840), 277; the second is from David W. Rohm, comp., *A Collection of Sacred Hymns for the Church of the Latter Day Saints* (New York: C. Vinton. 1838), 105.

10. David J. Whittaker, "The Articles of Faith in early Mormon literature and Thought," in *New Views of Mormon History: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington*, edited by Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 83-92.

11. Peter Crawley, "A Bibliography of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" in New York, Ohio, and Missouri" in *Brigham Young University Studies* 12 (Summer 1972): 507-08.

12. In Dean Jessee, "Howard Cony's Recollections of Joseph Smith," *Brigham Young University Studies*, 17 (Spring 1977): 346.

13. This version is taken from the two-volume facsimile edition of James Johnson's 1853 four-volume set, *The Scots Musical Museum* (Hartboro, Pa.: Folklore Associates, 1962), 1:4

14. Published in the *Wasp*, I, no. 37 (14 January 1843): 1. The manuscript version is transcribed in Scott Faulring, ed., *An American prophet's Record: The Diaries and journals Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books. 1989), 287-89.

15. The Eliza R. Snow version appeared in the *Times and Seasons* 4 (1 February 1843): 96. For the guest list and an account of the feast, see Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts., 7 vols.. 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City; Deseret Book, 1964), 5:248. 252-63.

16. For Phelps's relationship with Smith, see Hugh Nibley, "The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers," *Brigham Young University Studies*, 11, (Summer, 1971): 391-96.

17. W. W. Phelps, Letter to Brigham Young, 25 September 1860, wrote that he was sending Young a "revelation" (a short homily) "as I used to with Joseph." My thanks to David C Whittaker for sharing his notes on the Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives. and several other sources in this paper.

18. These phrases appear in a version of the song in Solomon Hancock, *Biography*, microfilm of typescript, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. A slightly different version with a tune, appears in Gale Huntington, *Songs the Whalemen Sang* (Barre, Mass: Barre Publishers, 1964: 180-81. In *Times and Seasons* 6 (15 January 1845): 783, Phelps designates "The Indian Hunter" as the tune to which his revision of "Go With Me" should be sung.

19. "The Vision" section 91; in the first edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* (1835); it was section 92 in editions from 1841 to 1869, and section 76 from 1876 to the present.

20. "The Vision" as originally published in the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*, had only eight very long verses. The verse numbers I use here are those of twentieth-century editions. I am indebted to Matthew Donaldson for providing me with a parallel column arrangement of the prose and the poem.

21. Dallin H. Oaks and Joseph I. Bentley, "Joseph Smith and the Legal Process: In the Wake of the Steamboat Nauvoo," *Brigham Young University Studies* 19 (Winter 1979): 181-91.
22. In *History of the Church* 5:222. For Smith's discussions on the nature of prophecy, see 215-16, 231-32.
23. Dean R. Zimmermann. *I Knew the Prophet: An Analysis of Ike letter of Benjamin F. Johnson to George F. Gibbs, Reporting Doctrinal Views of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon, 1976). 19.
24. In Dean C. Jessee, comp. and ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984) 535. I thank Richard Neitzel Holzapfel for bringing this and the following passage to my attention.
25. In Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 575-77.
26. W. W. Phelps, Letter to Parley P. Pratt. 16 June 1842, Parley Pratt Papers. LDS Church Archives.
27. W. W. Phelps, Diary, 19 January 1843, holograph, LDS Church Archives.
28. See Phelps's comments in a letter. to Brigham Young. 6 August 1863, Whittaker notes Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal: 1833-1898*; edited by Scutt G. Kenney. 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983).2:349; Van Orden. "William W. Phelps's Service", 81-94; .Consider also the quite obvious correspondences between passages in a letter of Joseph Smith to James Arlington Bennett, dated 17 November 1843 (*History of the Church* 6:73.78), and passages in Phelps's funeral sermon for Smith, published In Richard Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, "The Joseph/Hyrum Smith Funeral Sermon," *Brigham Young University Studies* 23 (Winter 1983): 9-18.
29. Phelps, "The Lours Prayer," *Times and Seasons* 4 (1 September 1843): 319.
30. Phelps, Letters to Brigham Young. 16 January 1860 and 29 September 1862, Whittaker notes.
31. Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, 305.
32. I an basing statements about Smith's typical usage on the entries In Truman Madsen, ed., *Concordance of Doctrinal Statements of Joseph Smith* (Salt lake City: I.E.S. Publishing, 1985). which indexes the *History of the Church*, Jessee's *Personal Writings*, and Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, comps and eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980). My conclusions about Phelps's usage derive from a less systematic but still thorough examination over the past ten years of his published and unpublished works—poetry, essays, letters, editorials, sermons, and almanacs.
33. See his comments in *History of the Church* 3:28, 226, 239, 5:215...
34. *History of the Church*, 2:270 and 5:207.
35. Nibley. "the Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers"; 359-62, 369, 391.
36. Phelps, "The Sky," *Times and Seasons* 6 (1 May 1845): 895; Van Wagoner and Walker, "The Joseph/Hyrum Smith Funeral Sermon", 11; Phelps, Letter to William Smith, 25 December 1844, *Times and Seasons* 5 (1 January 1845): 758.
37. It is possible, of course. That by the time of his 1844 quatrain, Smith had changed his mind. He seldom used "virtue" as an abstract value, and it appears primarily in formulaic expressions like "by virtue of". See Madsen's concordance.
38. Richard Holzapfel, in personal conversation and in earlier drafts of his "Eternity Sketch'd in a Vision."
39. *History of the Church*, 5:121-23.
40. In Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, 302.
41. Even Brigham Young, who was later hostile toward Rigdon, took care to attribute the vision to both See *Journal of Discourses* 6:293, 9:107.16:42.
42. It is unclear how Phelps felt about Rigdon; after Smith's assassination he argued for Rigdon's expulsion from the Church and alluded to a passage in "The Vision" (D&C 76:99-100). "Brother Sidney is endeavoring to draw off a party, and he will be like those who were spoken of the vision: some for Paul, some for Apollo, some for Cephas &c"Continuation of Elder Rigdon's Trial," *Times and Seasons* 5 (1 October 1844): 633.
43. Joseph Smith, Papers, Miscellany, Box 5, Folder 18, LDS Church Archives.
44. In Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, 293.
45. Early Drafts of the *History of the Church*; C.R. 100 92, holograph In LDS Church Archives.
46. This emendation first appeared In "History of Joseph Smith," *Deseret News*, 14 May 1856. Unfortunately the corresponding page of the rough draft of the history is missing. Woodford, "Historical

Development of the Doctrine and Covenants: cites the same passage as published in History of the Church 5:288, as authority for attributing the poem to Smith.

47. Phelps may even have written the preface; compare Phelps's essay, "Sacred Poetry," Evening and Morning Star 1, no. 6 (November 1832): [5].

48. "Let Us Go," in Eliza R. Snow, Poems, Religious, Historical, and Political, Vol. 1 (Liverpool, F. D. Richards, 1856), 146-47.

49. This song, under the heading "To Pret, B. Young & Councillor H. C Kimball" is in folder of manuscript songs in the Thomas Bullock Papers, MS 12475, LDS Church Archives.

50. Levi Hancock, Poetry Book, holograph. LDS Church Archives.

51. The Improvement Era, 9 (December 1905): 93.

52. James B. Allen, Ronald K Esplin. and David Whittaker, Men with a Mission. 1834-1841: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the British Isles (Salt lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992): 241.

53. Editorial, Millennial Star 4 (August 1843): 62-63.

54. Edward Tullidge, Life of Joseph the Prophet, (New York: Tullidge and Crandall, 1878), 361-62.

55. History of the Church, 5:288.

56. The annotations on the poem consist only of several pencilled check marks and n orange crayon bracket to the right of stanza's 20,21—the stanzas most often cited by later scholars because they clearly say that Christ is the savior of the inhabitutta of All other worlds. See the bound Millennial Star volumes in the Brigham Henry Roberts Collection. LDS Church Archives.

57. History of the Church 6:78 note; see Also Truman G. Madsen, Defender of On Faith: The B. H. Roberts Story (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 291-92.

58. I. B. Bull, "The Poetic Quality to the Writings of Joseph Smith, Improvement Era 37 (December 1934): 717, and 38 (December 1935):734-35.

59. N. B. Lundwall, comp., The Vision, Or. the Degreee of Glory (Kaysville, Ut.: Inland Printing, 1951). 154-64—and many subsequent printings, many of them without dates. the book is a compendium of doctrinal comments related to the vision of the degrees of glory.

## 1994

### **William J. Hamblin, George L. Mitton, and Daniel C. Peterson, BYU Professors of Religion Mormon in the Fiery Furnace Or, Loftes Tryk Goes to Cambridge; A Review Of "The Refiner's Fire: The Making Of Mormon Cosmology, 1644-1844" By John L. Brooke FARMS Review of Books**

FARMS Review: Volume - 6, Issue - 2, Pages: 3-58

Professor Brooke's sweeping pronouncements about the development of Mormon theology—asserted rather than demonstrated—appear to be untrue. And the evidence adduced to refute them was gathered by one of the present reviewers, without the aid of any computerized concordance, in about a half hour. Subsequently, a quick computer search for the words "atonement," "atone," and "atoned" revealed that much more might, in fact, be done. Those terms occurred thirty-nine (39) times in the Nauvoo newspaper Times and Seasons (published 1839-1846), fourteen (14) times in the Messenger and Advocate (1834-37), and twelve (12) times in the Evening and Morning Star (1832-34). They occurred thirty (30) times in the so-called "Documentary History of the Church,"<sup>58</sup> which relates mostly to the period of Joseph Smith, and two hundred and six (206) times in the Journal of Discourses, which, covering the interval from 1854 to 1886, accounts for most of the period when, according to The Refiner's Fire, Mormonism "came very close to . . . denying the necessity of grace and atonement in any form" (p. 259) Perhaps such entries, and others related to them, require closer study. Certainly they have received none from John Brooke.

It is hardly surprising that Professor Brooke's contention on this matter should prove false. Joseph Smith had never devalued or come close to denying Christ's atonement. For example, the great revelation on the three degrees of glory and eternal progression that is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76—surely, by Professor

Brooke's standards, one of the most "hermetic" of Mormon documents—identifies the deified inhabitants of the celestial kingdom as "they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood."<sup>59</sup> And, in a statement dated 8 May 1838—well into the period when, *The Refiner's Fire* assures us, no such statement could or would have been made—the Prophet remarked that

The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.<sup>60</sup>

The context of Joseph's statement was a kind of extended self-interview. "I published the foregoing answers," said the Prophet of this exercise, "to save myself the trouble of repeating the same a thousand times over and over again." Unfortunately, *The Refiner's Fire* demonstrates that certain things cannot be repeated too often.

Since there appear to be no explicit references to things hermetic or alchemical in early LDS writings, we would expect Professor Brooke to undertake careful exegesis of those LDS texts in which he claims to find his vague metaphorical allusions.<sup>61</sup> In fact, quite the opposite is true. Brooke has not read Mormon scriptural texts with anything approaching sufficient care. A large number of his alleged examples of hermetic influence are plagued by tendentious misreadings of LDS texts and history that completely undermine his thesis.

Brooke consistently maintains that Joseph thought he was establishing the "third dispensation" (pp. xv, 3, 13, 22, 41, 45-46, etc.). This is in order to draw a parallel to Joachim of Fiore's concept of the Three Ages or dispensations, the first two of which were "the dispensations of Moses [Judaism] and Christ [Christianity]" (p. 3)—an idea which Brooke says influenced later hermetic and occult thinking. In fact, Brooke makes no attempt to provide evidence that Joseph or any early Latter-day Saints ever thought in terms of three dispensations. Rather, Joseph specifically spoke of the seven dispensations familiar to modern Latter-day Saints, and Mormon usage can admit an even higher number.<sup>72</sup> And, since the idea of dispensations is prominent in the Bible (e.g., at 1 Corinthians 9:17 and Ephesians 1:10, which served as the source for Joachim's concept), why should we suspect that Joseph's seven dispensations were influenced by Joachim's three?

According to Brooke, Joseph "reproduced the three heavens of the Cabala and hermeticism in the three Mormon heavens, the telestial, terrestrial, and celestial kingdoms" (p. 12, cf. 199, 205). Here Brooke ignores the obvious antecedent in Paul (1 Corinthians 15:40-42),<sup>73</sup> which is extensively paraphrased in *Doctrine and Covenants* 76. But, just as important, he misreads the text: Where is the telestial kingdom described as a "heaven" in the *Doctrine and Covenants*? In fact, the three references to "heaven" in *Doctrine and Covenants* 76 (vs. 63, 68, 109) refer either to the sky or to the place where God and Christ judge (D&C 76:68). The "heavens" are called upon to "hear" (76:1), the heavens weep (76:26), and they bear record (76:40); but nowhere in this revelation are the three degrees of glory themselves called "heavens." Quite the contrary, the telestial kingdom is explicitly associated with "hell" (76:84, 106), not "heaven." In fact the terrestrial and telestial glories are called "worlds" (D&C 76:71, 98, 109). But even if we allow Brooke the latitude to interpret *Doctrine and Covenants* 76 as referring to three "heavens," we must then ask: Precisely how many heavens do we actually find in hermeticism? In fact, the usual number is not three, as Brooke claims, but seven!<sup>74</sup> So why should we think that Joseph got his concept of three heavens from the seven heavens of hermeticism, instead of from the three heavens so prominently mentioned by Paul (2 Corinthians 12:2)?

Brooke's understanding of contemporary Mormonism fares no better. Many endowed Latter-day Saints will no doubt be bemused to learn that, since the early twentieth century "only the dead who had died outside the faith explicitly required the saving powers of temple ordinance [sic]" (p. 292). And readers of the *Ensign* may be excused for doubting Brooke's claim that "since 1950 references to Joseph Smith have declined just as fast as references to Jesus Christ have grown" (p. 305). Following O. Kendall White,<sup>75</sup> Brooke sees the



contemporary Church as being pushed by "neo-orthodox" thinkers into abandoning its true, hermetic roots (pp. 296-97; cf. 283, 305). In fact, he says, because of "significant departures from its nineteenth-century origins" (p. 293; cf. 295) "modern Mormonism may well soon become essentially indistinguishable from conservative Christian fundamentalism" (p. 282; cf. 284, 295, 303-5, 404)—a trend that our numerous, vocal, evangelical Protestant critics seem to have overlooked. Yet he acknowledges that there is opposition to this supposed tendency, identifying Hugh Nibley and D. Michael Quinn as allies who "see the survival of Mormonism in the embracing of this hermetic tradition" (p. 301). But this identification exposes the problematic nature of Brooke's depiction, since—however dubiously—his source, Kendall White, singles Hugh Nibley out as one of the leaders of the purported "neo-orthodox" party in modern Mormonism.<sup>76</sup> Both White and Brooke have seriously misunderstood Nibley on these matters.

As a matter of fact, Brooke seems to have read little or nothing of Nibley, nor of the unidentified writers to whom he refers as "Nibley's students" (p. 301). In a cavalier passage—less than a paragraph—he characterizes in the narrowest way Nibley's entire work (about 20 volumes!), showing no real acquaintance with his significant contribution to the study of Mormonism, much of which is quite germane to the issues Brooke is discussing (p. 301). He never cites the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* and shows little awareness of faithful Latter-day Saint scholarship. He mentions passingly only one book from the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, despite the publication of several books and articles related to his topic.<sup>77</sup>

It is striking, too, that Professor Brooke seems to have sought no feedback from reputable Latter-day Saint scholars before going public with his work. "The first test that a research project undergoes," he comments in his preface (p. xix), "is the scrutiny provided by public presentations. I am very much indebted for the opportunity to develop my ideas and my evidence—and for commentary and critique given free of charge—at a variety of forums." He thereupon lists a number of places at which he has presented his theories of Mormonism, some of them quite prestigious (e.g., the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Viola Sach's Colloquia at the *Maison des Sciences de l'Homme* at the University of Paris, the Andover-Harvard Divinity School Church History Seminar, and the Atlantic History Workshop at Johns Hopkins University.) But, one wants to ask, why did he evidently never submit his speculations to the evaluation of informed Latter-day Saints at the Mormon History Association or, even, at a Sunstone Symposium? Why, when, on the same page, he thanks scholars like Jan Shipps, Larry Moore, David Hall, and Jon Butler, who read his manuscript in whole or in part, are there no thanks for reading the manuscript to respected Latter-day Saint historians such as Thomas Alexander, James Allen, Richard Lloyd Anderson, Leonard Arrington, Milton Backman, Davis Bitton, Richard Bushman, or Grant Underwood, etc.? (How would Cambridge University Press regard a Christian or Muslim writer who had submitted to them a major revisionist work on Judaism, but who had egregiously failed to engage in dialogue with contemporary Jewish scholars?) Yet Professor Brooke could have avoided many embarrassing errors had he opted to take a look at current Latter-day Saint scholarship, or to submit his musings to competent Latter-day Saint evaluation. Thus, to choose just one example from scores that could have been selected, when he alludes in passing to "the already shaky edifice of the Book of Mormon, a historical revelation far too accessible to the historian's prying eyes" (p. 304), his is an uninformed judgment that relies far too confidently on the work of professional anti-Mormons like Jerald and Sandra Tanner (pp. 363, 380), to say nothing of Walter F. Prince's widely-ridiculed speculations about the origins of Book of Mormon names (pp. 169, 368).<sup>78</sup>

Professor Brooke's ignorance of contemporary Mormonism hurts him in amusing ways. Even the cold fusion claims made at the University of Utah a few years ago are pressed into service as illustrations of Mormon hermeticism: They are interesting, Brooke declares, "given Mormon doctrines on the nature of matter" (p. 299). He never troubles himself, though, to explain how the experiments of the two non-Mormon chemists Stanley Pons and Martin Fleischman are even remotely helpful as indicators of Latter-day Saint attitudes and beliefs.

It is probably significant that Brooke's mistakes are not random; rather, his presentation consistently misrepresents LDS scripture, doctrine, and history in ways that tend to support his thesis by making LDS

ideas seem closer to his hermetic prototypes. These are not minor errors involving marginal characters or events in LDS scripture and history; nor are they mere matters of interpretation. Rather, for the most part, they are fundamental errors, clearly demonstrating Brooke's feeble grasp of the primary texts. By analogy, if a biblical scholar were to discuss John's vision on the road to Damascus, or Peter's revelation on the isle of Patmos, he would be laughed out of the American Academy of Religion; such work would certainly not be published by Cambridge University Press. "This book," says Harvard's David D. Hall, praising *The Refiner's Fire* on its rear jacket cover, "changes the shape of American religious history." He is absolutely right, though probably not in the sense he intended. It is a sad reflection on the sorry state of knowledge of Mormonism among non-Mormon scholars that errors of such magnitude could pass undetected in the writing, reviewing, and editing process of *The Refiner's Fire*.

### **Biblical vs. Hermetic Antecedents**

Brooke recognizes that the question of "how to specify the role of hermeticism in relation to the many obviously Christian elements in Mormon theology" (p. xiv) is one of his major methodological problems. Yet the solution to this problem is, in fact, quite simple: Brooke must provide evidence for uniquely hermetic or alchemical terms or ideas in Mormonism—terms or ideas which are not paralleled in the Bible. Ignoring this principle, though, Brooke consistently downplays, and frequently altogether suppresses, the obvious and explicit biblical antecedents of Mormon thought in favor of obscure and vague parallels to hermetic, alchemical, Masonic, and occult texts and ideas, which themselves often derive from the Bible.

It is universally acknowledged that biblical quotations, paraphrases, and imagery fill all early LDS scripture, writings, and sermons. Time and again early Latter-day Saints explicitly point to biblical precedents for their doctrines and practices. Joseph Smith and all the early Mormon elders taught and defended their doctrines from the Bible. Even in the great King Follett discourse—which Brooke sees as a cornucopia of "hermetic" doctrine—Joseph declared "I am going to prove it [the doctrine of multiple gods] to you by the Bible."<sup>79</sup> The text is filled with biblical quotations and allusions. Never do the early Saints claim they are following hermetic or alchemical precedents. Brooke, however, generously sets out to correct this lapse for them, as the following examples will demonstrate.

- Anabaptists "posit Christ as . . . the Second Adam" (p. 14), as do Mormons; likewise, "touched by hermetic thought, the revolutionary [Protestant] sects interpret Christ as a Second Adam" (p. 204). No mention is made of 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 as the clear source for this idea.
- "Michael Quinn," Professor Brooke reports, "has noted that the idea of three heavens, or degrees of glory, was available in Emmanuel Swedenborg's cosmic system, in which three heavens—topped by a 'celestial kingdom'—were associated with the sun, the moon, and the stars" (p. 205). But Michael Quinn also knows that "the idea of three heavens, or degrees of glory, . . . associated with the sun, the moon, and the stars" can be derived from 1 Corinthians 15:40-42 and 2 Corinthians 12:2. Is Professor Brooke unaware of this?
- The Paracelsan and Joachimite "hope that an Age of Spirit [the third dispensation] would commence with the second coming of Elijah" (p. 15) is posited as a source of "the visions of Elias and Elijah received by Joseph Smith" (p. 28). Brooke fails to mention Malachi 4:5 and Mark 9:11 as obvious sources for this idea.
- "The godly Monarchy prophesied in the Book of Daniel [is] a typology popular among both the chiliast Munster Anabaptists and the Latter-day Saints at Nauvoo and in early Utah" (p. 24)—and, we might add, with every other Christian and Jewish millenarian group in history.
- The "visions and revelations" and "powers of healing and exorcism" of early Mormons are "like those of early Quaker leaders" (p. 28). No mention is made of the fact that these precise supernatural powers existed in the apostolic church, the obvious source for both Quakers and Mormons.

- Mormon "baptism for the dead [is based on] Spiritualist doctrine" (p. 28) and on the "radical heritage" of "the German pietist mystics at Ephrata" (p. 243). Why does Professor Brooke make no reference whatsoever to 1 Corinthians 15:29 as the unquestionable source for this idea in all of these movements?

- "In words replicated in Mormon doctrine, the high priest in the Royal Arch [Masonry] was to be "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedec" (p. 101). Professor Brooke omits mention of Hebrews 5:6 as the indisputable source for this precise quotation. Although he is elsewhere aware of Hebrews as the source for the Masonic material (p. 194), Brooke still perversely argues that Mormons got the idea from Masonry rather than from the New Testament.

- Brooke helpfully suggests that, "for a description of the biblical tabernacle and temple probably available to Smith, [his readers should] see *The Genuine Works of Flavius Josephus . . .* (New York, 1821)" (p. 376 n. 49). However, a description of the biblical tabernacle and temple that was most certainly available to Smith was the Bible (e.g. Exodus 25-36, 1 Kings 6-8, 1 Chronicles 21-28).

Given this consistent pattern of ignoring biblical antecedents for Mormon ideas, we are left to wonder whether Brooke is merely ignorant of the Bible, or whether he has consciously suppressed biblical parallels in order to bolster his weak case. His recognition that "proto-Mormon families were certainly immersed in the language and the promise of the Bible" (p. 72) indicates that he should have been aware of possible biblical antecedents. However, his acknowledgment, on one issue, that he is "obliged to Jan Shipp" for a point having an obvious biblical basis (pp. 72; 341 n. 45) leads us to suspect he may simply be biblically illiterate. At any rate, his case for hermetic influences on early Mormonism can only be made if he can demonstrate unique hermetic ideas in Mormon thought that have no biblical antecedents. This he utterly fails to do.

### **1995 (1830's Period LDS Beliefs)**

**Daniel Peterson, BYU Professor of Religion and Arabic**

**Review Of Grant Underwood, Saved Or Damned? Regarding Belief In Degrees Of Glory By Some Early Converts To Mormonism**

**BYU Studies**

**Daniel Peterson? Review of Grant Underwood, Save or Damned? BYU Studies, 35:2 (1995)**

Readers also need to cautiously explore Underwood's account of how the revelation of the three degrees of glory gradually impacted early Mormon thought prior to the early 1840s. While the dualism of heaven and hell continued to be found in early Mormon writings following the 1832 publication of what is now known as D&C 76, writings of early Latter-day Saints-such as W. W. Phelps, Warren Foote, Philo Dibble, Wilford Woodruff, Levi Hancock, George Laub, Zera Pulsipher, and George Morris-provide examples of converts who rejected the traditional belief in hell and readily accepted the Prophet's vision of glories. Thus, although a belief in heavenly mansions was not emphasized in the 1830s by Latter-day Saint missionaries, it was a belief understood and embraced by many early converts. Additional study of the impact on early Latter-day Saints of the doctrine of the three degrees of glory is still needed.

### **1996**

**Bob Wilkin, Executive Director, Grace Evangelical Society**

**The Biblical Distinction Between Eternal Salvation And Eternal Rewards: A Key to Proper Exegesis**

**Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society**

**Spring 1996 -- Volume 9:16 (excerpts)**

## **I. Introduction**

A number of books have been written recently which attempt to harmonize two NT themes: judgment according to one's works and justification by faith.

Sometimes the explanation given is hard to follow. Some authors seem to feel that justification is by faith apart from works and yet final salvation is by faith plus works.

For example, Judith Gundry Volf writes, "Paul's certainty that God will faithfully accomplish God's purpose to save Christians completely and finally does not mean, however, that he views this process as "automatic." The present is characterized by the eschatological tension. Both the reality of salvation and the power of evil await the completion of their salvation while enduring testing and afflictions in the present. Subjection to antagonistic forces at work in such tribulation can even threaten their salvation. Moreover, they have yet to appear before the judgment seat at which occasion their final destiny will be made manifest. Will they be accused and condemned after all?"

It is in the very context of these dangers that Paul affirms the certainty of Christians' final salvation... Christians are more than conquerors in tribulations and will come through the final judgment unscathed (Rom 8:28-39).

This is confusing. How is it possible that Paul "affirms the certainty of Christians' final salvation" and yet at the same time asserts that Christians await a final judgment in which they may be "condemned after all"?

The problem here is a failure to recognize a distinction between eternal salvation and eternal rewards. This is a widespread today. Blomberg, who feels that there is no distinction between eternal rewards and eternal salvation, writes concerning five texts which deal with the possibility of receiving crowns (1 Cor 9:25; 1 Thess 2:19; 2 Tim 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4): "A majority of commentators agree in each of these five instances that our texts are not at all talking about degrees of rewards in heaven but simply about eternal life."  
“

It is my contention that we will often miss the meaning of the text if we fail to recognize the distinction between eternal salvation and eternal rewards.

## **V. Theological Principles Which Grow Out of This Distinction**

The following are a number of points which naturally follow if there is indeed a distinction between eternal salvation and eternal rewards:

- Believers can and sometimes do fall away.
- All will not have an equal experience in the kingdom. Some will have more abundant lives than others.
- Salvation is a gift, but rewards are earned.
- Salvation can't be lost, but rewards can be.
- Assurance of salvation is absolute, but assurance of rewards is not absolute.
- There is no future judgment of believers to determine their eternal destiny. There is a future judgment of believers to determine the quality of their eternal experience.

## II. Two Test Passages

### A. First Corinthians 9:24-27

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

#### 1. The eternal salvation view

Blomberg argues that Paul was here speaking of eternal salvation and that he was uncertain that he possessed it. He writes:

In 1 Cor 9:25, Paul compares our perseverance to the athlete striving after an Olympic crown. But unlike a race on a track in which there can be only one winner, "we" [Christians] all should compete for "the crown that will last forever." This "crown" is the same as the "prize" of vv. 24, 27, which one fails to receive if one is "disqualified" (adokimos)... Eternal life and death are at stake here, not gradations of reward.

A too simplistic understanding of "eternal security" has probably led many Christians to doubt that Paul could have seriously considered not "making it to heaven." But true Reformed doctrine recognizes that saints are those who persevere. No Biblical text offers assurance of salvation for people who flagrantly repudiate Christ without subsequent repentance. Anthony Hoekema captures the sense of 1 Cor 9:26-27 quite well: "Only as he thus continued to discipline himself did Paul feel justified in claiming his spiritual security in Christ. He did not dare to claim this blessing while being careless and indolent in his daily battle against sin. And neither may we."<sup>3</sup>

#### 2. The eternal rewards view

There is a major difference theologically and practically between the eternal salvation view and the eternal rewards view. According to the latter view, Paul was sure he had eternal life, but he was not sure he would be approved by Christ at His Judgment Seat and receive the rewards that go along with that approval.

Hodges writes concerning this passage:

Paul compares the Christian life to a racecourse in which winning is not automatic for any runner, not even for himself...

Again, there is no thought here of the loss of eternal life. Such a loss is impossible, as our Lord Himself made clear. But the apostle can indeed envision the possibility that even he—a preacher to others—might lose the reward that God grants to successful runners...

No Christian life can be pronounced a success until it ends successfully. The race is not over simply because we have been running it for years."<sup>4</sup>

### B. Philippians 3:11, 14

If, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection of the dead... I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

#### 1. The eternal salvation view

"The Problem of Doubt in Philippians 3:11" is the title of a thesis written at Dallas Seminary adopting this perspective.<sup>5</sup> The author, William R. Johnson, says: "One can never be absolutely sure that he will persevere to the end until the end."<sup>6</sup>

He goes on: "There can be relative assurance of such perseverance. Paul expresses this in Philippians 3:11. He had seen what Christ had done in his life so far."<sup>7</sup>

Since he is writing from the Reformed perspective, Johnson then assures the reader that "the loss of assurance as treated in this thesis could never indicate more than that an individual never possessed salvation to begin with."<sup>8</sup>

Johnson concludes, "Paul seeks sanctification if perhaps he may attain to the resurrection of the dead. As long as his attitude is always on the goal and the striving required to reach it, he may have relative assurance of reaching it. Should he ever stop running, resting on his present achievements, or should he begin a lifestyle of habitual sin, such would be an indication that he might not truly know God."<sup>9</sup>

## 2. The eternal rewards view

A thesis entitled "The Out-Resurrection of Philippians 3:11" adopted the rewards interpretation.<sup>10</sup> In it the author, Phil R. Williams, says:

Exanastasis occurs in three other places [in the NT], in addition to Philippians 3:11. In each of these three instances...it [speaks] of a special, select, limited resurrection. It is used metaphorically with this same significance in Philippians 3:11. It is the same as the "better resurrection" of Hebrews 11:35, and is resurrection to greater glory and higher reward, won on the basis of faithfulness to Christ, and likeness to Him.<sup>11</sup>

There is a variation on this interpretation. I have argued elsewhere (The Grace Evangelical Society News, August 1991) that v 11 does not deal directly with eternal salvation or eternal rewards. Paul was hoping to attain to a quality of life here and now which manifested resurrection power. He was seeking to live now in the same manner in which he would live forever (cf. Heb 12:14).

According to this view the theme of eternal rewards is still present. In v 14 Paul indicates that he is striving to know Christ in his experience and to attain now to a resurrection type of life, so that he might receive the prize (brabeion, cf. 1 Cor 9:25) of the upward call of God in Christ. That prize, as in 1 Cor 9:24-25, is the approval of Christ and the rewards that attend such approval.

### **C. Which View Does the Text Support?**

There are several strong reasons to conclude that the rewards view is the best understanding of the texts in our test passages.

First, the salvation view demands the conclusion that Paul was unsure of his own salvation. That is, however, impossible apart from clear evidence of a complete mental breakdown on Paul's part. There is, of course, no evidence in the NT or in extrabiblical literature of Paul having experienced a major breakdown.

Paul came to faith in Christ by a dramatic encounter with the risen Lord (Acts 9:3-6; 22:6-16). He made it clear that he received the Gospel from Jesus Himself (Gal 1:12). He repeatedly asserted in his epistles that he believed in Christ and that he had eternal life and could never lose it. His certainty of his standing with God was based on his faith in the promises of God:

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Rom 8:38-39

"knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law" Gal 2:16

"you all are partakers with me of grace" Phil 1:7

"giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light" Col 1:12

"I know whom I have believed" 2 Tim 1:12

"To Titus, a true son in our common faith" Titus 1:4

"according to His mercy He saved us" Titus 3:5

See also Rom 4:23-25; 1 Cor 3:9-15; 2 Cor 5:1-21; Gal 1:12; 2:4-10; 1 Thess 2:4; 2 Tim 2:11-13.

In addition, in his letters to churches Paul called himself an apostle of Jesus Christ (cf. Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:1; etc.). Surely he knew that there were no unsaved apostles (cf. 1 Cor 12:1-31, esp. v 28)! Equally certain is that he wouldn't have called himself an apostle if he had any doubt about whether he was saved or not!

Any view that requires the conclusion that Paul was uncertain of his salvation should be rejected on that basis alone.

Second, the term *brabeion*, used in the NT only in our two test passages, most naturally fits with the eternal rewards interpretation. *Brabeion* means a prize. This prize can be compared with those won by competitors in an athletic contest (cf. 1 Cor 9:24-25). Competitors in a race who lost were not executed. They were not excluded from the kingdom in which they lived. They did not forfeit their citizenship. They did, however, miss out on the prize and the special privileges attendant to it.

Third, to suggest that "striving [is] required to reach [the goal of eternal salvation]," as the salvation view suggests, requires that Paul completely contradict his doctrine of justification by faith apart from works. Surely Paul would not contradict the Gospel which he preached. He was adamant to maintain its purity (cf. Gal 1:6-9; 5:12).

Fourth, the salvation view appeals to theology before exegesis. Blomberg admits that his understanding of 1 Cor 9:24-27 is influenced by dogmatic concerns: "True Reformed doctrine recognizes that saints are those who persevere." This leads him to the following syllogism:

- All Christians persevere.
- Paul wasn't sure he would persevere.
- Conclusion: Paul wasn't sure he was a Christian.

The syllogism appears airtight. However, it is flawed because one of the premises is wrong. All Christians do not persevere. In fact, 1 Cor 9:24-27 suggests that perseverance is neither automatic nor guaranteed.

We thus turn now to consider the various problems which result from misinterpreting passages which deal with eternal rewards.

### **III. Difficulties Which Arise from Failing to Recognize this Distinction**

#### **A. Distorting the Gospel Message**

If passages like 1 Cor 9:24-27 and Phil 3:11-14 refer to obtaining eternal salvation, then believers must work to obtain it:

"Run in such a way that you may obtain it."  
1 Cor 9:24

"I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."

1 Cor 9:27

"I press toward the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Phil 3:14

However, we know from many NT passages that this is not the case. Eternal salvation is absolutely free to the recipient (John 4:10; Rom 3:24; 4: 3-8; Eph 2:9; Rev 22:17). Jesus paid the whole price. We pay nothing. We are saved the moment we believe Jesus' promise to give eternal life to all who trust Him for it (John 5:24; 6:47).

Unlike eternal salvation, eternal rewards are not free. They are earned by work done. Paul said in 2 Cor 5:10 that "all [believers] must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." Similarly, the Lord Jesus said the He will "reward each according to his works" (Matt 16:27, emphasis added). Eternal salvation is not "according to what [one] has done" and is not "according to [one's] works."

In some places eternal salvation and eternal rewards are contrasted in the same paragraph. For example, in 1 Cor 3:14-15 Paul said: "If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire." The unproductive believer is saved even though his works are burned up. However, if a believer's works endure the test of fire, then in addition he will be rewarded. Compare also Rom 14:8-12; 2 Tim 2:11-13; Rev 22:14-17.

Since eternal rewards are not the same as eternal salvation, there is no contradiction of the Gospel in passages conditioning eternal rewards on perseverance in good works.

To understand passages like 1 Cor 9:24-27 and Phil 3:11-14 as being Gospel passages is to distort the Gospel by suggesting that ongoing good works are a requirement for obtaining eternal salvation.

#### **B. Undermining Assurance**

Obviously if the apostle Paul could not be certain he had eternal life, neither can anyone.



Reformed exegetes do not view this as a problem. In fact, they view ongoing doubt about one's standing with God as an important impetus to perseverance. For example, MacArthur writes, "Periodic doubts about one's salvation are not necessarily wrong. Such doubts must be confronted and dealt with honestly and biblically" (The Gospel According to Jesus, revised edition, p. 214). Shortly thereafter he writes:

It has become quite popular to teach professing Christians that they can enjoy assurance of salvation no matter what their lives are like. After all, some argue, if salvation is a gift to people who simply believe the gospel facts, what does practical living have to do with assurance? That teaching is nothing but practical antinomianism. It encourages people living in hypocrisy, disobedience, and sin by offering them a false assurance (p. 215).

Since assurance in the Reformed view is conditioned upon ongoing perseverance, assurance is something less than certainty.

As long as one looks to his works to discern whether he is saved or not, he will never be sure he has eternal life. If one fails to recognize the distinction between eternal salvation and eternal rewards, certainty is lost.

### **C. Improperly Motivating Obedience**

As mentioned above, doubts about one's salvation are viewed as an important motivation for those who do not distinguish between eternal salvation and eternal rewards. However, such a motivation is seriously flawed.

Believers should not fear going to hell. Jesus guarantees to give eternal life to all who trust Him for it (John 6:47). Paul proclaimed that there is nothing which can separate us from the love of God in Christ (Rom 8:38-39). It is impossible to trust Christ for eternal life and at the same time fear going to hell. The two are incompatible.

This is not to suggest that one who doubts his salvation is necessarily unsaved. It is sadly possible for genuine believers to lose their assurance (though not their salvation).

To be motivated to obey God out of fear of hell is to return to Rome. Such a motivation is not pleasing to God for He promises that those who believe in Christ will never be judged to determine their eternal destiny (John 5:24).

In addition to adopting an improper motive, those who miss the distinction between eternal salvation and eternal rewards jettison a proper motivation. Eternal rewards are held forth in Scripture as a powerful motivation for believers to obey God. Believers should set their hearts on laying up treasure in heaven (Matt 6:19-21) and on ruling with Christ (1 Cor 9:24-27; 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 3:21). While eternal life is an absolutely free gift, eternal rewards are earned by work done. Only by remaining faithful and diligent can any believer earn the right to rule with Christ forever (2 Tim 2:12; Rev 3:21).

## **IV. A Grace Gospel Hermeneutic**

If a given interpretation of a passage requires that eternal salvation is earned or preserved by works which the believer must do, then that interpretation should be rejected as impossible. The analogy of faith requires that we understand difficult texts in light of the simple ones. There are many simple texts which assert that eternal salvation is neither earned nor preserved by works which the believer does (cf. Rom 4:4-8; Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

If a passage clearly conditions something upon good works which a person must do, then the passage is either showing the impossibility of salvation by works (e.g., Romans 2), or is not dealing with the Gospel at all (e.g., the two sample passages).

John 6:28-29 appears to be an exception, but it isn't. There the expression "good work" (singular) is used rhetorically to refer to believing the Gospel. The Jews thought they had to do good works (plural) to obtain everlasting life. Jesus said the work (singular) they needed to do was to believe Him. Jesus was not talking about good works in the Pauline sense. He was talking about obeying God's command to believe in His Son (cf. Acts 5:32; 6:7; 1 Pet 2:7). Eternal salvation is conditioned upon faith, not upon good works.

Words like salvation (*sozo*, *soteria*), inheritance (*kleronomeo*, *kleronomia*), and even eternal life (*aionion zoe*) are not technical terms which always refer to eternal salvation from hell. On some occasions they refer to eternal rewards which believers can earn. See, for example, 1 Pet 1:5,9; Gal 5:19-21; 6:7-9.

Exegetes should be open to the possibility that a given text may be dealing with eternal rewards and not eternal salvation.

## **VI. Conclusion**

Two NT themes, justification by faith and judgment according to one's works, can best be understood and harmonized by realizing that there is an author-intended distinction in the NT between eternal salvation and eternal rewards. The former is a free gift, is apart from works, and is received by faith alone. The latter is earned, is conditioned upon ongoing good works, and is received by faith plus works.

If we fail to recognize the distinction between passages which deal with eternal salvation versus those which deal with eternal rewards, we will misunderstand quite a large number of NT texts. In addition, a number of practical difficulties will result. The Gospel becomes garbled. Assurance of salvation is eliminated. And motivations for obedience are muddled.

First Corinthians 9:24-27 and Phil 3:11-14 show the importance of this study and strongly support the thesis of this article. The biblical distinction between eternal salvation and eternal rewards is a key to proper exegesis.

**1998**

**R. C. Sproul, Evangelical Calvinist Professor**

**There Will Be Degrees Of Blessedness In Heaven**

**Essential Truth of the Christian Faith: 100 Key Doctrines in Plain Language**

**There will be degrees of blessedness in Heaven.**

Paul uses a metaphor of the stars of differing brilliance shining in the same heaven to illustrate this. There are, however, several clarifying points that need to be made. First, all the stars will shine. That is to say, there is no unhappiness in heaven. All are blessed beyond our most insightful imaginations. Second, the atoning work of Christ has the same saving efficacy for all saints. Finally, the works "of the believer" which "merit" greater or lesser blessedness are not good in themselves. Rather, it is the sovereign pleasure of God to regard these works as meritorious. He does so for Christ's sake only. While the great horror of Hell is its eternity, one of the greatest joys of Heaven is the assurance that it will never end. The last enemy, death, will be no more. Luke 20:34-38 assures the believer that this reward of Heaven is everlasting.

(The provided "Biblical passage for Reflection" are 1 Corinthians 15, 1 Peter 1:3-9, and Revelations 21 and 22)

**1998**

**Bishop Kallistos Ware, Eastern Orthodox Scholar**

**Dare We Hope For The Salvation Of All? Origen, St Gregory of Nyssa and St Isaac the Syrian  
The Inner Kingdom**

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**Chapter I2**

**Dare We Hope For The Salvation Of All? Origen, St Gregory of Nyssa and St Isaac the Syrian**

God is not one who requites evil, but He sets aright evil.  
St Isaac the Syrian

**"Love could not bear that"**

There are some questions which, at any rate in our present state of knowledge, we cannot answer; and yet, unanswerable though these questions may be, we cannot avoid raising them. Looking beyond the threshold of death, we ask: How can the soul exist without the body? What is the nature of our disembodied consciousness between death and the final resurrection? What is the precise relationship between our present body and the "spiritual body" (1 Cor 15:44) which the righteous will receive in the Age to come? Last, but not least, we ask: Dare we hope for the salvation of all? It is upon this final question that I wish to concentrate. Unanswerable or not, it is a question that decisively affects our entire understanding of God's relationship to the world. At the ultimate conclusion of salvation history, will there be an all-embracing reconciliation? Will every created being eventually find a place within the Trinitarian perichoresis, within the movement of mutual love that passes eternally among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Have we the right to endorse that confident affirmation of Julian of Norwich, as T. S. Eliot does in the last of his Four Quartets?

Let us pose the question more sharply by appealing first to the words of a twentieth-century Russian Orthodox monk and then to the opening chapter of Genesis. The dilemma that disturbs us is well summed up in a conversation recorded by Archimandrite Sophrony, the disciple of St Silouan of Mount Athos:

It was particularly characteristic of Staretz Silouan to pray for the dead suffering in the hell of separation from God... He could not bear to think that anyone would languish in "outer darkness." I remember a conversation between him and a certain hermit, who declared with evident satisfaction, "God will punish all atheists. They will burn in everlasting fire."

Obviously upset, the Staretz said, "Tell me, supposing you went to paradise, and there looked down and saw somebody burning in hell-fire—would you feel happy?"

"It can't be helped. It would be their own fault," said the hermit.

The Staretz answered him with a sorrowful countenance. "Love could not bear that," he said. "We must pray for all."

Here exactly the basic problem is set before us. St Silouan appeals to divine compassion: "Love could not bear that." The hermit emphasizes human responsibility: "It would be their own fault." We are confronted by two principles that are apparently conflicting: first, God is love-, second, human beings are free.

How are we to give proper weight to each of these principles? First, God is love, and this love of His is generous, inexhaustible, infinitely patient. Surely, then, He will never stop loving any of the rational creatures whom He has made; He will continue to watch over them in His tender mercy until eventually, perhaps after countless ages, all of them freely and willingly turn back to Him. But in that case what happens to our second principle, human beings are free? If the triumph of divine love is inevitable, what place is there for liberty of choice? How can we be genuinely free if in the last resort there is nothing for us to choose between?

Let us restate the issue in a slightly different way. On the first page of the Bible it is written, "God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was altogether good and beautiful" (Gen 1:31, lxx). In the beginning, that is to say, there was unity; all created things participated fully in the goodness, truth and beauty of the Creator. Are we, then, to assert that at the end there will be not unity but duality? Is there to be a continuing opposition between good and evil, between heaven and hell, between joy and torment, that remains forever unresolved? If we start by affirming that God created a world which was wholly good, and if we then maintain that a significant part of His rational creation will end up in intolerable anguish, separated from Him for all eternity, surely this implies that God has failed in His creative work and has been defeated by the forces of evil. Are we to rest satisfied with such a conclusion? Or dare we look, however tentatively, beyond this duality to an ultimate restoration of unity when "all shall be well"?

Rejecting the possibility of universal salvation, C. S. Lewis has stated: "Some will not be redeemed. There is no doctrine which I would more willingly remove from Christianity than this, if it lay in my power. But it has the full support of Scripture and specially of Our Lord's own words; it has always been held by Christendom; and it has the support of reason."<sup>2</sup> Is Lewis right? Does universalism in fact contradict Scripture, tradition, and reason in such a stark and clear-cut way?

### **Two strands of Scripture**

It is not difficult to find texts in the New Testament that warn us, in what seem to be unambiguous terms, of the prospect of never-ending torment in hell. Let us take but three examples, each consisting of words attributed directly to Jesus.

Mark 9:43, 47-48. "If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire... And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the Kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched" (cf. Mt 18:8-9; Is 66:24).

Matthew 25:41 (from the story of the sheep and the goats). "Then He will say to those at His left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from Me into the eternal fire.'"

Luke 16:26 (the words of Abraham to the rich man in hell). "Between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to speak about the life after death except through the use of metaphors and symbols. Not surprisingly, then, these three passages employ a metaphorical "picture language": they speak in terms of "fire," the "worm," and a "great chasm." The metaphors doubtless are not to be taken literally, but they have implications that are hard to avoid: the fire is said to be "unquenchable" and "eternal"; the worm "does not die"; the gulf is impassable. If "eternal" (aionios, Mt 25:41) in fact means no more than "age-

long"—lasting, that is, throughout this present aeon but not necessarily continuing into the Age to come—and if the gulf is only temporarily impassable, then why is this not made clear in the New Testament?

Yet these and other "hell-fire" texts need to be interpreted in the light of different, less frequently cited passages from the New Testament, which point rather in a "universalist" direction.

There is a series of Pauline texts which affirm a parallel between the universality of sin on the one hand and the universality of redemption on the other. The most obvious example is 2 Corinthians 5:21, where Paul is working out the analogy between the first and the second Adam: "As all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ." Surely the word "all" bears the same sense in both halves of this sentence. There are similar passages in Romans: "Just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all" (5:18); "God has imprisoned all in disobedience, that He may be merciful to all" (11:32). It might be argued that in these three cases Paul's meaning is simply that Christ's death and Resurrection extend to all the possibility of redemption. It does not follow that all will or must be saved, for that depends upon the voluntary choice of each one. Salvation, that is to say, is offered to everyone, but not everyone will actually accept it. In fact, however, Paul suggests more than a mere possibility; he expresses a confident expectation. He does not say, "All may perhaps be made alive," but "All will be made alive." At the very least this encourages us to hope for the salvation of all. C. S. Lewis therefore contradicts St Paul when he asserts as an established fact, "Some will not be redeemed."

The same note of expectant confidence is also to be heard, yet more distinctly, in 1 Corinthians 15:28 (this was Origen's key text). Christ will reign, says Paul, until "God has put all things in subjection under His feet... And when all things are made subject to the Son, then the Son himself will also be made subject to the Father, who has subjected all things to Him; and thus God will be all in all." The phrase "all in all" (panta en pasin) definitely suggests not ultimate dualism but an ultimate reconciliation.

There is also the text from the Pastoral Epistles that influenced the Arminians and John Wesley: "It is the will of God our Savior... that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4). It can of course be pointed out that the author does not here state as a certainty that all will be saved, but merely says that this is what God wants. Are we to assert, however, that God's will is going to be eventually frustrated? As before, we are being encouraged at least to hope for universal salvation.

It is important, therefore, to allow for the complexity of the Scriptural evidence. It does not all point in the same direction, but there are two contrasting strands. Some passages present us with a challenge. God invites but does not compel. I possess freedom of choice: am I going to say "yes" or "no" to the divine invitation? The future is uncertain. To which destination am I personally bound? Might I perhaps be shut out from the wedding feast? But there are other passages which insist with equal emphasis upon divine sovereignty. God cannot be ultimately defeated. "All shall be well," and in the end God will indeed be "all in all." Challenge and sovereignty: such are the two strands in the New Testament, and neither strand should be disregarded.

### **God the cosmic physician**

Turning now from Scripture to tradition, let us look first at the author who, more than anyone else in Christian history, has been associated with the universalist standpoint, Origen of Alexandria. He is someone who, over the centuries, has been greatly commended and greatly reviled, in almost equal measure. He is praised, for instance, by his fellow Alexandrian Didymus the Blind, who calls him "the chief teacher of the Church after the Apostles."<sup>3</sup> "Who would not rather be wrong with Origen than right with anyone else?" exclaims St Vincent of Lérins.<sup>4</sup> A striking but typical expression of the opposite point of view is to be found in a story told of St Pachomius, the founder of cenobitic monasticism in Egypt. While conversing one day with some visiting monks, Pachomius was puzzled because he noticed an "exceedingly nasty smell," for which he could find no explanation. Suddenly he discovered the reason for the odor: the visitors were Origenists. "Behold, I testify to you before God," he admonished them, "that everyone who reads Origen and accepts his writings will go down to the depth of hell. The inheritance of all such persons is the outer

darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth... Take all the works of Origen that are in your possession, and throw them into the river."<sup>5</sup> Alas! All too many have heeded Pachomius' advice, burning and destroying what Origen wrote, with the result that several of his chief works survive only in translation, not in the original Greek. This is true in particular of the treatise *On First Principles*, where Origen expounds most fully his teaching about the end of the world. Here we have to rely largely on the Latin version (not always accurate) made by Rufinus.<sup>6</sup>

Origen, to his credit, displays a humility not always apparent in his leading critics, Jerome and Justinian. Again and again in his treatment of the deeper issues of theology, Origen bows his head in reverent wonder before the divine mystery. Not for one moment does he imagine that he has all the answers. This humility is evident in particular when he speaks about the Last Things and the future hope. "These are matters hard and difficult to understand," he writes. "...We need to speak about them with great fear and caution, discussing and investigating rather than laying down fixed and certain conclusions."?

Yet, humble or not, Origen was condemned as a heretic and anathematized at the time of the Fifth Ecumenical Council, held at Constantinople under the Emperor Justinian in 553. The first of the fifteen anathemas directed against him states: "If anyone maintains the mythical preexistence of souls, and the monstrous apocatastasis that follows from this, let him be anathema." This seems entirely explicit and definite: belief in a final "restoration" (apocatastasis) of all things and all persons—belief in universal salvation, not excluding that of the devil—has apparently been ruled out as heretical in a formal decision by what is for the Orthodox Church the highest visible authority in matters of doctrine, an Ecumenical Council.

There is, however, considerable doubt whether these fifteen anathemas were in fact formally approved by the Fifth Ecumenical Council. They may have been endorsed by a lesser council, meeting in the early months of 553 shortly before the main council was convened, in which case they lack full ecumenical authority; yet, even so, the Fathers of the Fifth Council were well aware of these fifteen anathemas and had no intention of revoking or modifying them.<sup>9</sup> Apart from that, however, the precise wording of the first anathema deserves to be carefully noted. It does not speak only about apocatastasis but links together two aspects of Origen's theology: first, his speculations about the beginning, that is to say, about

the preexistence of souls and the precosmic fall; second, his teaching about the end, about universal salvation and the ultimate reconciliation of all things. Origen's eschatology is seen as following directly from his protology, and both are rejected together.

That the first of the fifteen anathemas should condemn protology and eschatology in the same sentence is entirely understandable, for in Origen's thinking the two form an integral unity. At the beginning, so he believed, there was a realm of *logikoi* or rational intellects (*noes*) existing prior to the creation of the material world as minds without a body. Originally all these *logikoi* were joined in perfect union with the Creator Logos. Then followed the precosmic fall. With the exception of one *logikos* (which became the human soul of Christ), all the other *logikoi* turned away from the Logos and became, depending on the gravity of their deviation, either angels or human beings or demons. In each case they were given bodies appropriate to the seriousness of their fall: lightweight and ethereal in the case of angels; dark and hideous in the case of demons; intermediate in the case of human beings. At the end, so Origen maintained, this process of fragmentation will be reversed. All alike, whether angels, human beings, or demons, will be restored to unity with the Logos; the primal harmony of the total creation will be reinstated, and once more "God will be all in all" (1 Cor 15:28). Origen's view is in this way circular in character: the end will be as the beginning.

Now, as we have noted, the first of the fifteen anti-Origenist anathemas is directed not simply against Origen's teaching concerning universal reconciliation, but against his total understanding of salvation history—against his theory of preexistent souls, of a precosmic fall and a final apocatastasis—seen as a single and undivided whole. Suppose, however, that we separate his eschatology from his protology; suppose that we abandon all speculations about the realm of eternal *logikoi*; suppose that we simply adhere to the standard

Christian view whereby there is no preexistence of the soul, but each new person comes into being as an integral unity of soul and body, at or shortly after the moment of the conception of the embryo within the mother's womb. In this way we could advance a doctrine of universal salvation—affirming this, not as a logical certainty (indeed, Origen never did that), but as a heartfelt aspiration, a visionary hope—which would avoid the circularity of Origen's view and so would escape the condemnation of the anti-Origenist anathemas. We shall return to this possibility in a moment when considering St Gregory of Nyssa, but let us first explore further Origen's reasons for affirming a final apocatastasis.

It is often claimed that belief in universal salvation, because it considers the eventual triumph of divine love to be inevitable, fails to properly allow for our liberty of choice. This is an objection to which Origen is consistently sensitive. However confident his hope that God's love will in the end prevail, he is careful never to undermine the vital significance of human free will. While affirming that "God is love," he does not lose sight of the correlative principle, "Human beings are free." Thus, when speaking of the subjection of all things to Christ, and of Christ to the Father (1 Cor 15:28), he observes: "This subjection will be accomplished in accordance with various assured methods and disciplines and times; yet it should not be thought that there is some necessity which compels all things into subjection, or that the whole world will be subdued by force to God." Origen is altogether definite here: there is no compulsion, no force. If God's love is finally victorious, this will be because it is freely and willingly accepted by the whole of rational creation. Origen's apocatastasis is not simply a deduction from some abstract system; it is a hope.

Here we touch upon a difficulty that is frequently felt not only in connection with the final reconciliation at the end of the world but also throughout our Christian experience in this present life. It is tempting to regard divine grace and human freedom as two contrasting principles, the one excluding the other; and as a result we often assume that the stronger the action of grace, the more restricted is the exercise of our human freedom. But is this not a false dilemma? In the words of John A. T. Robinson:

Everyone may point to instances in which he has been constrained to thankful response by the overmastering power of love. And yet, under this strange compulsion, has anyone ever felt his freedom infringed or his personality violated? Is it not precisely at these moments that he becomes conscious, perhaps only for a fleeting space, of being himself in a way he never knew before, of attaining a fullness and integration of life which is inextricably bound up with the decision drawn from him by another's love? Moreover, this is true however strong be the constraint laid upon him: or, rather, it is truer the stronger it is. Under the constraint of the love of God in Christ this sense of self-fulfillment is at its maximum. The testimony of generations is that here, as nowhere else, service is perfect freedom."

Surely this is true par excellence of the victory of God's love in the age to come. The power that is victorious is the power of loving compassion, and so it is a victory that does not overrule but enhances our human freedom.

Origen's caution is evident in particular when he refers to the salvation of the devil and his angels. He makes it abundantly clear that he regards this not as a certainty but as a possibility. In his Commentary on John he does no more than pose a question: "Since human beings can display repentance and turn from unbelief to faith, shall we shrink back from asserting something similar about the angelic powers?" In his treatise On Prayer, Origen limits himself to saying that God has a plan for the devil in the age to come, but we have at present no idea what this plan may be: "God will make arrangements for him, I know not how." In the work On First Principles, the matter is left to the judgment of the reader:

Whether certain of those orders, which are under the leadership of the devil and are obedient to his wickedness, can at some point in future ages be converted to goodness, inasmuch as there still exists in them the power of free will; or whether the evil has become so permanent and deep-rooted that it has become through habit part of their nature: let my reader decide this for himself".

Here Origen suggests two possibilities: either the demons still possess the power of free will, or else they have reached the point of no return, after which repentance is impossible. But he expresses no judgment; both possibilities are left open.

This raises an interesting question, which I once put to a Greek archbishop at the beginning of a four-hour car journey, in the hope that it would help us while away the time. If it is possible that the devil, who must surely be a very lonely and unhappy person, may eventually repent and be saved, why do we never pray for him? To my disappointment (for I could not at the moment think of other topics of conversation), the archbishop settled the matter with a sharp and brief rejoinder: "Mind your own business." He was right. So far as we humans are concerned, the devil is always our adversary; we should not enter into any kind of negotiations with him, whether by praying for him or in other ways. His salvation is quite simply none of our business. But the devil has also his own relationship with God, as we learn from the prologue of the book of Job, when Satan makes his appearance in the heavenly court among the other "sons of God" (Job 1:6-2:7). We are, however, altogether ignorant of the precise nature of this relationship, and it is futile to pry into it. Yet, even though it is not for us to pray for the devil, we have no right to assume that he is totally and irrevocably excluded from the scope of God's mercy. We do not know. In Wittgenstein's words, *Wovon man nicht reden kann, darüber muff man schweigen*.<sup>15</sup>

The strongest point in Origen's case for universalism is his analysis of punishment. We may summarize his view by distinguishing three primary reasons that have been advanced to justify the infliction of punishment.

First, there is the retributive argument. Those who have done evil, it is claimed, themselves deserve to suffer in proportion to the evil that they have done. Only so will the demands of justice be fulfilled: "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (Ex 21:24). But in the Sermon on the Mount Christ explicitly rejects this principle (Mt 5:38). If we humans are forbidden by Christ to exact retribution in this way from our fellow humans, how much more should we refrain from attributing vindictive and retributive behavior to God. It is blasphemous to assert that the Holy Trinity is vengeful. In any case, it seems contrary to justice that God should inflict an infinite punishment in requital for what is only a finite amount of wrongdoing.

The second line of argument insists upon the need for a deterrent. It is only the prospect of hell-fire, it is said, that holds us back from evil-doing. But why then, it may be asked, do we need an unending, everlasting punishment to act as an effective deterrent? Would it not be sufficient to

threaten prospective malefactors with a period of painful separation from God that is exceedingly prolonged, yet not infinite? In any case, it is only too obvious, especially in our own day, that the threat of hell-fire is almost totally ineffective as a deterrent. If in our preaching of the Christian faith we hope to have any significant influence on others, then what we need is not a negative but a positive strategy: let us abandon ugly threats, and attempt rather to evoke people's sense of wonder and their capacity for love.

There remains the reformatory understanding of punishment, which Origen considered to be the only view that is morally acceptable. Punishment, if it is to possess moral value, has to be not merely retaliatory or dissuasive but remedial. When parents inflict punishment on their children, or the state on criminals, their aim should always be to heal those whom they punish and to change them for the better. And such, according to Origen, is precisely the purpose of the punishments inflicted upon us by God; He acts always as "our physician."<sup>16</sup> A doctor may sometimes be obliged to employ extreme measures which cause agony to his patients. (This was particularly so before the use of anesthetics.) He may cauterize a wound or amputate a limb. But this is always done with a positive end in view, so as to bring about the patient's eventual recovery and restoration to health. So it is with God, the physician of our souls. He may inflict suffering upon us, both in this life and after our death; but always He does this out of tender love and with a positive purpose, so as to cleanse us from our sins, to purge and heal us. In Origen's words, "The fury of God's vengeance avails to the purging of our souls."<sup>17</sup>



Now, if we adopt this reformative and therapeutic view of punishment—and this is the only reason for inflicting punishment that can worthily be attributed to God—then surely such punishment should not be unending. If the aim of punishment is to heal, then once the healing has been accomplished there is no need for the punishment to continue. If, however, the punishment is supposed to be everlasting, it is difficult to see how it can have any remedial or educative purpose. In a never-ending hell there is no escape and therefore no healing, and so the infliction of punishment in such a hell is pointless and immoral. This third understanding of punishment, therefore, is incompatible with the notion of perpetual torment in hell; it requires us, rather, to think in terms of some kind of purgatory after death. But in that case this purgatory should be envisaged as a house of healing, not a torture chamber; as a hospital, not a prison." Here, in his grand vision of God as the cosmic physician, Origen is at his most convincing.

### **An uncondemned universalist**

Origen's longing for the salvation of all had already brought him under suspicion in his own lifetime.<sup>19</sup> Yet there were some among his spiritual descendants who kept alive this universal hope. The two most notable examples are to be found at the end of the fourth century: Evagrius of Pontus, monk in the Egyptian desert, and St Gregory of Nyssa, the younger brother of St Basil the Great. Evagrius upheld and perhaps hardened the full Origenist teaching concerning the preexistence of souls, the precosmic fall, and the final apocatastasis; and for this he was condemned along with Origen in 553. Gregory of Nyssa, on the other hand, abandoned Origen's speculations concerning preexistence and the precosmic fall,<sup>20</sup> while holding fast to his belief in an ultimate restoration; and, significantly, he has never been anathematized for this, either in 553 or in more recent times. In expressing his hope that all will be saved, Gregory of Nyssa is fully as confident as Origen. His words recall the great affirmation of Paul, "and thus God will be all in all" (I Cor 15:28). "When, through these long and circuitous methods," writes Gregory, "the wickedness which is now mingled and consolidated with our nature has been finally expelled from it, and when all those things that are now sunk down in evil are restored to their original state, there will ascend from the entire creation a united hymn of thanksgiving... All this is contained in the great mystery of the Divine Incarnation."<sup>21</sup> This final restoration, Gregory clearly states, will embrace even the devil.

Despite this bold claim, Gregory of Nyssa has never been condemned as a heretic, but on the contrary he is honored as a saint. Why should this be so? Perhaps he escaped reprobation because he was Basil's brother. Yet if he was treated differently from his master Origen, perhaps it was because, while retaining Origen's hope in the eventual triumph of good over evil, he abandoned the notion of preexistence and so avoided the circularity of the Origenist scheme. Whatever the explanation, the fact that Gregory has not been anathematized is certainly significant. It suggests that, if dissociated from speculations about a precosmic fall, a carefully qualified expression of universal hope is acceptable, even within the bounds of strict orthodoxy.

St Gregory of Nyssa is one of the patrons of the house of ecumenical studies to which I am attached in Oxford; and personally I am delighted that this should be so.

### **The scourgings of love**

A third patristic author who dared to hope for the salvation of all was St Isaac of Nineveh, honored and loved throughout the Christian East as "Isaac the Syrian." Although he lived some three generations after the Fifth Ecumenical Council, he was unaffected by the anti-Origenist anathemas associated with it; for, as a member of the Church of the East,<sup>22</sup> dwelling in Mesopotamia far outside the bounds of the Byzantine Empire, he owed no allegiance to the Emperor at Constantinople and did not recognize the Council held in 553 as ecumenical. Possibly he was altogether unaware of its decrees.

Particularly striking is Isaac's understanding of hell. He insists that the texts in the New Testament about fire, the worm, outer darkness, and the gnashing of teeth are not to be understood literally and in a physical sense. He speaks of hell or Gehenna as "noetic" or "intelligible."<sup>23</sup> Hell is an "effect," not a "substance,"<sup>24</sup> while

the "outer darkness" is not a place but "the state without any delight in true knowledge and communion with God."<sup>25</sup> "There will be psychic weeping and grinding of teeth," says Isaac, "which is a grief more hard to endure than fire."<sup>26</sup> The teeth-gnashing in the Age to come, then, so far from being physical and material, signifies an inner and spiritual anguish. I am reminded of the story of the preacher who, in his sermons on hell, dwelt with particular relish upon the gnashing of teeth. Eventually an elderly member of the congregation could bear it no more. "But I have no teeth," she exclaimed—to which the preacher replied severely, "Teeth will be provided."

Isaac had a better answer. In his view, the real torment in hell consists, not in burning by material fire, nor in any physical pain, but in the pangs of conscience that a person suffers on realizing that he or she has rejected the love of God:

Also I say that even those who are scourged in hell are tormented with the scourgings of love.

The scourges that result from love—that is, the scourges of those who have become aware that they have sinned against love—are harder and more bitter than the torments which result from fear.

The pain which gnaws the heart as the result of sinning against love is sharper than all other torments that there are.

It is wrong to imagine that the sinners in hell are deprived of the love of God... [But] the power of love works in two ways: it torments those who have sinned, just as happens among friends here on earth; but to those who have observed its duties, love gives delight.

So it is in hell: the contrition that comes from love is the harsh torment.<sup>27</sup>

When I first came across this passage as a student more than forty years ago, I said to myself: That is the only view of hell that makes any sense to me. God is love, St Isaac tells us, and this divine love is unchanging and inexhaustible. God's love is everywhere and embraces everything: "If I go down to hell, Thou art there also" (Ps 138 [1391:8]). Thus even those in hell are not cut off from the love of God. Love acts, however, in a twofold way: it is joy to those who accept it but torture to those who shut it out. In the words of George MacDonald, "The terror of God is but the other side of His love; it is love outside, that would be inside."<sup>28</sup>

Thus those in hell feel as agonizing pain that which the saints feel as unending delight. God does not inflict torment upon those in hell, but it is they who torment themselves through their willful refusal to respond to His love. As Georges Bernanos observes, "Hell is not to love any more."<sup>29</sup> "The love of God," writes Vladimir Lossky, "will be an intolerable torment to those who have not acquired it within themselves."<sup>30</sup> From this it follows that those in hell are self-enslaved, self-imprisoned. Ultimately, states C. S. Lewis,

there are only two kinds of people...those who say to God, "Thy will be done," and those to whom God says, in the end, "Thy will be done." All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell... The doors of hell are locked on the inside.<sup>31</sup>

Now if all this is true—if, as Isaac says, those in hell are not cut off from the love of God, and if, as Lewis asserts, they are self-imprisoned—then may it not be that they still have some hope of redemption? (Indeed, the Orthodox Church says a special prayer for them at Vespers on the Sunday of Pentecost.)<sup>32</sup> If divine love is constantly knocking on the door of their heart, and if that door is locked on the inside, may not the time come when at long last they respond to love's invitation and open the door? If the reason for their suffering is that they recognize how grievously they have sinned against love, does this not imply that there is still within them some spark of goodness, some possibility of repentance and restoration?

Isaac, for his part, definitely believed that this was so. In the second part of his Homilies (previously thought to have been lost, but rediscovered in 1983 by Dr. Sebastian Brock) Isaac speaks of a "wonderful outcome" that God will bring to pass at the end of history:

I am of the opinion that He is going to manifest some wonderful outcome, a matter of immense and ineffable compassion on the part of the glorious Creator, with respect to the ordering of this difficult matter of [Gehenna's] torment: out of it the wealth of His love and power and wisdom will become known all the more—and so will the insistent might of the waves of His goodness.

It is not [the way of] the compassionate Maker to create rational beings in order to deliver them over mercilessly to unending affliction.<sup>33</sup>

Isaac has two main reasons for affirming with such confidence his expectation of a "wonderful outcome." First, even more passionately than Origen, he rejects any suggestion that God is vengeful and vindictive. This he sees as blasphemy: "Far be it, that vengeance could ever be found in that Fountain of love and Ocean brimming with goodness!" When God punishes us, or appears to do so, the purpose of this punishment is never retributive and retaliatory, but exclusively reformative and therapeutic:

God chastises with love, not for the sake of revenge—far be it—but seeking to make whole His image... Love's chastisement is for correction, but it does not aim at retribution.<sup>34</sup>

As Isaac insists in the second part, "God is not one who requites evil, but He sets aright evil... The Kingdom and Gehenna are matters belonging to mercy." Gehenna is nothing else than a place of purging and purification which helps to bring about God's master plan "that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4).

Second, and more fundamentally, Isaac is convinced that "many waters cannot quench love" (Song 8:7). "Not even the immense wickedness of the demons can overcome the measure of God's goodness," he writes, quoting Diodore of Tarsus.<sup>36</sup> Unquenchable and limitless as it is, God's love will eventually triumph over evil: "There exists with Him a single love and compassion which is spread out over all creation, [a love] which is without alteration, timeless and everlasting... No part belonging to any single one of [all] rational beings will be lost."<sup>37</sup> Here, then, in distant Mesopotamia is one who is not afraid to affirm with Julian of Norwich and T. S. Eliot, "All shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well."

### **Love and freedom**

Within the tradition of the Christian East, then, we have identified three powerful witnesses who dare to hope for the salvation of all. Other witnesses could certainly be cited from the West, particularly among the Anabaptists, Moravian, and Christadelphians. Yet it has to be admitted that in East and West alike—but more particularly in the West because of the influence of St Augustine of Hippo—the voices raised in favor of universal salvation remain a small minority. Most Christians, at any rate until the twentieth century, have assumed that the main part of the human race will end up in an everlasting hell: "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Mt 22:4). How far is such an assumption justified? Having looked at Scripture and tradition, let us now invoke reason. Drawing together all that has been said so far, let us marshal three arguments in favor of universalism and four against.

### **In favor of universal hope**

The power of divine love. As a God of infinite compassion, it is argued, the Creator is not grudging in His mercy and forgiveness but immeasurably patient. He compels no one, but He will in fact wait until each and every one of His rational creatures voluntarily responds to His love. Divine love is stronger than all the forces of darkness and evil within the universe, and in the end it will prevail. "Love never fails" (1 Cor 13:8); it is never exhausted, never comes to an end. This appeal to the invincibility of divine love is the strongest argument in favor of universal hope.

The essence of hell. This is basically a restatement of the first argument. As we noted when citing St Isaac the Syrian, hell is not God's rejection of humankind but humankind's refusal of God. It is not a punishment which God inflicts upon us, but a state of mind in which we punish ourselves. God does not shut the door against those in hell; He does not withdraw His love from them, but it is they who deliberately harden their hearts against that love. Since, then, those in hell are still enfolded in divine love, it remains possible that they may some day open their hearts to this omnipresent compassion; and, when they do, they will find that God has not stopped loving them. "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny himself" (2 Tim 2:13). His nature is love, and He cannot cease to be that which He is.

The non-reality of evil. This is an argument that we have not so far had occasion to discuss. "I am He who is," says God to Moses at the burning bush in the Septuagint version of Ex 3:14; "I am the Existing One" (ego eimi ho on). God is Being and Reality, and He is the sole source of all existence. Evil, on the other hand, is in the strict sense non-being and unreality. Evil and sin have no substantive existence, for they are not a "thing" that God has made; they are a distortion of the good, a parasite—not a noun but an adjective. This was clearly shown to Julian of Norwich, who states in her Thirteenth Revelation: "I did not see sin, for I believe that it has no kind of substance, no share in being, nor can it be recognized except by the pains which it causes."<sup>38</sup>

Existence, then, is good, for it is a gift from God; and everything that exists, by the very fact of existing, retains some link with God, who is the only source of existence. From this it follows that nothing that exists can be entirely and utterly evil. To posit something totally evil would be a non-sense, a contradiction in terms; for such a thing would be altogether unreal and could not actually exist. Even the devil, because he exists, still has a continuing relationship with God. Thus where there is existence, there is hope—even for the devil.

A possible conclusion from this third line of argument is not universal salvation but conditional immortality. At the end God will indeed be "all in all," not because all rational creatures have been saved but because at a

certain point the radically wicked have simply ceased to be. Cut off from God, the unique source of existence, they have lapsed into non-being. At the end-time, that is to say, there will be a resurrection to eternal life, but no resurrection to eternal death; or, rather, there will be resurrection to a death that is final but not continuing, for it will entail annihilation.

This notion of conditional immortality has much to be said in its favor. It is an attractive way of avoiding the need to choose between universal salvation and an unending hell. But, although it was held by the fourth-century African author Arnobius of Sicca, it has otherwise little support in earlier tradition. The objection commonly advanced against the "conditionalist" standpoint is that God's gift of existence is stable and changeless. It is something that He will never withdraw: "For the charismata and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom 11:29). Within each rational being endowed with free will, there is something unique and unrepeatable; God never does the same thing twice. Shall this uniqueness disappear forever from the universe?

### **Against universal hope**

#### **The argument from free will.**

Because humans are free, it is argued, they are at liberty to reject God. His gifts are irrevocable; He will never take away from us our power of voluntary choice, and so we are free to go on saying "No" to Him through all eternity. Such unending rejection of God is precisely the essence of hell. Because free will exists, there must exist also the possibility of hell as a place of everlasting suffering. Take away hell, and you deny freedom. None can be forced to enter heaven against their will. As the Russian theologian Paul Evdokimov observes, God can do anything except compel us to love him; for love is free, and thus where there is no liberty of choice there is no love.<sup>39</sup> Whereas the appeal to the power of divine love constitutes the strongest

argument in favor of universal salvation, this appeal to free will is certainly the strongest argument on the other side. Significantly, both parties in the debate, although in different ways, seek their main support from the fact that God is love.

### **The point of no return.**

But, it may be rejoined, does not this argument from free will prove too much? If God never takes away from us our liberty of choice, and if those in hell therefore retain free will, then is not the possibility of repentance a continuing option for them? To this the anti-universalists commonly reply that there is a point of no return, after which repentance becomes impossible. God does not deprive the damned of their freedom, but the misuse of their freedom becomes eventually so deeply rooted in them that they cannot thereafter change, and thus they remain fixed forever in their attitude of rejection. God has not ceased to love them, but they have rendered themselves incapable of ever again responding to that love.

A parallel can thus be drawn between the saints in heaven and the damned in hell. The saints in heaven have not lost their freedom, but it is no longer possible for them ever again to turn away from God and to lapse into sin. They still have liberty of choice, but all their choices are good. In a similar way the damned in hell still retain a residual freedom of choice, for they have not ceased to be persons. But all their choices are bad, and it is no longer possible for them to ascend to the divine realm. The devil possesses freedom—but not the freedom to repent. In this way, after the Last Judgment there will be a "great divorce," and the chasm between heaven and hell will remain forever impassable.

### **The argument from justice.**

It is contrary to divine justice, so it is often alleged, that the wicked should enjoy the same reward as the righteous; the moral harmony of the universe will be impaired if evildoers do not receive their just recompense. I find this argument far less strong than the two previous arguments. As St Isaac the Syrian rightly insists, our human notions of retributive justice are altogether inapplicable to God.<sup>40</sup> He is a God not of vengeance but of forgiving love; His justice is nothing other than His love. When He punishes, His purpose is not to requite but to heal.

### **The moral and pastoral argument.**

Finally, on the anti-universalist side it is often said that universalism deprives the Christian message of its sense of urgency and underestimates the note of insistent warning present throughout the New Testament. Christ begins His public preaching with the word "Today" (Lk 4:21). "See, now is the acceptable time," states Paul; "see, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2). Today, now: it is this present

life that is our moment of opportunity and decision, our time of crisis, the *kairos* when we make the choices that determine our eternal future. If, on the other hand, we are allowed an unlimited series of further chances after our death, and if in any case we shall all end up in the same place whatever we do in this present life, then where is the challenge in the preaching of the Christian message, and where is the need for conversion and repentance here and now? If the triumph of God's love is inevitable and there is ultimately nothing for us to choose between, does this not make our present acts of moral decision trivial and meaningless?

Origen is aware of this difficulty. The doctrine of apocatastasis, he advises, ought to be kept secret; for, if preached openly to the immature, it will lead them to become careless and indifferent.<sup>41</sup> No doubt it is for this reason that the nineteenth-century Pietist theologian Christian Gottlieb Barth remarks, "Anyone who does not believe in the universal restoration is an ox, but anyone who teaches it is an ass."<sup>42</sup> St Isaac the Syrian deals with the problem in a different way. It makes an immeasurable difference to us, he points out, whether we respond to divine love here and now or only after countless aeons. Even though the torment of hell is not everlasting, it remains truly appalling: "Nevertheless [Gehenna] is grievous, even if it is thus limited in its extent: who can [possibly] bear it?"<sup>43</sup>

If the strongest argument in favor of universal salvation is the appeal to divine love, and if the strongest argument on the opposite side is the appeal to human freedom, then we are brought back to the dilemma with which we started: how are we to bring into concord the two principles God is love and Human beings are free? For the time being we cannot do more than hold fast with equal firmness to both principles at once, while admitting that the manner of their ultimate harmonization remains a mystery beyond our present comprehension. What St Paul said about the reconciliation of Christianity and Judaism is applicable also to the final reconciliation of the total creation: "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!" (Rom 11:33).

When I am waiting at Oxford Station for the train to London, sometimes I walk up to the northernmost stretch of the long platform until I reach a notice: "Passengers must not proceed beyond this point. Penalty: 150." In discussion of the future hope, we need a similar notice: "Theologians must not proceed beyond this point"—Let my readers devise a suitable penalty. Doubtless, Origen's mistake was that he tried to say too much. It is a fault that I admire rather than execrate, but it was a mistake nonetheless.

Our belief in human freedom means that we have no right to categorically affirm, "All must be saved." But our faith in God's love makes us dare to hope that all will be saved.

Is there anybody there? said the traveler, Knocking on the moonlit door.

Hell exists as a possibility because free will exists. Yet, trusting in the inexhaustible attractiveness of God's love, we venture to express the hope—it is no more than a hope—that in the end, like Walter de la Mare's Traveller, we shall find that there is nobody there. Let us leave the last word, then, with St Silouan of Mount Athos: "Love could not bear that... We must pray for all."

## Notes

1 Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov), St. Silouan the Athonite, 48.

2 *The Problem of Pain* (London, Jeffrey Bles, 1940), 106.

3 See Jerome's preface to Origen, *Homilies on Ezekiel*: ed. Baehrens, 318.

4 *Commonitorium* 57 (23): tr. C. A. Huertley, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, it (Oxford: James Parker, 1894), 144.

5 *Paralipomena* 7: ed. Halkin, 130-32; tr. Armand Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, Cistercian Studies Series 45-47, 3 vols. (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1980-82), 2:28-29.

6 By the same token, how far can we depend upon the total accuracy of the Greek quotations found in Justinian's Letter to Menas and used by Koetschau in his edition of Origen's *On First Principles*?

7 *On First Principles* 1.6.1; tr. Butterworth, 52.

8 For Greek text, see Franz Diekamp, *Die origenistischen Streitigkeiten im sechsten Jahrhundert und das fünfte allgemeine Concil* (Munster: Verlag Aschendorff, 1899), 90; French translation in Antoine Guillaumont, *Les "Kephalaia Gnostica" d'Evagre le Pontique et l'histoire de l'Origénisme chez les Grecs et chez les Syriens*, *Patristica Sorbonensia* 5 (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1962), 144; English translation in Aloys Grillmeier and Theresia Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition* 2:2 (London: Mowbray, 1995), 404-5. Origen took the term *apocatastasis* from Acts 3:21.

9 See Grillmeier and Hainthaler, *op. cit.*, 403-4. It should be noted that there are two sets of anathemas against Origen: the ten anathemas attached to the letter of Justinian to Patriarch Menas of Constantinople in 543, and the fifteen anathemas attached to Justinian's letter of 59, addressed to the bishops gathered in Constantinople before the opening of the Fifth Ecumenical Council. Distinct from these fifteen anathemas against Origen, there are also fourteen other anathemas dealing with the question of the "Three Chapters," which were formally endorsed by the Fifth Ecumenical Council; and in the eleventh of these there is a general condemnation of Origen, although without any specific reference to *apocatastasis*.

10 *On First Principles* 3.5.8; tr. Butterworth, 243.

11 *In the End God* (London: Fontana Books, Collins, 1968), 122.

12 *Commentary on John 13.59*: ed. Preuschen, 291.1-3.

- 13 On Prayer 27.15; tr. Greer, 146.
- 14 On First Principles 1.6.3; tr. Butterworth, 56-57. I have followed Rufinus here; the Greek (from Justinian) is less clear, but the sense is basically the same.
- 15 "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent" (from the preface of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*).
- 16 On First Principles 2.10.6 tr. Butterworth, 143.
- 17 On First Principles z.io.6; tr. Butterworth, 144
- 18 It is true that Orthodox theologians usually express reservations about the doctrine of purgatory as developed in medieval and post-medieval Roman Catholic teaching; but at the same time most of them allow for some sort of purging or purification after death. See my book (published under the name Timothy Ware), *Eustratios Argenti: A Study of the Greek Church Under Turkish Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 139-60. Elsewhere I have suggested that Catholic and Orthodox views on the "middle state" after death are less sharply opposed than appears at first. See my article "'One Body in Christ': Death and the Communion of Saints," *Sobornost* 3:2 (1981), 179-91.
- 19 For attacks on Origen in his lifetime, see Joseph Wilson Trigg, *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church* (London: SCM Press, 1983), 206-208; for fourth-century disputes, see Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1992); also Guillaumont, *Les "Kephalaia Gnostica."*
- 20 In *On the Making of humanity*, written ca. 380, Gregory of Nyssa advances a complex theory concerning what is sometimes called "double creation" of the human race (see especially §§16-17), but this is not at all the same as Origen's doctrine of the preexistence of souls, which elsewhere Gregory specifically repudiates (*On the Soul and the Resurrection*, PG 46:109B-113B; tr. Roth, 90-92).
- 21 *Catechetical Oration 26*: ed. Wallenberg, 67.7-11, 13-15.
- 22 Often styled "the Nestorian Church," but this is an inaccurate and misleading designation.
- 23 *Homilies 65(64) and 76* (alias Appendix A, §5): tr. Wensinck, 306, 350; tr. Miller, 313, 395.
- 24 *Homily 26(27)*: tr. Miller, 133; Wensinck, r28, renders less clearly, "...facts, not persons."
- 25 *Homily 76* (alias Appendix A, §5): tr. Wensinck, 350-51; tr. Miller, 396.
- 26 *Homily 6*: tr. Wensinck, 60. In Miller (tr.), 57, the word "psychic" does not occur.
- 27 *Homily 27(28)*: tr. Wensinck, 136; tr. Miller, 141. For the most part I follow here the translation of Sebastian Brock in A. M. Allchin (ed.), *The Heart of Compassion: Daily Readings with Si Isaac of Syria, "Enfolded in Love" Series* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1989), 53. For a similar view of hell, see Origen, *On First Principles 2.10.4-5*; tr. Butterworth, 141-43.
- 28 Cited in C. S. Lewis, *George MacDonald: An Anthology* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1946), 49 (par.484).
- 29 *Journal d'un cure (de campagne)* (Paris: Plon, Le Livre de Poche, 1961), 142.
- 30 *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, 234.
- 31 *The Great Divorce: A Dream* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1945), 66-67; *The Problem of Pain*, n5.
- 32 See above, 35.
- 33 *Homily 39.6*: tr. Brock, 165.
- 34 *Homily 45(48)*: tr. Wensinck, 216; tr. Miller, 230.
- 35 *Homily 39.15, 22*; tr. Brock, 170, 172.
- 36 *Homily 39.13*: tr. Brock, 169. Isaac also appeals to Theodore of Mopsuestia (39.8: tr. Brock, 166-67).
- 37 *Homily 40.5, 7*: tr. Brock, 174, 176.
- 38 Showings, ed. Edmund Colledge and James Walsh, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York/Ramsey/Toronto: Paulist Press, 1978), 148.
- 39 *L'Orthodoxie* (Neuchatel/Paris: Delachaux et Niestle, 1959), 60.
- 40 Compare also the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Mt 20:1-16). By conventional human criteria God is certainly unjust!
- 41 *Against Celsus 6.z6*; tr. Chadwick, 341. Thus for Origen the notion of an eternal hell has a certain usefulness as a deterrent, though only in the case of persons at a low spiritual level.
- 42 Quoted in Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Melody of Theology: A Philosophical Dictionary* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 5. I am grateful to Professor Donald Paul Burgo of Fontbonne College, St

Louis, for drawing my attention to this passage. He rightly adds that the ox and the ass were already at the stable in Bethlehem before the wise men had found their way to it.  
43 Homily 40.7: tr. Brock, 176.

**1998**

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**Chapter 2 - More Kingdoms Than One**  
**Life After Death**

**Chapter 2 - More Kingdoms Than One**

While meeting with his chosen disciples at the Last Supper, the Master said: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:1-2). This is a most intriguing statement. The Savior seems to have been saying, in essence, that it should be obvious, self-evident, to anyone that life hereafter consists of more than merely a heaven and a hell; if it were not so, he would have told us otherwise. Reason suggests that not all people are equally good and thus not all good people deserve the same reward hereafter. Likewise, not all bad people are equally bad and surely 'some are so bad they deserve to sink to the lowest pit in hell. Something so fundamental, so central to salvation as this principle of justice would surely be a part of what God would make known during the times of restitution.

**Background**

In June 1830 the Prophet Joseph Smith began an inspired translation of the King James Version of the Bible, a labor to which he was divinely directed and appointed, a work he considered to be a "branch of [his] calling." The Prophet and his scribes progressed through the book of Genesis until 7 March 1831, when the Lord commanded the Prophet to turn his attention to the New Testament (D&C 45:60-61). On 12 September 1831, to escape persecution, Joseph Smith relocated to Hiram, Ohio, to live with the John Johnson family.

By 16 February 1832 the Prophet and his scribe, Sidney Rigdon, had translated much of the fifth chapter of John. In verses 28 and 29 the Savior indicates that the time will come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and will come forth from the graves: "They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." The Prophet felt impressed to alter the text as follows: "And shall come forth; they who have done good, in the resurrection of the just; and they who have done evil, in the resurrection of the unjust" (JST John 5:29; D&C 76:17). "Now this caused us to marvel," the Prophet stated, "for it was given unto us of the Spirit. And while we meditated upon these things, the Lord touched the eyes of our understandings and they were opened, and the glory of the Lord shone round about" (D&C 76:18-19). The alteration in the text, though interesting, is not earthshaking or overwhelming. But truly, "out of small things proceedeth that which is great" (D&C 64:33). There came to Joseph Smith and his scribe on this occasion one of the most remarkable oracles ever given to men on earth, one we have come to know simply as the vision, or the vision of the glories, which is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76. This grand revelation stands for Latter-day Saints as an interpretive commentary upon the Savior's words concerning "many mansions" in the world to come.

Philo Dibble, one who was present at the Johnson home when this vision was received, has left us the following fascinating account:



The vision of the three degrees of glory which is recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants was given at the house of 'Father Johnson,' in Hiram, Ohio, and during the time that Joseph and Sidney were in the Spirit and saw the heavens open there were other men in the room, perhaps twelve, among whom I was one during a part of the time—probably two-thirds of the time. I saw the glory and felt the power, but did not see the vision.

Joseph wore black clothes, but at this time seemed to be dressed in an element of glorious white, and his face shone as if it were transparent, but I did not see the same glory attending Sidney....

Joseph would, at intervals, say: 'What do I see?' as one might say while looking out the window and beholding what all in the room could not see. Then he would relate what he had seen or what he was looking at.

Then Sidney replied, 'I see the same.'

Presently Sidney would say, 'What do I see?' and would repeat what he had seen or was seeing.

And Joseph would reply, 'I see the same.'

This manner of conversation was repeated at short intervals to the end of the vision, and during the whole time not a word was spoken by any other person. Not a sound or motion was made by anyone but Joseph and Sidney, and it seemed to me that they never moved a joint or limb during the time I was there, which I think was over an hour, and to the end of the vision.

Joseph sat firmly and calmly all the time in the midst of a magnificent glory, but Sidney sat limp and pale, apparently as limber as a rag, observing which, Joseph remarked, smilingly, 'Sidney is not used to it as I am.'

After the vision and while still in the Spirit, the Prophet and his scribe were permitted to record a hundredth part of what they saw and experienced.' In fact, the vision actually consists of six visions, each of which we will now consider briefly.

### **Vision I: The Glory Of The Son**

The first vision briefly sets the stage for what follows by placing things in perspective with regard to the work of redemption and salvation—namely, that salvation is in Christ and comes through the shedding of his own blood and his glorious rise to newness of life in the resurrection. The translators thus saw in vision "the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, and received of his fulness; and saw the holy angels, and them who are sanctified before his throne, worshipping God, and the Lamb, who worship him forever and ever" (D&C 76:20-21). Similarly, John the Revelator had recorded concerning the Redeemer, "Ten thousand limes ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing" (Revelation 5:11-12).

The Prophet and his scribe bore witness of the Redeemer in powerful language: "And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he ilves! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:22-24). Truly, the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10), and all the holy prophets,

from the beginning, have testified of the One who called and sent them (Acts 10:43; Jacob 4:4; 7:11; Mosiah 1<sup>3</sup>:3<sup>3</sup>).

In addition, the Prophet Joseph's witness contains significant doctrine. For one thing, his testimony affirms the burden of scripture—that Jehovah-Christ was and is the Creator of worlds without number (Moses 1:33; 7:30; Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 1:1-2). It confirms also the infinite and eternal nature of the Atonement. Whatsoever our Lord and Master creates, he redeems. That is to say, his redemptive labors reach beyond the bounds of our earth (Moses 1:32-35). In 1843 the Prophet Joseph Smith rewrote this vision in poetry. Verses 22 through 24 were rendered as follows:

And now after all of the proofs made of him,  
By witnesses truly, by whom he was known,  
This is mine, last of all, that he lives; yea he lives!  
And sits at the right hand of God, on his throne.  
And I heard a great voice, bearing record from heav'n.  
He's the Savior, and only begotten of God—  
By him, of him, and through him, the worlds were all made,  
Even all that careen in the heavens so broad,  
Whose inhabitants, too, from the first to the last,  
Are sav'd by the very same Savior of ours;  
And, of course, are begotten God's daughters and sons,  
By the very same truths, and the very same pow'rs.<sup>o</sup>

Or, as Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: "Christ created worlds without number whose inhabitants are adopted into the family of God by the atoning sacrifice wrought on our earth. The faithful on all worlds are spiritually begotten in the same way as on our earth."

### **Vision II: The Fall Of Lucifer**

Having been shown that the foundation of our faith is redemption in Christ, the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon learned a vital element of the plan of salvation—the nature of opposition through Satan and satanic influences. Lucifer is described in the vision as one "who was in authority in the presence of God" (DEC 76:25), who rebelled against the Father and the Son in the premortal council in heaven, thus becoming known as perdition, a word meaning "ruin" or "destruction." Because he was indeed a spirit son of God, our spirit brother, "a son of the morning" (DEC 76:26), in fact, "one of the early born spirit children of the Father,"<sup>6</sup> the heavens wept over his defection. He coveted the throne of the Father and proposed to save all the sons and daughters of God in a way contrary to the plan of the Father (Moses 4:1-4). "The contention in heaven was—Jesus said there would be certain souls that would not be saved; and the devil said he could save them all, and laid his plans before the grand council, who gave their vote in favor of Jesus Christ. So the devil rose up in rebellion against God, and was cast down, with all who put up their heads for him."<sup>7</sup> Lucifer became thereby an enemy to God and to all righteousness: "Wherefore, he maketh war with the saints of God, and encompasseth them round about" (DEC 76:25-29).

### **Vision III: The Sons Of Perdition**

Doctrine and Covenants 76:30-49 describes those who have once known light and truth and the revelations of heaven and who choose knowingly to deny the light and defy God and his work. These are the sons of perdition, "vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity" (DEC 76:33). The apostle Paul observed that "it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have

tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance" (Hebrews 6:4-6; compare 10:26-29).

"What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin?" Joseph the Seer asked rhetorically in the King Follett Sermon. He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against Him. After a man has sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy." He continued: "When a man begins to be an enemy to this work, he hunts me, he seeks to kill me, and never ceases to thirst for my blood. He gets the spirit of the devil—the same spirit that they had who crucified the Lord of Life—the same spirit that sins against the Holy Ghost. You cannot save such persons; you cannot bring them to repentance; they make open war, like the devil, and awful is the consequence."

All of the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve will come forth from the grave in the resurrection, including sons of perdition (DEC 88:32). The sons of perdition are guilty of the unpardonable sin (Alma 39:6), a sin not covered by the atonement of Christ, a sin for which no amount of personal suffering will right the wrongs done. There is no forgiveness for them, neither here nor hereafter, for "having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it, and having denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father, having crucified him unto themselves and put him to an open shame" (DEC 76:34-35), they are guilty of shedding innocent blood, meaning the innocent blood of Christ.<sup>9</sup>"The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," a later revelation affirms, "which shall not be forgiven in the world nor out of the world, is in that ye commit murder wherein ye shed innocent blood, and assent unto my death, after ye have received my new and everlasting covenant, saith the Lord God" (D&C 132:27).

The sons of perdition are the only ones who shall be subject to the second spiritual death, the final expulsion from the presence of God. They, after being resurrected and standing before God to be judged (2 Nephi 9:15) shall be consigned to a kingdom of no glory.

In the midst of this gloomy scene the Lord provides one of the most beautiful descriptions of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the "glad tidings" that "he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness; that through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power and made by him; who glorifies the Father, and saves all the works of his hands, except those sons of perdition who deny the Son after the Father has revealed him" (D&C 76:40-43).

This third vision ended with a sobering reminder that the particulars of the fate of the sons of perdition have not been revealed (D&C 76:45-48). In 1833 the Prophet Joseph Smith explained that "the Lord never authorized [certain individuals] to say that the devil, his angels, or the sons of perdition, should ever be restored; for their state of destiny was not revealed to man, is not revealed, nor ever shall be revealed, save to those who are made partakers thereof: consequently those who teach this doctrine have not received it of the Spirit of the Lord. Truly Brother Oliver declared it to be the doctrine of devils."

#### **Vision IV: The Celestial Glory**

The scene shifted as the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were permitted to study and learn by contrast—from perdition to exaltation. They beheld the glories of the highest, or celestial, kingdom and provided broad descriptions of those who inhabit the same. They beheld the inhabitants of the "resurrection of the just" (D&C 76:50) which is what we call the first resurrection (Mosiah 15:21-25), the resurrection of celestial and terrestrial persons. Celestial persons are those who receive the testimony of Jesus and accept the terms and conditions of

the gospel covenant. They are "baptized after the manner of his burial" and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, thereby becoming "cleansed from all their sins" (D&C 76:51-52). Those who inherit a celestial glory are they who "overcome by faith" (D&C 76:53), who "withstand every temptation of the devil, with their faith on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Alma 37:33). They overcome the world in forsaking worldliness and carnal attractions and give themselves to the Lord and his work. These are "sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true" (D&C 76:53). The Holy Spirit of Promise is the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit promised to the Saints. Because "the Comforter knoweth all things" (D&C 42:17; Moses 6:61), the Holy Ghost is able to search the souls of men and women and to ascertain the degree to which they have truly yielded their hearts unto God, the degree to which they are "just and true" (D&C 76:53). Thus to be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise is to have the ratifying approval of the Holy Ghost upon our lives and upon the ordinances and covenants into which we have entered. It is to have passed the tests of mortality, to have qualified for celestial glory hereafter.

For these overcome, by their faith and their works,  
Being tried in their life-time, as purified gold,  
And seal'd by the spirit of promise, to life,  
By men called of God, as Aaron of old."

Celestial men and women are "the Church of the Firstborn" (D&C 76:54). The Church of the Firstborn is the "inner circle" of faithful Saints who have proven true and faithful to their covenants. As baptism is the gate to membership in the Church of Jesus Christ on earth, so celestial marriage opens the door to membership in the heavenly church.<sup>12</sup> The Church of the Firstborn is the Church beyond the veil, the organized body of Saints who inherit exaltation. It is made up of those who qualify for the blessings of the Firstborn. Jesus is the Firstborn of the Father and as such is entitled to the birthright. As an act of consummate mercy and grace, our blessed Savior makes it possible for us to inherit, receive, and possess the same blessings he receives, as though each of us were the Firstborn. Those who come into the Church and live worthy of the companionship of the Holy Ghost are born again; they become the sons and daughters of Jesus Christ by adoption (Mosiah 5:1-7). If they continue faithful, receive thereafter the covenants and ordinances of the temple, including the endowment and celestial marriage, and are true to those higher covenants, they will eventually become the sons and daughters of God, meaning the Father." They become heirs of God and joint-heirs, or co-inheritors, with Christ to all that the Father has, including eternal life. "Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God" (D&C 76:58). President Brigham Young therefore stated that "the ordinances of the house of God are expressly for the Church of the Firstborn:"

"They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory" (D&C 76:56). That is, they are kings and queens, priests and priestesses, men and women who through their steadfastness and immovability in keeping their covenants have received what the prophets call the "fulness of the priesthood" (D&C 124:28). The Prophet Joseph explained in 1843 that "those holding the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood are kings and priests of the Most High God, holding the keys of power and blessings." These are they who will accompany the Master when he returns in glory, those who, if they have already passed through the veil of death, will come forth from the grave in glorious immortality. The first resurrection, which began at the time of Christ's resurrection, will thus resume. These are they whose names are written in heaven, in the Lamb's book of life (D&C 88:2), "where God and Christ are the judge of all (D&C 76:68).

And then, lest we should conclude that such persons have attained to this highest degree of glory on their own,

through their own merits and mortal accomplishments or without divine assistance, the holy word attests: "These are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood" (DEC 76:69). They are made perfect—whole, complete, fully formed, spiritually mature—through their covenant union with the Savior.

### **Vision V: The Terrestrial Glory**

The next vision represents a continuation of the first resurrection, or the resurrection of the just. A broad description of terrestrial beings is given: "Behold, these are they who died without law" (D&C 76:72). We know from Joseph Smith's vision of the celestial kingdom that those who did not have the opportunity to receive the gospel fulness, including little children who die before the age of accountability, but who would have done so if that opportunity had been extended to them, are heirs of the celestial kingdom (D&C 137:7-10). Those who "died without law" are the heathen nations (D&C <sup>45,54</sup>), as explained in the poetic version:

Behold, these are they that have died without law;  
The heathen of ages that never had hope.

Elder Melvin J. Ballard described this group as follows: "Now, I wish to say to you that those who died without law, meaning the pagan nations, for lack of faithfulness, for lack of devotion, in the former life, are obtaining all that they are entitled to. I don't mean to say that all of them will be barred from entrance into the highest glory. Anyone of them that repents and complies with the conditions might also obtain celestial glory, but the great bulk of them shall only obtain terrestrial glory.""

The Prophet and his scribe witnessed the final state of those who chose to abide by goodness and equity and decency in their second estate but chose also not to receive and incorporate the fulness of that light and power that derive from the receipt of the everlasting gospel. The terrestrial glory is made up of those who in this life did not receive the testimony of Jesus--the testimony that he is the Savior and Redeemer of mankind—but afterward received it; that is, they received that witness in the postmortal spirit world (D&C 76:73-74). The terrestrial world is also inhabited by those who knew in this life that Jesus was the Christ but who were not valiant enough in that witness to receive the fulness of the gospel when it was presented to them. Or, as the Prophet rendered it poetically:

Not valiant for truth, they obtain'd not the crown,  
But are of that glory that's typ'd by the moon:  
They are they, that come into the presence of Christ,  
But not to the fulness of God, on his throne."

For that matter, those who have received the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ—in our day, those who have joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—and then do not prove to be valiant in their testimony, are candidates for the terrestrial degree of glory hereafter. <sup>19</sup>

### **Vision VI: The Telesstial Glory**

Remembering that celestial persons receive the testimony of Jesus and also the gospel covenant and that terrestrial persons receive the testimony of Jesus but not the gospel covenant, we now learn concerning the inhabitants of the telesstial world: "These are they who received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus" (D&C 76:82; see also D&C 76:101). They "deny not the Holy Spirit" (D&C 76:83). That is, their wickedness is not such as to lead to complete perdition; they do not qualify to become sons of perdition, but they "are thrust down to hell" (D&C 76:84); at the time of their mortal death, they enter into that realm of the postmortal sphere we know as hell and are confronted with their sinfulness. These

do not come forth from the grave until the "last resurrection," until the end of the Millennium, "until the Lord, even Christ the Lamb, shall have finished his work" (D&C 76:85).

As is the case with the other kingdoms of glory, there are broad classifications of telestial people. These are they "who are of Paul, and of Apollos, and of Cephas. These are they who say they are some of one and some of another—some of Christ and some of John, and some of Moses, and some of Elias, and some of Esaias, and some of Isaiah, and some of Enoch; but received not the gospel, neither the testimony of Jesus, neither the prophets, neither the everlasting covenant" (D&C 76:99-101). Or, as the Prophet wrote in poetry,

These are they that came out for Apollos and Paul;  
For Cephas and Jesus, in all kinds of hope;  
For Enoch and Moses, and Peter and John;  
For Luther and Calvin, and even the Pope.  
For they never received the gospel of Christ,  
Nor the prophetic spirit that came from the Lord;  
Nor the covenant neither, which Jacob once had;  
They went their own way, and they have their reward.<sup>10</sup>

Further, the telestial kingdom is the final abode of liars, sorcerers, adulterers and whoremongers, and, as John the Revelator learned, of murderers (D&C 76:103; Revelation 21:8; 22:15).

Finally, the vision adds the sobering detail that the inhabitants of the telestial world, "as innumerable as the stars in the firmament of heaven, or as the sand upon the seashore," shall be "servants of the Most High; but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end" (D&C 76:109, 112). In short, the celestial body is qualitatively different from the terrestrial or the telestial body. Elder Melvin J. Ballard pointed out that "one who gains possession of the lowest degree of the telestial glory may ultimately arise to the highest degree of that glory, but no provision has been made for promotion from one glory to another. . . [T]hose who come forth in the celestial glory with celestial bodies have a body that is more refined. It is different. The very fibre and texture of the celestial body is more pure and holy than a telestial or terrestrial body, and a celestial body alone can endure celestial glory.... When we have a celestial body it will be suited to the celestial conditions and a telestial body could not endure celestial glory. It would be torment and affliction to them. I have not read in the scripture where there will be another resurrection where we can obtain a celestial body for a terrestrial body. What we receive in the resurrection will be ours forever and forever.""

President Spencer W. Kimball wrote: "After a person has been assigned to his place in the kingdom, either in the telestial, the terrestrial or the celestial, or to his exaltation, he will never advance from his assigned glory to another glory. That is eternal! That is why we must make our decisions early in life and why it is imperative that such decisions be right."<sup>22</sup>

Although the telestial kingdom is the lowest of the kingdoms of glory, the inhabitants of that glory shall be "heirs of salvation" in a world that "surpasses all understanding" (D&C 76:88-89). Generally speaking, the word salvation means in scripture exactly the same thing as exaltation or eternal life (D&C 6:13; 14:7; Alma 11:40). There are a few times in scripture, however, when salvation refers to something less than exaltation (see, for example, D&C 132:17), and this is one of those times. In this expansive sense, our Lord seeks to save all of his children with an everlasting salvation. And he does so, in that all but the sons of perdition eventually inherit a kingdom of glory (D&C 76:43). In fact, Elder Charles W. Penrose observed about the

telestial kingdom:

While there is one soul of this race, willing and able to accept and obey the laws of redemption, no matter where or in what condition it may be found, Christ's work will be incomplete until that being is brought up from death and hell, and placed in a position of progress, upward and onward, in such glory as is possible for its enjoyment and the service of the great God.

The punishment inflicted will be adequate to the wrongs performed. In one sense the sinner will always suffer its effects. When the debt is paid and justice is satisfied; when obedience is learned through the lessons of sad experience; when the grateful and subdued soul comes forth from the everlasting punishment, thoroughly willing to comply with the laws once rejected; there will be an abiding sense of loss. The fullness of celestial glory in the presence and society of God and the Lamb are beyond the reach of that saved but not perfected soul, forever. The power of increase, wherein are dominion and exaltation and crowns of immeasurable glory, is not for the class of beings who have been thrust down to hell and endured the wrath of God for the period allotted by eternal judgment....

Those who were cast down to the depths of their sins, who rejected the gospel of Jesus, who persecuted the Saints, who reveled in iniquity, who committed all manner of transgressions except the unpardonable crime, will also come forth in the Lord's time, through the blood of the Lamb and the ministry of His disciples and their own repentance and willing acceptance of divine law, and enter into the various degrees of glory and power and progress and light, according to their different capacities and adaptabilities. They cannot go up into the society of the Father nor receive of the presence of the Son, but will have ministrations of messengers from the terrestrial world, and have joy beyond all expectations and the conception of uninspired mortal minds. They will all bow the knee to Christ and serve God the Father, and have an eternity of usefulness and happiness in harmony with the higher powers. They receive the telestial glory."

The vision is a remarkable oracle. "Nothing could be more pleasing to the Saints upon the order of the Kingdom of the Lord," Joseph Smith stated, "than the light which burst upon the world through the foregoing vision. Every law, every commandment, every promise, every truth, and every point touching the destiny of man, from Genesis to Revelation, . . . witness the fact that the document is a transcript from the records of the eternal world. The sublimity of the ideas; the purity of the language; the scope for action; the continued duration for completion, in order that the heirs of salvation may confess the Lord and bow the knee; the rewards for faithfulness, and the punishments for sins, are so much beyond the narrow-mindedness of men, that every man is constrained to exclaim: It came from God."<sup>24</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon received the vision of the glories in 1832. God continued to reveal himself, his plan, and the doctrines of salvation during the next twelve years of the Prophet Joseph's mortal ministry and subsequently to his successors. Some time after the coming of Elijah and the restoration of the fulness of the priesthood in April 1836, the Prophet Joseph Smith introduced the Saints to the doctrine and practice of celestial marriage. He taught that "in the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; and if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase" (DEC 131:1-4). Or, as the Prophet stated another way, "except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection. But those who are married by the power and

authority of the priesthood in this life, and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory.'"

Truly there are many mansions of the Father (John 14:1-2), and the Holy One of Israel has made provision for his people to attain to that level of glory hereafter that they are willing to receive. The Prophet quoted the Savior about many mansions and said: "It should be—'In my Father's kingdom are many kingdoms, in order that ye may be heirs of God and joint-heirs with me.' I do not believe the Methodist doctrine of sending honest men and noble-minded men to hell, along with the murderer and the adulterer. They may hurl all their hell and fiery billows upon me, for they will roll off me as fast as they come on. But I have an order of things to save the poor fellows at any rate, and get them saved; for I will send men to preach to them in prison and save them if I can."<sup>26</sup> Here is a message of hope, a breath of fresh air amid the fiery winds of sectarian theology, a doctrine that manifests the mercy and wisdom of our Divine Redeemer. Thanks be to God for the revelations of the Restoration.

### **Notes**

1. Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957), 1:238.



2. Cited in *They Knew the Prophet*, comp. Hyrum L. Andrus and Helen Mae Andrus (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), 67-68.
  3. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 305; compare D&C 76:115-16.
  4. Joseph Smith, *Times and Seasons* 4 r 1 February 1843): 82-83, stanzas 18-20.
  5. Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 131; see also *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 65.
  6. See McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 744.
  7. Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 357.
  8. Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 358.
  9. Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft 1965-73), 3:345; *New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 233.
  10. Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 24.
  11. Smith, *Times and Seasons* 4 (1 February 1843): 84, stanza 43.
  12. See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-56), 2:42; *Man: His Origin and Destiny* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954), 272; *The Way to Perfection* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 208; Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 47; *New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 337.
  13. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 2:472, 475, 491.
  14. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1851-86), 8:154.
  15. Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 322.
  16. Smith, *Times and Seasons* 4 (1 February 1843): 84, stanza 54.
  17. Melvin J. Ballard, "The Three Degrees of Glory" in Melvin J. Ballard, *Crusader for Righteousness* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 221.
  18. Smith, *Times and Seasons* 4 (1 February 1843): 84, stanza 57.
  19. Bruce R. McConkie, *Conference Report*, October 1974, 43-47.
  20. Smith, *Times and Seasons* 4 (1 February 1843): 85, stanzas 70-71.
  21. Ballard, "Three Degrees of Glory," in Melvin J. Ballard, 224-25; see also Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:31-34.
  22. Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969), 243-44.
  23. Charles W. Penrose, "Mormon" *Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1897), 72, 74, 75.
  24. Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 11.
  25. Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 300-301.
- Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 366; see also 331.

**1999**

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**Three Degrees of Glory and Outer Darkness**

**FAIRlds website in [Restoring the Ancient Church: Joseph Smith and Early Christianity](#)**

The Bible makes clear that all mankind will be "judged. . . according to their works." (Revelation 20:12) And if so, won't everyone's rewards be different one from another? Jesus insisted that in His "Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:2), and Paul wrote that in the judgment a person's works might be added to his reward or burned up, but either way he might still be saved: "If any man's work abide which he hath built [upon the foundation of Jesus Christ], he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (1 Corinthians 3:14-15) Paul also indicated that he had seen a vision of "the third heaven." (2 Corinthians 12:2) Therefore, one might logically conclude from these passages that recipients of salvation will be allotted varying rewards within at least three different

"heavens" or "degrees of glory." However, it must be admitted that this fact is not really made explicit in the Bible, so it is understandable that the Christian world has for many centuries been content with the doctrine of one heaven and one hell.

### **The LDS Doctrine of Degrees of Glory**

While pondering the significance of certain of the aforementioned passages in the Bible, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were given a most striking vision of the fate of mankind after the general resurrection and judgment, which included a description of the three principal kingdoms of glory. (D&C 76) They found that the first kingdom, called the Celestial, will be inhabited by those who have overcome by faith in Jesus Christ (D&C 76:50-70, 92-96), including children who have died and those who would have accepted the gospel in this life, but were not given the chance until they reached the spirit world. (D&C 137:1-10) The second kingdom, called the Terrestrial, will be inhabited by good people who were just and kind, but were not valiant in their testimony of Jesus. Those who rejected the gospel in this life, but afterwards received it will be given a reward in this kingdom, as well. (D&C 76:71-80, 91, 97)199 The third, or Telestial, kingdom will be given to the generally wicked masses of the earth who spent their entire residence in the Spirit World in Hell, and so were not worthy of any higher glory. (D&C 76:81-90, 98-112)

Another distinction between these kingdoms is that those who receive Celestial glory will reside in the presence of the Father Himself, while those in the Terrestrial kingdom will receive the presence of the Son, and those in the Telestial will have the Holy Ghost to minister to them. (D&C 76:62, 77, 86)  
Sun, Moon, and Stars as Types of the Degrees of Glory

What marvelous light this vision has thrown upon obscure Bible passages! For example, what good does it do to know that there are three heavens if one does not know anything about them? Another example of a passage illuminated by this revelation is Paul's description of the glory of the resurrected body:

There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. (1 Corinthians 15:40-42)

In the vision of the kingdoms of glory, the Lord revealed that this passage is not just a comparison of earthly bodies with heavenly, but also a reference to the fact that there are three different major levels of glory to which a body can be resurrected:

And the glory of the celestial is one, even as the glory of the sun is one. And the glory of the terrestrial is one, even as the glory of the moon is one. And the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one; for as one star differeth from another star in glory, even so differs one from another in glory in the telestial world. (D&C 76:96-98)

Origen, in the early third century, revealed that the early Church interpreted this passage in essentially the same way:

Our understanding of the passage indeed is, that the Apostle, wishing to describe the great difference among those who rise again in glory, i.e., of the saints, borrowed a comparison from the heavenly bodies, saying, "One is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, another the glory of the stars."200

He further explained that the highest of the three degrees is associated with the Father, and the second degree with the Son:

And some men are connected with the Father, being part of Him, and next to these, those whom our argument now brings into clearer light, those who have come to the Saviour and take their stand entirely in Him. And third are those of whom we spoke before, who reckon the sun and the moon and the stars to be gods, and take their stand by them. And in the fourth and last place those who submit to soulless and dead idols.<sup>201</sup>

We shall see that Origen's doctrine of a fourth degree for the very wicked is fairly consistent with LDS belief, as well.

John Chrysostom was another witness to the fact that the early Church considered this passage to be a reference to degrees of reward in the afterlife:

And having said this, he ascends again to the heaven, saying, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon." For as in the earthly bodies there is a difference, so also in the heavenly; and that difference no ordinary one, but reaching even to the uttermost: there being not only a difference between sun and moon, and stars, but also between stars and stars. For what though they be all in the heaven? yet some have a larger, others a less share of glory. What do we learn from hence? That although they be all in God's kingdom, all shall not enjoy the same reward; and though all sinners be in hell, all shall not endure the same punishment.<sup>202</sup>

#### **More Ancient Witnesses to the Three Degrees of Glory**

This doctrine goes back much further than Origen and Chrysostom, however. Irenaeus preserved the same tradition which had supposedly come from the elders who knew the Apostles. Many think he received it from Papias:

And as the presbyters say, Then those who are deemed worthy of an abode in heaven shall go there, others shall enjoy the delights of paradise, and others shall possess the splendour of the city; for everywhere the Saviour shall be seen according as they who see Him shall be worthy. [They say, moreover], that there is this distinction between the habitation of those who produce an hundred-fold, and that of those who produce sixty-fold, and that of those who produce thirty-fold: for the first will be taken up into the heavens, the second will dwell in paradise, the last will inhabit the city; and that was on this account the Lord declared, "In My Father's house are many mansions." For all things belong to God, who supplies all with a suitable dwelling-place; even as His Word says, that a share is allotted to all by the Father, according as each person is or shall be worthy. And this is the couch on which the guests shall recline, having been invited to the wedding. The presbyters, the disciples of the Apostles, affirm that this is the gradation and arrangement of those who are saved, and that they advance through steps of this nature; also that they ascend through the Spirit to the Son, and through the Son to the Father, and that in due time the Son will yield up His work to the Father, even as it is said by the Apostle, "For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."<sup>203</sup>

Clement of Alexandria also expressed belief in the three degrees, and echoed the Lord's revelation to Joseph Smith that those in the highest degree "are gods, even the sons of God." (D&C 76:58)

Conformably, therefore, there are various abodes, according to the worth of those who have believed . . . . These chosen abodes, which are three, are indicated by the numbers in the Gospel--the thirty, the sixty, the hundred. And the perfect inheritance belongs to those who attain to "a perfect man," according to the image of the Lord . . . . To the likeness of God, then, he that is introduced into adoption and the friendship of God, to the just inheritance of the lords and gods is brought; if he be perfected, according to the Gospel, as the Lord Himself taught.<sup>204</sup>

Clement also preached that the three gradations of glory are procured by virtue of three types of actions:

[Clement of Alexandria] reckons three kinds of actions, the first of which is . . . right or perfect action, which is characteristic of the perfect man and Gnostic alone, and raises him to the height of glory. The second is the class of . . . medium, or intermediate actions, which are done by less perfect believers, and procure a lower grade of glory. In the third place he reckons sinful actions, which are done by those who fall away from salvation.<sup>205</sup>

### **Other Systems of Multiple Heavens**

Actually, there were several schemes for the structure of the heavens, with different numbers of heavens which varied also in their contents.<sup>206</sup> But even where three degrees were not specifically mentioned, it was maintained that various gradations of the elect exist. For example, Similitude 8 in the Pastor of Hermas discusses various types of elect. The editors of one collection of early Christian documents preface the chapter with this summary: "That there are many kinds of elect, and of repenting sinners: and how all of them shall receive a reward proportionable to the measure of their repentance and good works."<sup>207</sup>

Jesus, in the Epistle of the Apostles, made a distinction between the "elect" and "most elect."<sup>208</sup> And consistent with this, the Jewish Christian Clementine Recognitions reduced the number of heavens to two.<sup>209</sup>

One of the most popular schemes was that of seven heavens. Daniélou asserts that the idea of seven heavens was first introduced by certain Jewish Christian groups and "derives from oriental, Irano-Babylonian influences," while the older Jewish apocalyptic tradition and many other early Christian groups held to the three heavens scheme.<sup>210</sup> However, it appears that the seven heavens may originally have been consistent with the three heavens doctrine. For example, we have seen that Irenaeus preserved Papias's doctrine of three heavens, but in another passage he asserted that "the earth is encompassed by seven heavens, in which dwell Powers and Angels and Archangels, giving homage to the Almighty God who created all things . . ."<sup>211</sup> As Daniélou points out, since the seven heavens were the dwelling places of angels, they probably were thought to have been gradations within the second of the three principal heavens.<sup>212</sup>

### **Notes:**

199 Note also that the paradise of Adam and Eve was in a Terrestrial state, and translated beings dwell in this sphere awaiting the resurrection, as well. See Chapter Note 2.

200 Origen, *De Principiis* 2:10:2, in ANF 4:294.

201 Origen, *Commentary on John* 2:3, in ANF 10:324-325.

202 John Chrysostom, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians* 41:4, in NPNF Series 1, 12:251.

203 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5:36:1-2, in ANF 1:567, brackets in original.

204 Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 6:14, in ANF 2:506.

205 ANF 2:506.

206 Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 179.

207 *The Lost Books of the Bible* (New York: Bell Publishing Company, 1979), 240.

208 *Epistula Apostolorum*, in NTA 1:210.

209 Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 174; However, it is clear from the passages which mention two heavens in the Recognitions that the two heavens spoken of are the visible heaven, which men can see, and the invisible, where the angels, etc., dwell. See Clementine Recognitions 9:3, in ANF 8:183; Clementine Recognitions 3:27, in ANF 8:121; Clementine Recognitions 2:68, in ANF 8:116. There is no mention of any division in the invisible heaven, but the following passage may be an oblique reference to the three degrees: "Be this therefore the first step to you of three; which step brings forth thirty commands, and the second sixty, and the third a hundred, as we shall expound more fully to you at another time." Peter, in Clementine Recognitions 4:36, in ANF 8:143. The footnote to this passage makes clear that whatever it referred to was most likely part of the esoteric tradition.

210 Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 174.

211 Irenaeus, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 9, in ACW 16:53.

212 Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 176.

## **2000 (Expanded Commentary in 2006)**

**Lawrence R. Flake**

### **Background of Doctrine & Covenants 76, "The Vision"**

### **Three Degrees of Glory: Joseph Smith's Insights on the Kingdoms of Heaven**

#### **Chapter 1: Background of Doctrine & Covenants 76, "The Vision"**

In February 1832, when the vision of the kingdoms of glory was received, the Prophet and his family had no home of their own. Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon had returned the previous year from a trip to Missouri and were commanded by the Lord to "seek them a home ... through prayer by the Spirit" (D&C 63:65). Shortly after receiving this commandment, Joseph, Emma, and their adopted twin babies were invited to live with the John Johnson family of Hiram, Ohio. Father Johnson provided a "translating" room in the upper story of his home where Joseph and Sidney worked on revising the King James Version of the Bible, restoring many of the "plain and precious truths" that had been lost from the scriptures (see 1 Nephi 13:26-40). Sixteen of the revelations which now make up the Doctrine and Covenants were received in this room. Joseph had been working on this project periodically since June 1830, when he and Emma were living in Harmony, Pennsylvania. In 1831, the Lord had commanded Joseph and Sidney to lay aside their work on the Old Testament and to begin translating the New Testament (see D&C 45:60-62). It was while they were engaged in this effort that Joseph and Sidney received the revelation now found in section 76.

During this translation process, other people were often present. Seeing Joseph translate was an enlightening experience: "There must have been frequent periods of discussion about passages and ideas. . . . The translation was not a simple, mechanical recording of divine dictum, but rather a study-and-thought process accompanied and prompted by revelation from the Lord" (Matthews, *A Plainer Translation*, 39). On this particular day, February 16, 1832, there were about twelve brethren present in the translating room. Joseph dictated and Sidney Rigdon wrote every word of the chapter they were revising. While working on the fifth chapter of John, Joseph began to ponder the meaning of the two resurrections mentioned in verse 29:

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28-29).

The Prophet later expressed his thoughts as he had pondered these verses:

From sundry revelations it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of man, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled. It appeared self evident from what truths were left, that if God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body the term "Heaven," as intended for the Sainte eternal home, must include more kingdoms than one (History of the Church, 1:245).

As Joseph and Sidney studied these verses, the Lord inspired them to change the wording of the twenty-ninth verse from "the resurrection of 4)V' to "the resurrection of thefts,' and "the resurrection of damnation" to "the resurrection of the unjust" (John 5:28-29, emphasis added). In reference to this experience, Joseph declared, "Now this caused us to marvel for it was given unto us of the Spirit" (D&C 76:18). Suddenly the heavens opened, and both the Prophet and Sidney beheld the glorious vision. Their experience is recorded in section 76.

We, Joseph Smith, Jun., and Sidney Rigdon, being in the Spirit on the sixteenth day of February, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-two—

By the power of the Spirit our eyes were opened and our understandings were enlightened, so as to see and understand the things of God-

... And while we meditated upon these things [i.e., John 5:28-29], the Lord touched the eyes of our understandings and they were opened, and the glory of the Lord shone round about.

And we beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, and received of his fulness;

And saw the holy angels, and them who are sanctified before his throne, worshiping God, and the Lamb, who worship him forever and ever.

And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: that he lives!

For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father (D&C 76:11-12,19-23)-

Years later, the Prophet observed: "Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject" (History of the Church, 6:50; emphasis added). Joseph and Sidney's view of heaven, lasting for at least an hour, certainly yielded a vast amount of knowledge. On this day, the two men saw a series of six visions. During these visions, the Lord repeatedly commanded them to write down what they had seen (see D&C 76:28, 49, 80, 113). However, at one point during the manifestation, the Lord commanded them not to write what they had seen (see 76:115). The six visions consisted of the following:

1. The Savior on the right hand of the Father being worshiped by holy angels (76:20-24).
2. Lucifer rebelling against Christ and being thrust down from the presence of God (76:25-29).
3. The sons of perdition suffering and going away into a lake of fire and brimstone (76:30-49).
4. The inhabitants of the celestial kingdom (76:50-70, 92-96).
5. The inhabitants of the terrestrial kingdom (76:71-80, 91, 97).
6. The inhabitants of the telestial kingdom (76:81-90, 98-112).

Philo Dibble was one of the twelve people present during the manifestation. He reported that he and the other men in the room "saw the glory, and felt the power but did not see the vision" (Juvenile Instructor, 15 May 1892, 303). Brother Dibble related some of the fascinating details of this experience:

Joseph would, at intervals, say: "What do I see?" as one might say while looking out the window and beholding what all in the room could not see. Then he would relate what he had seen or what he was looking at. Then Sidney replied, "I see the same." Presently Sidney would say; "What do I see?" and would repeat what he had seen or was seeing, and Joseph would reply, "I see the same." This manner of conversation was repeated at short intervals to the end of the vision, and during the whole time not a word was spoken by any other person. Not a sound nor motion was made by anyone but Joseph and Sidney, and it seemed to me that they never moved a joint or limb during the time I was there, which I think was over an hour, and to the end of the vision. Joseph sat firmly and calmly all the time in the midst of a magnificent glory, but Sidney sat limp and pale, apparently as limber as a rag, observing which Joseph remarked, smilingly, "Sidney is not used to it as I am." (Juvenile Instructor; *ibid.*).

On another occasion, Brother Dibble elaborated on this stark contrast between Joseph and Sidney:

Joseph wore black clothes but at this time seemed to be dressed in an element of glorious white, and his face shone as if it were transparent,' but I did not see the same glory attending Sidney. Joseph appeared as strong as a lion but Sidney seemed as weak as water, and Joseph noticing his condition smiled and said: 'Brother Sidney is not as used to it as I am' (juvenile Instructor, *ibid.*).

Despite Sidney's fatigue, Sidney stayed up the entire night writing his account of the vision (Barrett, *Joseph Smith and the Restoration*, 204). The experience stayed with him throughout his life; he later referred to the Vision in a stirring testimony:

If any man says it is not the work of God, I know he lies... We know here is the Church of God, and I have authority before God for saying so. I have the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of prophecy. I have slept with it—I have walked with it. The idea has never been out of my heart for a moment, and I will reap the glory of it when I leave this world. I defy man and hell and devils to put it out of my heart. I defy all, and will triumph in spite of all of them. I know God .I have gazed upon the glory of God the throne, the visions, and glories of God and the visions of eternity in the days gone by (History of the Church, 6:290; emphasis added).

The revelation was unprecedented in its doctrinal significance to the Latter-day Saints. But there is scriptural evidence that other prophets may have seen the same vision and taught the same doctrines in earlier times. Joseph Smith indicated that both Jacob in the Old Testament and the apostle Paul in the New Testament had seen visions of the kingdoms of glory: "Paul ascended into the third heavens, and he could understand the three principal rounds of Jacob's ladder—the telestial, the terrestrial, and the celestial glories or kingdoms, where Paul saw and heard things which were not lawful for him to utter" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 304-5). Jacob's dream of the ladder is described in Genesis 28:12: 'And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.' Paul's experience of ascending to the third heaven is recorded in 2 Corinthians 12:2. Paul wrote that "a man" was "caught up to the third heaven." Referring to this verse, the Prophet Joseph Smith said,

But St. Paul informs us of three glories and three heavens. He knew a man that was caught up to the third heavens. Now, if the doctrine of the sectarian world, that there is but one heaven, is true, Paul, what do you tell that lie for and say there are three? Jesus said unto His disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come and receive you to myself, that where I am ye may be also" (History of the Church 5:425-26).

The Prophet made it clear that he himself had the experience of being "the man" caught up to the third heaven: "I know a man that has been caught up to the third heavens, and can say, with Paul, that we have seen and heard things that are not lawful to utter" (History of the Church, 5:556; emphasis added). In the often-quoted fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, the apostle Paul clearly teaches the doctrine of the three heavens: "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory" (1 Corinthians 15:40-41). In the following quote, John Taylor makes a connection between these biblical revelations of the kingdoms of glory and Joseph Smith's poetic rendition of his revelation:

Our poet seems to be perfectly at home among heavenly worlds, and converses about their proceedings with as much familiarity as one could do about his domestic economy. He unlocked great and important principles which were indeed made known to the ancients; but which have been hid for ages: and when we contemplate the things that are unfolded we shall be led to say with Paul, "great is the mystery of godliness" (Times and Seasons, 1 February 1843, 81).

In spite of the biblical evidence, these doctrines were not correctly understood by those in Joseph Smith's day.

The Prophet did not formulate a theology by merely elaborating upon ideas proclaimed by other American religious leaders. . . . An intensive analysis of the Prophet's teachings regarding life beyond the grave indicates that Joseph Smith unfolded a more reasonable, just, and comprehensive description of the future destiny of man than were taught by any of his contemporaries.... Many aspects of Joseph Smith's teachings on the gradations of heaven were different from the views popularized by the Shakers and a few other religious groups of nineteenth century America. The Prophet broached a distinct nineteenth century concept when he said that all men, other than the sons of perdition, would be assigned to one of three degrees of glory in heaven (Backman, American Religions and the Rise of Mormonism, 342-43; emphasis added).

The Vision was a major break, not only from what other American Christian communities were preaching at the time, but also from what the Latter-day Saints had known about the premortal and postmortal existence. Whatever the Prophet might have known before receiving the vision, the shock with which some of the Saints received these truths clearly indicates that they had never heard of such concepts. Brigham Young said, "My traditions were such, that when the Vision came first to me, it was directly contrary and opposed to my former education. I said, Wait a little. I did not reject it; but I could not understand it" (Journal of Discourses, 6:281). He also reported that:

When God revealed to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon that there was a place prepared for all, according to the light they had received and their rejection of evil and practice of good, it was a great trial to many, and some apostatized because God was not going to send to everlasting punishment heathens and infants, but had a place of salvation, in due time, for all, and would bless the honest and virtuous and truthful, whether they ever belonged to any church or not (Journal of Discourses, 16:42).



Like the apostle Paul, who beheld truths in vision that were "not lawful for a man to utter" (1 Corinthians 12:4), the Prophet and Sidney also received more knowledge during the Vision than they were permitted to record (see 76:115). Orson Pratt said, "There were things which they beheld which they were strictly commanded not to write, as the world was not worthy to receive them. Neither was the Church, at that time, prepared to receive a full knowledge concerning these things" (Journal of Discourses, 20:70). Joseph made an intriguing statement on the same subject: "I could explain a hundredfold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive it" (History of the Church, 5:402) It is likely that over the remaining twelve years of Joseph's life, as the Church matured, some of these further truths were revealed to the Saints. For example, eleven years later in section 131 of the Doctrine and Covenants under the heading "Instructions by Joseph Smith the Prophet," Joseph presented the doctrine of exaltation in the celestial kingdom:

In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;

And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage];

And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.

He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom, he cannot have an increase (D&C 131:1-4).

Some members may have had difficulty accepting the newly revealed truths, but the Prophet and many others certainly did not. In his history Joseph recorded that:

Nothing could be more pleasing to the Saints upon the order of the Kingdom of the Lord, than the light which burst upon the world through the foregoing vision. Every law, every commandment, every promise, every truth, and every point touching the destiny of man, from Genesis to Revelation, where the purity of the Scriptures remains unsullied by the folly of men, go to show the perfection of the theory [of different degrees of glory in the future life] and witnesses the fact that that document is a transcript from the records of the eternal world (History of the Church, 1:252-53)-

Wilford Woodruff, a twenty-six-year-old convert from Connecticut, read a copy of the revelation before he met the Prophet. This future president of the Church declared, "Before I saw Joseph I said I did not care how old he was, or how young he was; I did not care how he looked—whether his hair was long or short; the man that advanced that revelation was a prophet of God. I knew it for myself" (Deseret Weekly News, Vol. 43, No. 2, 321).

### **Chapter Notes**

1. This method of writing every word was used at the time the Vision was received. More efficient methods were adopted later. In describing these changes, Reed C. Durham, in his doctoral dissertation on this subject, notes the following:

The previous method of dictating and writing the entire text proved time-consuming; and in one sense, some of the work was needless as many verses were not being corrected by Joseph Smith, but were being dictated and written nevertheless. It appears, therefore, that they decided on a simpler method of recording the revisions. Only the verses needing corrections were written on the manuscript pages, and the books, chapters, or verses which were unrevised would either be written in the manuscript with the word "correct" after them, or else they simply were not marked or listed at all on the manuscript pages. It further appears that as their work progressed, in order to

conserve more time, only the parts of the verses which were to be corrected, such as a line, a phrase, or even a word in the verse, would be written in the manuscript.

While his scribe wrote the corrections as dictated, Joseph Smith, with a lead pencil and sometimes with pen and ink, made some minor corrections in the Bible, such as adding a few words, underlining key words, or crossing out some words. . . . In addition to these Bible corrections, Joseph check marked, before and after every verse which he felt or desired a needed correction should be made, and then dictated that change to his scribe, who would so note it in the manuscript ("A History of Joseph Smith's Revision of the Bible," 51-53).

2. N. B. Lundwall adds the following note:

Mrs. Sarah N. Williams Reynolds, of Salt Lake City, dictated the following highly important statement to the Compiler of this book: "I was a dose neighbor of Philo Dibble who visited me very often. He had been very familiar and intimately acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith, and took great delight in rehearsing his wealth of information concerning this acquaintance. Brother Dibble stated to me that the Prophet Joseph told him in connection with the others who were present in Father Johnson's home at the time the Vision was given to the Prophet Joseph and Sidney Rigdon, that (the Prophet speaking): 'MY WHOLE BODY WAS FULL OF LIGHT AND I COULD SEE EVEN OUT AT THE ENDS OF MY FINGERS AND TOES'" (The Vision or the Degrees of Glory, 11)

## Chapter 2

### Background of the Poetic Rendition "A Vision"

Shortly after New Year's Day 1843, the citizens of Nauvoo had great cause for celebration. Joseph Smith and the Saints had just received the news that charges against the Prophet, accusing him of being involved in an attempt on the life of former governor Lilburn W. Boggs of Missouri, had been dismissed. Wilford Woodruff recorded that a day of fasting, prayer, and thanksgiving was held in Nauvoo on January 17, to express gratitude for the Prophet's "release and delivery" (Journal, 17 January 1843). Several new songs were composed and performed to honor Joseph and celebrate the good news. A dose friend and personal secretary to the Prophet, William W. Phelps, expressed his joy by writing a poem to the Prophet:

From W. W Phelps To Joseph Smith, The Prophet  
Vade Mecum, (Translated.) Go With Me

Go with me, will you go to the saints that have died,—  
To the next, better world, where the righteous reside;  
Where the angels and spirits in harmony be  
In the joys of a vast paradise? Go with me.  
Go with me where the truth and the virtues prevail;  
Where the union is one, and the years never Fail;  
Not a heart can conceive, nor a nat'ral eye see  
What the Lord has prepaid for the just. Go with me.  
Go with me where there is no destruction or war;  
Neither tyrants, or sland'ers, or nations ajar;  
Where the system is perfect, and happiness free,  
And the life is eternal with God. Go with me.  
Go with me, will you go to the mansions above,  
Where the bliss, and the knowledge, the light, and the love,  
And the glory of God do eternally be?—  
Death, the wages of sin, is not there. Go with me.  
Nauvoo, January, 1843.1

During the next month, Joseph composed a 312-line answer to Brother Phelps's poem. The 78-stanza poem entitled "The Answer: A Vision" was published one month later (February, 1843) in the *Times and Seasons*. This was an incredible accomplishment given that we have no evidence the Prophet had ever written any poetry before this time. Some may feel that "The Answer: A Vision" represents literary talents beyond Joseph Smith's capability. The same skepticism is also manifest regarding his "writing" the Book of Mormon and other scripture. Through the power of the Lord, the Prophet was able to accomplish remarkable literary feats beyond his natural abilities. It seems evident that he wrote the poem with divine aid.

While Joseph may have enlisted the assistance of a more experienced poet, possibly even W. W. Phelps, in composing "The Answer," it seems clear that the work is primarily his own.<sup>2</sup> This is based on four facts:

1. The Prophet was careful to sign only those editorials in the *Times and Seasons* which he authored. A year earlier, when he became the editor of the *Times and Seasons*, he published this statement: "This paper commences my editorial career: I alone stand responsible for it, and shall do for all papers having my signature henceforward.... Joseph Smith" (*History of the Church*, 4:551). The February issue of the *Times and Seasons* printed the Phelps poem *Vade Mecum* dated January 1843, and "The Answer: A Vision," which concluded with the name "Joseph Smith" and the date "February, 1843."
2. The scriptural version of the revelation uses the first person plural "we" (Joseph and Sidney). The poem is written in the first person singular "I," such as in stanza 11, where the author says, "I, Joseph the Prophet," and in stanza 13, where he says, "I bear record as all prophets have."
3. When John Taylor, the editor of the *Times and Seasons*, introduced and commented on the poem, he acknowledged Joseph Smith as its author. After praising the poem for a column and a half, he concluded, "Modern prophets can prophesy in poetry as well as ancient prophets" (*Times and Seasons*, 1 February 1843, 82).
4. For February 24, 1843, the *History of the Church* records, "In reply to W. W. Phelps's *Vade Mecum*, or 'Go with me,' of 20th of January last, I dictated an answer: [It consisted of the 'Revelation known as the Vision of the Three Glories,' *Doctrine and Covenants*, section bowl:, made into verse." (*History of the Church*, 5:288; bracketed material was added to Joseph Smith's entry by B. H. Roberts, editor).

In light of the above, it seems reasonable to assume that Joseph Smith is the poem's principle author.

John Taylor, a gifted writer himself, commented on the fact that although the poem may not be considered great poetry by literary critics, its content puts it in a class by itself. Highlighting some of the magnificent doctrines presented in the poem, he wrote,

The following very curious poetic composition, is at once both novel and interesting; for while the common landmarks of modern poetry are entirely disregarded; there is something so dignified and exalted conveyed in the ideas of this production, that it cannot fail to strike the attention of every superficial observer.

Uncontrolled by the narrow limits of this earth, and raised above all sublunary objects, his mind soars aloft unto other kingdoms, unravels the secrets of eternity, and contemplates the organization of worlds, in other spheres: the destiny of the living, the dying, and the dead are developed; together with the laws that govern other worlds, and the state of their inhabitants; the "heavens of heavens," open before his gaze, and the celestial kingdom; the habitation of the great "I Am," with all its resplendent, brilliant, and dazzling glory, bursts upon his sight. The Celestial, the Terrestrial and the 'Celestial

worlds, with all their magnificence and beauty are open to his view; whilst the various states of their respective inhabitants, are presented before his vision. The dark and gloomy abodes of the departed lost, are also unlocked, and their confusion, and misery developed (Times and Seasons, 1 February 1843, 81).

Although the "common landmarks of modern poetry" are not necessarily followed in the poem, Elder Taylor says that Joseph, inspired by the Spirit, wrote above the rules of poetry as had ancient prophets:

Concerning the style of the poetry, there seems to be a native simplicity, a brilliance of thought, and an originality in the composition, that can only be equalled in the oracles of truth; and by those who profess the same spirit; and when the muse of those ancient poets was fired by the spirit of God, and they spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, there was a richness a dignity and a brilliancy of ideas; and an exuberance of thought that ran through all their productions, as in the fascinating beauties of poesy they rolled forth the words of eternal life, with all their richness, and dignity, and glory; while at the same time they paid little or no attention to the rules of poetic composition. Let the curtains of heaven be withdrawn, and the purposes and glories of the eternal world burst upon his view and the dry forms; and the simple jingling of poetry, alone, will be very dry and insipid to the enlarged and enlightened understanding of a man of God (Ibid.).

For reasons that are not entirely apparent, the poem was not widely known and used after the Saints migrated to Utah. Only during the last half of this century has it resurfaced, and not until now has it had a publication specifically dedicated to it)

the Doctrine and Covenant( and Church History Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1993, 152).

### **Chapter Notes**

1 Ironically, Phelps's joy may have been tempered by the prophetic tone of the poem, which foreshadows Joseph's death the next year. After the martyrdom, Phelps expanded and rewrote "Go with Me.' He changed the perspective from addressing Joseph Smith to Joseph Smith addressing the Saints from beyond the veil and titled it (53 Voice from the Prophet: Come to Me" (Michael Hicks, "Joseph Smith, W. W. Phelps, and the Poetic Paraphrase of "The Vision,"*Journal of Mormon History* Fall 1994, 80).

2 Michael Hicks makes a case for W. W. Phelps being the principle author ("Joseph Smith, W. W. Phelps, and the Poetic Paraphrase of The Vision," *Journal of Mormon History*, Fall 1994, 63-84). Richard N. Holzapfel supports the authorship of Joseph Smith ("'Eternity Sketch'd in a Vision': The Poetic Version of Doctrine and Covenants 76," *The Heavens ..Are Open. The 1992 Sperry Symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company*, 1993, 141-62). William H. Brugger believes Joseph and W W Phelps collaborated on the poem and suggests that a wordprint might provide more conclusive data ("Section 76 as Literature in the Doctrine and Covenants, "Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1993, 100).

3 Richard N. Holzapfel surveyed the publication and use of the poem in the twentieth century and makes the following observations:

That the poem did not receive much attention during the last half of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century may be because the early printed sources of the poem were not easily accessible. When the History of the Church was published in 1909, the text of Ethel poem was not included, a significant lapse in making the document available to a wider audience in the beginning of this century. It was not until N. B. Lundwall reprinted it in 1951 that the poem generally became available. Several important twentieth-century studies neglect the poem altogether. A few more recent works make slight reference to it. A final group reproduce the poem in its entirety as an addendum but do not specifically cite it in their commentary ("Eternity Sketch'd in a Vision': The Poetic Version of Doctrine and Covenants 76," *The heavens Are Open: The 1992 Sperry Symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants*.

**2001**

**Father Alexander, Russian Orthodox Leader**

**Kingdom of Glory**

**Father Alexander.org Website**

With the transformation of this world into a new and better one, the eternal Kingdom of God will begin. Then the earthly Kingdom of Grace — the militant Church on earth, to which we belong — will merge with its heavenly counterpart — the Kingdom of Glory. Then the Son of God will reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and "His Kingdom shall have no end," as the Angel Gabriel proclaimed to the Virgin Mary (Lk. 1:33). Cyril of Jerusalem comments about this, saying: "For will not He who reigned before overthrowing His enemies, reign all the more after He has conquered them?" (Cathetical Lectures).

Then death will lose all its power over the righteous: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death ... So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory," states St. Paul (1 Cor. 15:26 and 54). The book of Revelation predicts that then time will cease to exist. Apparently in that eternal spiritual world not only will the sensation of the flow of time disappear, but also the very concepts of space and time will be drastically different from what they are now.

Chapter 21 of the book of Revelation vividly depicts the blissful state of eternal life: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, as the previous heaven and earth have gone, and the sea is no more." In the Kingdom of Glory all will be spiritual, immortal, and holy. Most importantly, those attaining eternity in communion with God will become partakers of that perfect union with Him Who is the ultimate Source of all life and happiness. In particular, the new members of God's Kingdom share with the Angels the honor and happiness of seeing their Creator and Benefactor. They will contemplate His glory, not as if through dim glass, not conjecturally, but face to face — and not only contemplate but also partake in His Divine Life, shining like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. They will become co-heirs with Christ and will share with Him His glory (Rev. 3:21; 2 Tim. 2:11-12). As the book of Revelation describes: "they shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." It will be as the prophet Isaiah summarizes: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (Rev. 7:16-17; Is. 64:4; 1 Cor. 2:9).

Blessedness in God will be more desirable in that it will have no end: "and the righteous will enter life eternal." Nevertheless, according to the Fathers of the Church, even glory in God has its levels proportional to the spiritual level of each person. This belief is based on the following explicit statements of Holy Scripture: "In my Father's house are many mansions ... God will give to everyone according to his deeds ... There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory" (Is. 64:4; 1 Cor. 2:9; John 14:2, Mt. 16:27, 1 Cor. 3:8, 15:41).

St. Ephrem the Syrian explains this as follows: "Just as everyone enjoys the rays of the sensual sun according to the purity of his power of seeing, and just as when a lamp illuminates a large room, each ray is perceived as coming from that same source, similarly it will be in the future age: all the righteous will share inseparably of a single joy, but each in his own degree will be illumined by the single spiritual Sun, and to the degree of his worth he will draw in joy and rejoicing as if in a single atmosphere and place. No one will see the degrees that are higher or lower, lest looking on the surpassing grace of another and upon his own deprivation, he will thereby have some cause for sorrow and disturbance. This cannot be there, where there is neither sorrow nor sighing. But there everyone will rejoice inwardly according to the grace proper to him, while outwardly all will have a single contemplation and a single joy" (Sermon On the Heavenly Mansions).

**2001**

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**Section 76**

**A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants, Vol. 3**

**Section 76**

**Background**

After their brief mission to eastern Ohio in December of 1831 and January of 1832 (see D&C 71:1), Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were living again with their families in borrowed quarters at the John Johnson farm in Hiram, Ohio. There, according to the Lord's command, they had been working on Joseph's translation of the Bible since about 10 January (see D&C 73:3). By 16 February, Joseph and Sidney had been translating for over five weeks, taking only short breaks to preach locally and to attend the conference in Amherst, Ohio, on 25 January.

As Joseph and Sidney studied the Bible during these weeks of translation, the Lord revealed to their understanding many things not contained or not clearly explained in the present biblical text. Doctrine and Covenants 74, for example, had been received by the Prophet in January following his study of 1 Corinthians 7:14. On 16 February 1832, while Joseph and Sidney were in an upstairs room of the Johnson farmhouse translating John 5:29, they received a remarkable joint vision now recorded as Doctrine and Covenants 76. This revelation was so magnificent in scope and precept and restored such important information on life after death and other matters that for years afterward the Saints referred to section 76 simply as "the Vision."

Joseph's own account of receiving this vision reads as follows:

"Upon my return from Amherst conference, I resumed the translation of the Scriptures. From sundry revelations which had been received, it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of man, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled. It appeared self-evident from what truths were left, that if God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body the term 'Heaven,' as intended for the Saints' eternal home must include more kingdoms than one. Accordingly on the 16th of February 1832, while translating St. John's Gospel, myself and Elder Rigdon saw the following vision.'

Several other persons were present at the Johnson farm when Joseph and Sidney received Doctrine and Covenants 76. Sixty years later Philo Dibble, one of those who had been present on that day, shared his recollections of the event:

"The vision which is recorded in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants was given at the house of 'Father Johnson,' in Hyrum, Ohio, and during the time that Joseph and Sidney were in the spirit and saw the heavens open, there were other men in the room, perhaps twelve, among whom I was one during a part of the time—probably two-thirds of the time,—I saw the glory and felt the power, but did not see the vision.

"The events and conversation, while they were seeing what is written (and many things were seen and related that are not written,) I will relate as minutely as is necessary.

"Joseph would, at intervals, say: 'What do I see?' as one might say while looking out the window and beholding what all in the room could not see. Then he would relate what he had seen or what he was

looking at. Then Sidney replied, 'I see the same.' Presently Sidney would say 'what do I see?' and would repeat what he had seen or was seeing, and Joseph would reply 'I see the same.'

"This manner of conversation was repeated at short intervals to the end of the vision, and during the whole time not a word was spoken by any other person. Not a sound nor motion made by anyone but Joseph and Sidney, and it seemed to me that they never moved a joint or limb during the time I was there, which I think was over an hour, and to the end of the vision.

"Joseph sat firmly and calmly all the time in the midst of a magnificent glory, but Sidney sat limp and pale, apparently as limber as a rag, observing which, Joseph remarked, smilingly 'Sidney is not used to it as I am.'"

It should be remembered that Philo Dibble was a very old man when he wrote this account of events that had occurred sixty years before. In an earlier reference to Doctrine and Covenants 76, Brother Dibble had indicated that he was actually present only at the end of the vision." Nevertheless, as a young man he was himself an eyewitness to at least part of the vision and was there at the time to learn from other eyewitnesses exactly what had happened before his own arrival.

Joseph Smith's own summation of the importance of this revelation is instructive:

Nothing could be more pleasing to the Saints upon the order of the kingdom of the Lord, than the light which burst upon the world through the foregoing vision. Every law, every commandment, every promise, every truth, and every point touching the destiny of man, from Genesis to Revelation, where the purity of the scriptures remains unsullied by the folly of men, go to show the perfection of the theory [of different degrees of glory in the future life] and witnesses the fact that that document is a transcript from the records of the eternal world. The sublimity of the ideas; the purity of the language; the scope for action; the continued duration for completion, in order that the heirs of salvation may confess the Lord and bow the knee; the rewards for faithfulness, and the punishments for sins, are so much beyond the narrow-mindedness of men, that every honest man is constrained to exclaim: 'It came from God.'<sup>5</sup>

Yet the reaction of the Saints to the doctrines revealed in Doctrine and Covenants 76 was not universally positive. The old orthodox belief that most of humanity would be tortured in hell forever was so ingrained in contemporary religious thinking that Joseph's glorious message of God's inexhaustible love and mercy was unwelcome to some. Brigham Young recalled:

When God revealed to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon that there was a place prepared for all, according to the light they had received and their rejection of evil and practice of good, it was a great trial to many, and some apostatized because God was not going to send to everlasting punishment heathens and infants, but had a place of salvation, in due time, for all, and would bless the honest and virtuous and truthful, whether they ever belonged to any church or not. It was a new doctrine to this generation, and many stumbled at it.<sup>6</sup>

At the close of the vision, Joseph and Sidney were commanded to write down while still "in the Spirit" those portions of it that could be shared with the Church and with the world (see D&C 76:28, 113). Their written account was then forwarded to Independence, Missouri, for Church publication and appeared in *The Evening and the Morning Star* in July 1832.<sup>7</sup> Eleven years later, in Nauvoo, Joseph also penned a poetic version of section 76 in response to a short poem on eternity written by W W Phelps entitled "Vade Mecum"—Latin for "Go with Me." Both of these poems were published in the *Times and Seasons* on 1 February 1843.<sup>8</sup> Joseph's poetic treatment of section 76, which is noted in the following commentaries, offers several important additions and insights to the Doctrine and Covenants.

## Commentary

1. Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth.

Compare Isaiah 1:2; Deuteronomy 32:1. Doctrine and Covenants 76 impacts our knowledge of both heaven and earth, of both the living and the dead, of both this life and the next. Elder Wilford Woodruff stated that this vision "gives more light, more truth, and more principle than any revelation contained in any other book we ever read. It makes plain to our understanding our present condition, where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going to."<sup>9</sup>

1. The Lord is God.

This, of course, refers to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God the Son. There is no salvation from the Fall and no return to the kingdom of God except through Christ.

3. His purposes fail not

Because of who and what he is, everything Christ undertakes will be successful.

3. From eternity to eternity he is the same.

The words usually translated as eternity in the Old and New Testaments do not refer to endless time, but rather to distinct "ages" or "eons" of time. "From eternity to eternity means from the spirit existence through the probation which we are in, and then back again to the eternal existence which will follow." Jesus Christ is now the same divine being, with the same mind, character, and intent as he was when he created the universe or when he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.

4. His years never fail.

In his role as Creator and Savior, Jesus Christ never grows too old to achieve his purposes or runs out of time in which to accomplish them. He goes on forever.

4. Gracious.

That is, Christ is a source of grace—of gifts and blessings freely and generously given.

5. Fear me.

See Commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 10:56.

5. All the hidden mysteries of my kingdom.

Whenever the scriptures speak of mysteries, they refer to information that can be learned only through divine revelation. In February of 1832, the knowledge received by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon in Doctrine and Covenants 76 contained what had been until that time "hidden mysteries."

10. For by my Spirit will I enlighten them.

The experience of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon in receiving section 76 is just one marvelous example of the fulfillment of the promises made in verses 5-10.

10. to all faithful Saints.

"Salvation cannot come without revelation; it is in vain for anyone to minister without it. No man is a minister of Jesus Christ without being a Prophet. No man can be a minister of Jesus Christ except he has a testimony of Jesus; and this is the spirit of prophecy. Whenever salvation has been administered, it has been by testimony. Men of the present time testify of heaven and hell, and have never seen either; and I will say that no man knows these things without this."



11. Being in the Spirit.  
Being filled with the Holy Ghost.

11. Our eyes were opened.

When the power of the Holy Ghost descends directly upon an individual, the mortal veil that normally covers sight and understanding can be temporarily drawn aside, allowing them to see and participate in things beyond this natural world. It is only in this way—through the personal and protective indwelling of the Spirit—that human beings can see God and survive the experience (see vv. 116-18; D&C 67:11; Moses 1:11).

13. Things which were from the beginning.

From the pre-mortal state even before the creation of this earth. It is technically incorrect to label section 76 as merely a vision of the afterlife or of the three degrees of glory, for Joseph and Sidney saw much more than this. As promised in verses 7-8, they saw things "from days of old" to "things to come , even the things of many generations," The scope of the vision spanned from the beginning of creation (see v. 13) to the completion of Christ's work (see v 106) to worlds without number and without end (see vv. 109-12). This vision is similar to the grand panoramic vision of this world from its beginning to its end given to other prophets at the heads of previous dispensations (see Moses 1:1-9, 24-41; 7:21-67; Abraham 3-5). The poetic version of Doctrine and Covenants 76 describes the content of the vision as including "what was, and now is, and yet is to be." The Prophet Joseph once remarked that "I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them"" (see also v. 115). Note also that "the beginning" in this case does not refer to the creation of the earth or even to the creation of the universe, but to the appearance of the Only Begotten in the bosom of the Father. Christ is the beginning of all things (see D&C 19:1).

14. The fulness of the gospel.

That is, faith, repentance, baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost.' The "good news" of the gospel, however, can also be summarized as it is in verses 40-42<sup>7</sup> (compare 3 Nephi 27:13-21).

14. The Son, whom we saw and with whom we conversed.

Through the power of the Holy Ghost, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw and spoke with the Son of God, as had Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses before them, and as Joseph himself had in his earlier experience in the Sacred Grove.

17. Resurrection of the just; and ... the unjust:

In the King James Version of John 5:29, the two resurrections are called the "resurrection of life" and the "resurrection of damnation" (see also Mosiah 15:24; 3 Nephi 26:5). The change in wording received here agrees with the terminology of Luke 14:14 and Acts 24:15. Neither set of terms, strictly speaking, would be incorrect, since both are found elsewhere in the scriptures. But the change of wording did cause Joseph and Sidney to stop and ponder the nature of the two resurrections (see v. 19). The first resurrection, the resurrection of life or the resurrection of the just, began with the resurrection of Christ and will extend through the Millennium.' It includes all those who receive a celestial or terrestrial glory (see vv. 50-65; D&C 45:54). The second or last resurrection, the resurrection of damnation or the resurrection of the unjust, takes place at the end of the Millennium. It includes those who receive a telestial glory (see D&C 76:85) and those who are sons of perdition.

17. It was given unto us.

The full significance of the meaning of John 5:29 was revealed to Joseph and Sidney.

18. And while we meditated upon these things.

At first Joseph and Sidney were allowed to understand (see v 18), and then as they meditated further upon what the Spirit had revealed to them, the Lord caused them not only to understand but to see.

I think we pay too little attention to the value of meditation, a principle of devotion. In our worship

there are two elements: One is spiritual communion arising from our own meditation; the other, instruction from others, particularly from those who have authority to guide and instruct us. Of the two, the more profitable introspectively is meditation. Meditation is the language of the soul. It is defined as 'N form of private devotion or spiritual exercise, consisting in deep, continued reflection on some religious theme.' Meditation is one of the most secret, most sacred doors through which we pass into the presence of the Lord. .XX

20. And we beheld.

Although the revelation of section 76 as a whole began with the inspiration of the Holy Ghost leading to an increased understanding of the scriptures, it was at this point that the "vision" proper began. Joseph and Sidney actually experienced several visions, or one vision divided into several parts. The first of these was the vision of the Son on the right hand of the Father and of his eternal glory in verses 20-24. The second was the vision of the premortal life, the fall of Satan, and the sufferings of perdition in verses 25-49. Third was a vision of the celestial glory, which is described in verses 50-70 and is further alluded to in verses 92-96. Fourth was a vision of the terrestrial glory in verses 71-80. Fifth was a vision of the telestial glory in verses 81-113 (except the digression in verses 92-97).

20. And received of his fulness.

Most likely this refers to the fulness of God's glory. Fulness here probably carries the meaning of "overflowing abundance." The glory that fills the exalted Christ overflows and abounds to fill also those who are his. Fulness might also be understood here to mean all that now makes Christ what he is. In the individual process of personally becoming exalted. Christ did not receive his own fulness in the beginning, but was, over time, filled with the glory, attributes, and merits of his Father. As Christ personally experienced and overcame all things, he "continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness" ( 93:13; see also vv. 12-20). Now that he is exalted, he has received as his own all that his Father has, and will share with us all that he now has.

21. Them who are sanctified.

Those who are truly and finally "Saints: having been made holy forever through the atonement of Christ and a glorious, celestial resurrection, enter into the Father's kingdom. The poetic version reads, "And sanctified beings from worlds that have been,"<sup>20</sup> thus making clear that these are men and women from other worlds created by Jesus Christ who have already been saved through his atonement and have already been glorified in the Father's kingdom (see v 24).

21. Last of all.

Meaning "the most recent" testimony rather than "the final" testimony.

24. That by him, and through him, and of him.

See Doctrine and Covenants 88:41; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17. The Creator of the universe and all it contains is Jesus Christ, who acted in behalf of the Father. This is true not only of its finished structures, such as planets and stars, but also of the raw materials themselves, of the elements and atoms and molecules. In a manner more comprehensive than a builder who merely uses preexisting materials, the creative force of Christ is expressed in the very structure or nature of the raw materials themselves. Without Christ, not only would the present structures of the universe collapse into unorganized chaos, but so would the materials out of which they are made, the atoms and molecules, for it is the light of Christ that imposes order and law upon all things—even at the atomic and subatomic levels (see D&C 88:6-13,41-50)"

24. The worlds ... and the inhabitants thereof.

Note that worlds is plural, and that there are inhabitants who have lived and who now live upon those many worlds. Is there intelligent life in the universe? Of course there is! There are innumerable inhabitants of

countless worlds, all created and saved by the same Jesus Christ who was born in Bethlehem two thousand years ago. The poetic version makes this even more explicit:

By him, of him, and through him, the worlds were all made,  
Even all that career in the heavens so broad,  
Whose inhabitants, too, from the first to the last,  
Are sav'd by the very same Saviour of ours;  
And, of course, are begotten God's daughters and sons,  
By the very same truths, and the very same pow'rs.<sup>22</sup>

24. Are begotten sons and daughters unto God.

Since this verse makes it clear that it is by, through, and of Jesus Christ specifically that all these inhabitants of all these many worlds are begotten sons and daughters of God, this "begetting" cannot refer to our common identity as spirit children of God in premortality. Rather, the reference is to our spiritual rebirth, which is being "born again" as children of Jesus Christ by accepting his atonement and entering his gospel covenant (see D&C 25:1; Mosiah 5:7; 27:24-26; Ether 3:14; Moses 6:6,62-7:1).<sup>11</sup>

24. An angel ... in authority.

Joseph and Sidney saw events of the premortal life, even before the earth was created. In the pre-mortal world, Satan held a position of great authority in God's very presence. He was one who exercised priesthood power. The poetic version calls him, "an angel of light, in authority great" (see Abraham 3:27-28).

26. Perdition.

The Latin root of the word perdition (perditus) means "lost." The name Perdition is sometimes used specifically for Satan, who is the archetypical "lost one." Perdition is also used more abstractly for the condition of being lost, and thus describes those souls, "sons of perdition," who will not be redeemed and saved in a kingdom of glory (see v 32).

26. The heavens wept.

The inhabitants of the heavens wept over the fall of Satan (compare Moses 7:28).

26. Lucifer, a son of the morning.

Besides this verse, the name Lucifer occurs only twice in scripture—in Isaiah 14:12 and 2 Nephi 24:12, which is quoting Isaiah. It is possible that the Hebrew text made a play on words with the term ben-shachar, "son of (the) morning" or "son of dawn." For shachar also means "dark" or "black," and thus ben-shachar might conceivably be interpreted as something like "son of [outer] darkness" (see also D&C 82:5).

28. Satan, that old serpent, even the devil.

The term Satan comes from the Hebrew and means "adversary" "enemy," or "accuser" (compare Revelation 12:10). Devil on the other hand comes from the Greek word diabolos, and means literally "one who separates or divides." This is a particularly apt description, for the devil separated himself and his followers from God in premortal life, he now separates those he deceives from their God, and, where God seeks to make us all one (see D&C 38:27; John 17:21-23), Satan seeks to divide us against one another into factions and parties (see 1 Corinthians 1:10-13). The divine impulse unites; the satanic divides. Satan is frequently identified with a serpent or dragon and particularly with the serpent in Genesis 3 (see also Revelation 20:2). In the ancient world, the serpent was often a symbol for the forces of chaos and dissolution. Like a poisonous serpent, Satan injects his venom and kills with his mouth, for example by lying, accusing, teaching false doctrine, and so on.

28. To take the kingdom.

That is, he attempted a coup—to seize the throne of God by force (see Isaiah 14:12-15).

28. He maketh war.

The war in heaven described in Revelation 12:7-10 isn't over yet! The present tense here indicates that Satan is still waging war with the Saints. The only differences are that the battlefield has been moved and that we mortals cannot now remember the war or even recognize our old, common enemy without God's help. Without the gospel in this mortal sphere, we humans are sometimes easy prey for the evil one.

29. Encompasseth.  
Surrounds or encircles.

30. Those with whom he made war and overcame.

Apparently the reference here is not to those who merely succumb to the threats, lies, or temptations of Satan and who become "prisoners" of war, but to those who actually change sides in the war, who knowingly change allegiance, thus becoming traitors to God, and fight for Satan, thus becoming "sons of perdition" (see vv 31-32).

31. Those who know my power ... partakers thereof.

The type of person being described in verses 30-38 is not merely disobedient, or even wicked or rebellious. Something much worse is being described here. These persons have experienced the highest blessings of the gospel and the strongest possible manifestations of God's power and glory (see D&C 67: 10).<sup>26</sup> Even so—and while they know what they are doing—they defy God and subject themselves to Satan.

31. Suffered themselves.

They knowingly allow themselves to be overcome. Like Cain, with full knowledge of both lords, they love Satan more than God and deliberately choose to follow Satan (see Moses 5:18).

31. Sons of perdition.

In the biblical idiom, "sons of" can mean literally "children of," or it can also mean "those who fall in the category of." Sons of perdition, therefore, are (1) those who have made the devil—Perdition—their spiritual father rather than Christ (compare v. 24), and (2) all those whose fate or condition is to be cast off and lost forever—perdition.<sup>27</sup> According to this revelation there are several characteristics common to sons of perdition (see vv. 31-32). First, they know the Lord's power, which is the priesthood. Second, they have partaken of this power by receiving its ordinances—particularly the ordinances of the temple. Third, having received the power of God, they willingly exchange it for the power of Satan and allow the evil one to bind them to him. Finally, while knowing of a certainty the truth of the gospel and the power of God, they deny the former and defy the latter. Compare these verses with Hebrews 6:4-6. Those who rebelled in the premortal life, before the mortal veil was drawn, did so with full knowledge of God and of his will and so became perdition. Likewise, in this life only those who, like the devil and his angels, have rebelled after the veil has been parted for them, can become sons of perdition (see v. 35).<sup>21</sup>

32. Better for them never to have been born.

This is not just a figure of speech. Before their mortal birth, sons of perdition were spirit children of God who lived with their heavenly parents. Leaving that blessed state for mortality, they have here chosen Satan and have switched sides, and thus they will be cast out from God's presence and influence forever. All the rest of God's mortal children, after meeting the demands of justice, will eventually receive some degree of glory and some relationship with God in the resurrection. Thus, for sons of perdition, and for them alone, it would have been better to have remained premortal spirits and never to have been born into mortality.

32. Vessels of wrath.

This metaphor compares sons of perdition to cups or other containers into which the wrath of God is to be poured.

32. No forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come.

Forgiveness comes only through the gospel of repentance. For those who refuse to repent, who have crucified Christ within themselves and have ripped his atonement from their souls, there is no other source of forgiveness either now or in all eternity. They have knowingly, intentionally, and irrevocably destroyed their only possible means of salvation (see Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26; D&C 88:35).

### 32. Having denied the Holy Spirit.

The kind of knowledge that is apparently a prerequisite for perdition—a personal encounter with God (see vv. 43, 118)—can be gained only through the direct intervention of the Holy Ghost (see vv 116-18). Only when "quickened [made to live] by the Spirit" in some more intimate way than usual can even righteous Saints see God in the flesh and live (D&C 67:11; see also v. 12). Thus, the scriptures correctly tell us that "no man hath seen God" (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12; Joseph Smith Translation parallel scriptures), for no mere man ever has. But the Holy Spirit is not a mortal man, nor does he suffer from these mortal limitations. If the Holy Spirit personally descends upon us, filling us with his own divine presence and glory—the state of being fully "in the Spirit" (vv.11-12)—then we are no longer merely human beings, but, becoming one with the Holy Spirit, we are "transfigured" and are thus able to bear contact with the "world of glory" (v 118). Because it is the Holy Spirit that comes upon us, changes us, and makes divine contact possible, then denial of this experience and of what one learns by it is also denial of the Holy Spirit. President Spencer W Kimball indicated the magnitude of this sin when he taught: "The sin against the Holy Ghost requires such knowledge that it is manifestly impossible for the rank and file to commit such a sin."<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that this sin can be committed only in the flesh: "No man can commit the unpardonable sin after the dissolution of the body, nor in this life, until he receives the Holy Ghost."<sup>30</sup>

### 35. Having denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father.

"What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against Him. After a man has sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy. This is the case with many apostates of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."<sup>31</sup>

### 35. Having crucified him unto themselves.

Through faith, repentance, baptism, and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, human beings become one with Christ and with other Saints of God, and Christ becomes their common Father (see v. 24). Jesus Christ and Satan can never become one. Therefore, when one who has partaken of the highest blessings of the gospel rebels and seeks to be one with the devil and his angels, he simultaneously destroys any relationship he may have had with Christ. He becomes like those who first crucified the Savior and murders / -crucifies—any part of the Savior that remains within himself. In joining ranks with the murderers of Christ by killing Christ within himself, rendering the Atonement vain in his case, and by seeking to destroy Christ and his work in others, he becomes one with Satan and his angels and thus becomes a child of the devil. "When a man begins to be an enemy to this work, he hunts me, he seeks to kill me, and never ceases to thirst for my blood. He gets the spirit of the devil—the same spirit that they had who crucified the Lord of Life—the same spirit that sins against the Holy Ghost. You cannot save such persons; you cannot bring them to repentance; they make open war, like the devil, and awful is the consequence."

### 36. Lake of fire and brimstone.

An image used to symbolize the fate of perdition."

### 36. The only ones on whom the second death shall have any power.

One of the greatest truths revealed in this vision is that God eventually saves all his children. The only exception to this universal salvation in some degree of glory is the sons of perdition, who by their own

choice put themselves beyond God's reach. The redemptive work of Christ saves all who inherit any degree of glory—telestial, terrestrial, or celestial—and the wicked who are not perdition do not suffer forever and ever after they have satisfied the demands of justice (see vv. 38, 83-85)<sup>34</sup>

38. The only ones who shall not be redeemed.

As plainly as the doctrine is taught in the Doctrine and Covenants (see vv. 39, 42-44, 88-89), it still eludes some of the Saints: All our Heavenly Father's children will go to "heaven," that is, they shall inherit heavenly glory in one of its three degrees—telestial, terrestrial, or celestial—except the sons of perdition. All humanity is saved from sin, death, and hell at the resurrection—except the sons of perdition. All human beings are eventually redeemed from the custody and power of the devil—except the sons of perdition. What a glorious doctrine! Oh, the infinite mercy, love, and grace of God our Father and our Savior Jesus Christ! Certainly many will be redeemed and saved in a telestial or a terrestrial glory, and many even in the celestial glory will not be exalted (see D&C 131:1-5; 132:16-17). But, contrary to the common traditions of the world and with the exception of the sons of perdition, nobody suffers after the resurrection; nobody bums in hell forever.

39. All the rest shall be brought forth.

This does not mean that the sons of perdition who have lived on this earth and gained mortal bodies will not be resurrected. Every person born of this earth will come forth in the resurrection (see D&C 88:14-16, 95-102; Alma 12:16-18). But the sons of perdition will not be resurrected "through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb" (D&C 76:39), since they have rejected his atonement, are "filthy still" (D&C 88:35, 102), and can receive no glory at all—no heat, no light, no energy (see D&C 88:24; Mosiah 16:11). All the rest of humanity are resurrected and glorified in some degree through the atonement of Christ. The poetic version reads, "While all the rest are, through the triumph of Christ, made partakers of grace, by the power of his word.""

39. And this is the gospel.

The Greek word translated as gospel in the New Testament means literally "glad tidings" or "good news." The capsule statement of the gospel here in verses 40-44 focuses on the role of Jesus in blessing the whole world and all of God's children: Jesus came into the world to die for the world, the whole world, and to bear the sins of the world, so that all the world, not just the righteous part of it, might eventually be cleansed, sanctified, and saved in some kingdom of glory (compare John 3:16). The poetic version explains that Jesus "lay down his life for his friends and his foes."<sup>35</sup> Other scriptural definitions of the gospel focus on what the gospel requires of us—faith, repentance, and baptism—rather than on the work of Jesus (compare D&C 33:10-11; 39:6; 138:32-35; Articles of Faith 1:3-4). In the fullest sense, any definition of "the gospel" includes both a proclamation of Jesus' mission and a clear statement of how humans are to respond to it (see 3 Nephi 27:13-22; Acts 2:22-38).

42. Whom the Father had put into his power.

Likely this refers to those who chose Christ and his plan in the premortal world and whom Christ was then given power to save through his atonement. Christ was not given power to save sons of perdition, those who will not repent, because repentance is a condition of receiving the full blessings of the Atonement.

42. And made by him.

All the physical laws and processes of the universe depend upon the creative power of Christ, or the light of Christ, in order to work. Thus, while Christ himself does not beget our physical bodies, both the processes of biology and the elements they work with come from Christ the Creator. All physical existence depends upon the light of Christ to remain in an organized state. In this sense he is responsible for all that is—including us (see D&C 88:6-13, 41-42). The poetic version of Doctrine and Covenants 76:42 here adds two lines to the description of Christ's work, to which there is no parallel in section 76: "And purify earth for the Sabbath of rest, by the agent of fire, as it was by the flood.""

42. Saves all the works of his hands.

Because the work and the glory of our Father in Heaven are "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39), we may assume that he is very, very good at it. Heavenly Father and Christ lose nothing. Only the sons of perdition are lost, and Christ doesn't lose them; they lose themselves. Not everyone is saved at the same time, however. Speaking in the context of what happens when we die, it is correct to say that some are saved in paradise, or Abraham's bosom, from sin, hell, and the power of the devil, and some are not (see Luke 16:22-23). But in the context of the final resurrection, after our time in the spirit world is over, everyone, all of humanity except the sons of perdition, are saved from sin, death, hell, and the power of the devil and receive some degree of glory in the mansions of the Father. It was this glorious doctrine that caused some in the Church in 1832 to stumble, because it so contradicted the traditions they had been taught and had accepted in their former churches.

43. Deny the Son after the Father has revealed him.

The voice of the Father has often been heard revealing the identity of his Only Begotten (see v. 23; Matthew 3:17; 17:5; 2 Peter 1:17; 2 Nephi 31:11, 15; 3 Nephi 11:7; Joseph Smith—History 1:17). Again, it requires more than a loss of testimony to become a son of perdition.<sup>40</sup>

44-48. Everlasting/endless/eternal punishment.

See Doctrine and Covenants 19:6-12.' It is important to note, however, that the doctrine taught in section 19 does not open the door to a doctrine of redemption for the sons of perdition at some future time. In answer to a letter from W W Phelps, Joseph Smith wrote in 1833: "Say to the brothers Hulet and to all others, that the Lord never authorized them to say that the devil, his angels, or the sons of perdition, should ever be restored; for their state of destiny was not revealed to man, is not revealed, nor ever shall be revealed, save to those who are made partakers thereof: consequently those who teach this doctrine have not received it of the Spirit of the Lord. Truly Brother Oliver declared it to be the doctrine of devils. We, therefore, command that this doctrine be taught no more in Zion.")

44. To reign with the devil and his angels.

Because they progressed further and received resurrected, physical bodies, the sons of perdition who were once mortals upon this earth will rule over the unembodied devil and his angels in eternity (see Moses 5:23).<sup>43</sup>

44. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

The phrasing follows Mark 9:44-48. The ancients believed that a toothache was caused by a worm eating the inside of a tooth just as a worm eats the inside of an apple. A cavity, they believed, marked the place where the worm had entered, and the phrase "the worm turns" described a sudden sharp pain in a bad tooth. When a bad tooth finally stopped aching, it was believed that the worm eating it had died. "Where their worm dieth not," then, described an endless excruciating toothache with no hope of relief. Of course the language is figurative, as is the reference to fire, but the imagery is meant to convey some idea of the unending, inextinguishable, and self-inflicted torments of perdition.

50. The resurrection of the just.

Questions about the resurrection of the just had been part of Joseph and Sidney's original inquiry (see vv 15-19). The resurrection of the just is also called the first resurrection, and this vision, or this part of the vision, extends from verse 50 to verse 80, including both the celestial and the terrestrial worlds—for those who inherit either of these are part of the first resurrection (see D&C 45:54). There are not three resurrections, one for each kingdom, but only two—the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust. Because the terrestrial beings are part of the just, their resurrection is described here in the same account as that of the celestial beings. Note also that the phrase "this is the end of the vision" (vv. 49, 80, 113), which divides Doctrine and Covenants 76 into its component parts, does not occur between verses 50-80, which should, therefore, be considered a single account dealing with the

whole of the first resurrection, or resurrection of the just, in both its aspects. The two resurrections, the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust, can each be further divided into their "mornings" and "evenings." Celestial and terrestrial beings will rise in the morning and evening of the first resurrection, respectively; Celestial beings and perdition will rise in the morning and evening of the second resurrection, respectively. These four occasions correspond symbolically to the first four trumpets to be blown during the millennial period, according to Doctrine and Covenants 88:97-102.

50. Who received the testimony of Jesus.

There is a great difference between having a testimony of Jesus and receiving the gospel. There are many fine and good people of other Christian churches who have received a testimony of Jesus and who know by the Spirit that he is the Son of God, but who still reject the fulness of the gospel as restored in the latter days through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

51-52. And believed . . . and were baptized ... and receive the Holy Spirit.

Those who receive a celestial glory accepted both the testimony of Jesus and the fulness of his gospel. They received the ordinances of the gospel as administered by the true Church (see vv. 51-52). Accepting the fulness of the gospel and its ordinances as commanded by God is a minimum requirement for celestial glory (see 2 Nephi 31:17-21). In a statement included by the Prophet Joseph Smith in his History of the Church, he said: "A man may be saved, after the judgment, in the terrestrial kingdom, or in the telestial kingdom, but he can never see the celestial kingdom of God without being born of the water and the Spirit." Those who receive celestial glory in the resurrection are they who received both a testimony of Jesus and the fulness of the gospel. Terrestrial beings received a testimony of Jesus but would not receive the fulness of his gospel, and those who are raised to telestial glory received neither the testimony of Jesus nor the fulness of his gospel (compare vv 51, 74-75, 79, 82, 101)."

52. Keeping the commandments.

In this context, "keeping the commandments" refers to keeping the specific commandments to have faith, repent, and be baptized (see, for example, D&C 18:19,29:49; Mosiah 16:12; Alma 9:12; 3 Nephi 27:20; Moses 5:14). By keeping the commandments to have faith, repent, and be baptized, human beings may be washed and cleansed and otherwise be made fit to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

52. Who overcome by faith.

It is indisputable that those who inherit the celestial kingdom overcome all things (compare v 60). hut the critical question is, "How do they do it?" This verse makes it clear that we do not overcome by our own magnificent feats of willpower and self-perfection. We do not save ourselves; Jesus saves us. Therefore, we follow the course described in verses 51-52. We receive a testimony of Christ; we believe the gospel of Christ; then we are baptized into Christ and receive the Holy Spirit. We must have faith in Christ and in his ability to save us from our weaknesses. Because it is Christ who overcomes all things, we must have faith in him as our Savior and become one with him through the gospel covenant. Then, as a part of him, we can share in his victory (see Romans 8:37), and this is how we overcome by our faith." While the canonized text emphasizes our ultimate victory through faith in Christ, we must not entirely ignore the role of works in being "faithful." Our work is to come to Christ and to remain faithful to him by keeping his commandments; his work is to perfect and exalt us. This partnership of faith and works is reflected in the text of the poetic version of this text: "For those overcome, by their faith and their works."

53. Sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise.

The Holy Spirit of promise is none other than the Holy Ghost. This is a title used for the Holy Ghost when he performs a particular type of function. A covenant is a contract or a mutual promise between two parties, and it becomes valid or binding when it is "sealed." Anciently; contracts were sealed in wax or clay with the impression of a signet ring or an official seal. Today we seal most contracts by signing them, though official



seals are sometimes still used. Covenants or contracts made with God are sealed by the power of the Holy Ghost, which testifies to us that all God's promises will be kept. The mere presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives is proof that our covenants with God are valid, while the Spirit itself promises that all our covenant blessings will become realities. Individuals are said to be "sealed" when they are promised a certain fate or destination, such as the celestial kingdom or exaltation in that kingdom, although people can also be sealed up to wrath (see D&C 1:8-9; 133:71-73) or even be sealed by the devil (see Alma 34:35). Whether God's promises are conditional, as in the covenants of baptism or the endowment, or unconditional, as when one's calling and election are made sure," on either level it is the power of the Holy Ghost acting as the Holy Spirit of promise that ratifies the contract, guarantees its terms, and testifies or promises that God's word will be kept.

#### 54. The church of the Firstborn.

The Firstborn of God the Father is Jesus Christ; therefore, the Church of the Firstborn is the Church of Jesus Christ. "The Church of Jesus Christ" is, however, a term used primarily to describe Jesus' earthly Church—the members of which are not always entirely celestial in nature. False or disloyal members are an unpleasant reality in the Church. Because Firstborn of the Father is one of Jesus' titles in eternity, then Church of the Firstborn can appropriately be used to describe the members of the Church of Jesus Christ who will still be members in eternity. The Church of the Firstborn is thus the heavenly church or the eternal church. They are the faithful—the "church within the church"—or those members who keep their covenants, who are faithful and loyal, and who serve God with all their heart, might, mind, and strength. Even though their names may have been upon the rolls of the Church in mortality, those who take their covenants lightly or who will not serve will no longer be members of Jesus' Church in eternity (see vv 79, 94-95).

#### 54. Into whose hands the Father has given all things.

See verses 59-60;<sup>49</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 84:37-38; Romans 8:17, Revelation 21:7. The poetic version adds, "For they hold the keys of the kingdom of heav'n."<sup>50</sup>

#### 54. Priests and kings.

They will have all authority, both temporal and spiritual, as kings and priests unto God in eternity. Though kings themselves, they shall still serve him who is the King of Kings.

#### 54. Who have received of his fulness.

The antecedent of the pronoun his is "the Father," and the fulness spoken of here is the fulness of the Father (see v 71). The celestial heirs, who are joint-heirs with Christ and follow his example (see Romans 8:17), are made full just as the Father is full and receive the kind of glory the Father gave the Son, thereby becoming like the Father and the Son in glory (see D&C 84:38; 2 Peter 1:3-4). The poetic version specifies, 'Receiving a fulness of glory and light.'

#### 54. Priests of the Most High.

Usually, "the Most High" refers in scripture to Jehovah, who is Jesus Christ (for example, Psalm 83:18). In the fulness of the gospel, however, Jesus introduces us to his Father, who is even greater than himself (see John 14:28). Thus, the title "Most High" may correctly be applied to either the Father or the Son, or even to the Godhead collectively.

#### 57. After the order of.

The order or type of priesthood necessary to achieve the kingdom of God, whether as Zion here upon the earth or as the celestial kingdom in eternity is the priesthood which Jesus Christ himself holds and exercises. Anciently this was called "the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God" (D&C 107:3). Because Melchizedek, and before him Enoch, had held this same priesthood and had established Zion with it, the order of the Son

also became known as the order of Enoch and the order of Melchizedek Both anciently and today out of respect for the sacredness of its full title, this priesthood is called the Melchizedek Priesthood (see D&C 107:4).

57. As it is written.

This is probably a reference to Psalm 82:6, which is also cited by Jesus in John 10:34. In John it is clear that Jesus understood the psalm to say that those who receive the "word of God" can be called gods (John 10:35), and in the fullest sense Christ is the Word of God (see John 1:1, 12; Revelation 19:13), which must be received to bring this about.

58. They are gods, even the sons of God.

Note that the two terms gods and sons of God, are equated here, for to be one is also to be or to become the other. Children grow up to be what their parents are If, through the gospel, we have truly become the sons and daughters of God as the scriptures insist (see v 24; D&C 11:30; 25:1; 50:41; 4 Nephi 1:17)," then it follows that as we grow "from grace to grace"—following the example of Jesus himself (D&C 93:13)—we also become more like God (see 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 3:21).

58. All things are theirs.

See 1 Corinthians 3:21-23 (see also D&C 84:37-38; Revelation 21:7). What isn't included in all things"? For the celestial Saints, every righteous desire will be granted; every goal achieved; every need satisfied; every hope fulfilled. It is impossible to adequately describe the gifts and bounties of God toward those who love him. They are truly beyond our present comprehension. Those who receive the celestial kingdom belong to Christ and are in his special care, just as Christ belongs to the Father and is in his special care. And as the Father gives all that he has to the Son, so the Son shares all that he has with us. his children of the covenant (see Romans 8:17; Revelation 3:21). Like a kind and good man who wins a fortune and shares his bounty with needy friends, so Christ overcomes all things and receives all things, and then he invites us to partake with him in his victory.

60. They shall overcome all things.

Ultimately, celestial individuals will learn to overcome all things on their own power. but not in this life, or before the Judgment, or for a long time after the resurrection." Until that distant time, those who are celestial do not overcome all things on their own. Rather, they overcome through their faith in the merits of Christ and in their relationship with him (see Romans 8:37). Just as Christ vicariously suffered and paid for sins, so also we, through him, vicariously conquer and overcome all things. In fact, overcoming all things or achieving perfection are not requirements for entering the kingdom at all, rather they are some of the blessings of doing so (see D&C 76:69) The Book of Mormon in particular reminds us that we must rely wholly upon the merits of Jesus Christ for our salvation and our victory (see 2 Nephi 2:8; 31:19; Alma 22:14; 24:10; Helaman 14:13; Moroni 6:4; D&C 3:20). Our job is to come to Christ and to keep his covenants; his job is to perfect us and exalt us and bring us to the Father.

60. Let no man glory in man.

While we must, however imperfectly keep the commandments in order to remain in the covenant (see D&C 138:4), the righteousness we ultimately rely on for salvation and exaltation is Jesus' righteousness. He earned it. He overcame every temptation and every enemy. He had perfect willpower and perfect self-control. He led a sinless life. Since we must rely "wholly upon the merits" of Christ for salvation (2 Nephi 31:19), and upon "the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah" (2 Nephi 2:8), it follows that we cannot—must not—become too proud of our own performance (compare Luke 18:9-14), or brag about our own merits, or rely upon our own strength or righteousness to save us (see Alma 26:11-12, 16; 1 Corinthians 1:31).

60. These shall dwell in the presence of God.

They shall have access to the presence of the Father and the Son. A citizen in a kingdom can have no greater honor than to be a welcome visitor in the palaces of the king. This is the privilege of those who come forth in the resurrection of the just."

60. They whom he shall bring with him.

At his second coming, Christ will bring with him the spirits of "the dead in Christ," who have rested in paradise, or Abraham's bosom, since their death (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Before any of those living upon the earth are caught up, these dead in Christ will be resurrected and will join their Savior in the clouds for his descent to the earth. Only then will the righteous mortals upon the earth be caught up—transfigured but not yet resurrected—to meet the Lord in the clouds and will also join him in his glorious descent (see D&C 88:96-98; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17).

63. To reign on the earth.

This will be the great Millennium, the thousand-year reign of Christ as King of Kings upon the earth. During this period the prayers of the righteous that "thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" will finally be answered (Matthew 6:10).

63. The first resurrection.

See Doctrine and Covenants 45:54; 63:18."

63. The resurrection of the just.

See Commentary on verse 17.

63. Mount Zion.

The language of verses 66-69 is paralleled in Hebrews 12:22-24. According to 63, the millennial New Jerusalem that is to be built upon the American continent beginning in Independence, Missouri. It was this very city that the Saints in February of 1832 were attempting to build and whose location had been revealed to them barely seven months earlier (see D&C 45:64-71; 57:2-3).<sup>5</sup>I

66. The city of the living God, the heavenly place.

While Mount Zion, the New Jerusalem, is the millennial city of God, that city itself is symbolic of another, heavenly Jerusalem, a cosmic holy of holies, where the Father dwells in celestial glory. Descriptions of this Mount Zion sometimes blend with descriptions of the New Jerusalem,

66. An innumerable company of angels.

Those who inherit the celestial kingdom will find themselves in communion and fellowship with billions upon billions of celestial beings like themselves—the hosts of heaven—from billions upon billions of other worlds all created and glorified by the same Jesus Christ who created our world and who will glorify us.

67. The general assembly and church of Enoch.

The English word church actually translates from Greek and Hebrew words in the Bible meaning "assembly" or "congregation." Thus, general assembly and church are parallel terms here meaning roughly the same thing. Because Enoch and his people established Zion and were taken up into heaven, they are a type or symbol for all those later Saints who are worthy of Zion and, therefore, comprise part of the Church of the Firstborn (see v. 54).

67. Whose names are written in heaven.

See Luke 10:20, Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 20:12. There are actually two sets of Church records. One is

kept on earth for use by the earthly Church—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—and one is kept in heaven, where no mistakes are made, for the heavenly Church—the Church of the Firstborn, or the faithful Saints who keep their covenants and magnify their callings (see D&C 88:2). Being recorded in the earthly records does not guarantee being recorded in the heavenly.

69. Just men made perfect through Jesus.

The moral standard of the celestial kingdom is not goodness or even righteousness. It is perfection; flawless and unblemished. "No unclean thing," no matter how small or inconsequential, "can inherit the kingdom of heaven" (Alma 11:37). Therefore, celestial beings must be sinless and perfect. But how is this possible? Humans can, through their own agency and willpower, make themselves just men and women. That is, by attempting to keep the commandments they can avoid wickedness and make themselves "good" and "righteous" people who keep most of the rules most of the time. And they don't need the Savior to do this; all they need is a conscience and some willpower. This kind of righteousness, however, is not celestial in nature but is characteristic of the terrestrial kingdom, for that kingdom will be inhabited by honorable men and women with testimonies of Jesus who will rise in the resurrection of the just (see v 75; D&C 45:54). Through our own efforts we can make ourselves relatively good or just human beings, and therefore worthy of terrestrial glory, but only Christ can make us perfect) Perfection, that flawless celestial righteousness necessary to dwell in the very presence of God, comes only "through the merits, and mercy and grace of the Holy Messiah" (2 Nephi 2:8). Even if we were to so discipline ourselves that one day we managed to live perfectly, there would still be sins in our past that would render us unworthy of celestial glory. Even if we could in this life eventually live flawlessly when we died we would still be sinners. No one can perfect himself or herself; it is only Christ who can cleanse our past as well as our present and future, who takes just men and women and makes them perfect and celestial by applying his merits, his mercy, and his grace (see Moroni 10:32-33). The poetic version of this verse reads: "These are they that are perfect through Jesus' own blood." While the hunger and thirst to be clean and righteous and the commitment and drive to do God's will must come from within us, perfection comes only as a gift from our perfect Savior through his perfect atonement.

69. The mediator of the new covenant.

When two parties are at odds or can't deal with each other face to face, a mediator—a negotiator or go-between—is often called. Because sinful, fallen humans are estranged from their perfect, celestial Father (see Romans 8:7; Mosiah 3:19), we also need a mediator to act as a go-between and to work out an agreement. The "old" covenant arranged between God and Israel was the law of Moses with its preparatory gospel, its carnal commandments, and its lesser priesthood (see D&C 84:23-27; Joseph Smith Translation Exodus 34:1-2). Because of Israel's iniquity at Sinai, knowledge of the Father and access to him were severely limited under this old or lesser covenant, because these are exclusive privileges of the fulness of the gospel and of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which had both been taken away (see D&C 84:25). Under the old covenant of Moses, Jehovah or Jesus Christ represented the Godhead, and his Father, the Father of spirits, remained largely unknown to Israel. The Prophet Moses became the mediator or go-between between the Godhead—represented by Jehovah, the Son—and Israel, and this lesser covenant was named after its mediator "the law of Moses." In the "new" and everlasting covenant, which is the fulness of the gospel, Jesus Christ once again reveals his Father to Israel and once again seeks to bring us into his Father's presence, as he once did with Adam, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham. In so doing, the Son himself now replaces Moses as mediator between the Godhead—now represented by Elohim, the Father—and Israel or the Church. This new and better covenant, which once again brings us a knowledge of and access to God the Father, is also named after its mediator the gospel of Jesus Christ."

69. Shedding of his own blood.

Jesus' blood was shed both in his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane (see D&C 19:18; Luke 22:44; Mosiah 3:7) and in his scourging, crucifixion, and death upon the cross (see Colossians 1:20).

69. Whose bodies are celestial.

Bodies resurrected to the celestial kingdom are qualitatively different from those resurrected to a lesser kingdom in that they possess greater glory. Glory is divine energy Celestial bodies possess and are able to withstand a higher level of this energy. Just as some elements, such as gold or copper, can carry more electric current than other elements, so celestial bodies can bear a more intense glory than terrestrial or telestial bodies. Thus, a celestial body can tolerate or "abide" the very presence of God and the fulness of his glory when a terrestrial or telestial body could not stand the full intensity of that glory. In the resurrection, our bodies will receive glory appropriate to those principles by which we lived during our probation. If we pursue celestial principles here and attempt to live by them upon the earth, then our bodies will receive celestial glory in the resurrection. What we seek to live here, we will receive there (see D&C 88:20-24). This is one aspect of the law of the harvest.

70. Whose glory is that of the sun.

The full glory of God is much, much greater than the energy of the sun. The relative glories of the sun, moon, and stars are only symbolic of the differences between the heavenly kingdoms. It is in this sense, as "symbolic" rather than as "a representative sample," that the word typical is used at the end of this verse. The sun is a type or symbol of celestial glory. Bear in mind that even the telestial glory is beyond our present powers of perception and appreciation (see y 89), and that the actual glory of the celestial kingdom is infinitely greater than the brightness of the sun that symbolizes it.

70. The terrestrial world.

Joseph and Sidney saw the terrestrial portion of the first resurrection. The difference between the brightness of our sun and moon symbolizes the difference between the glory of the celestial and terrestrial worlds. Outside sections 76 and 88, the word terrestrial occurs in scripture only in 1 Corinthians 15:40, where it is used to mean 'of the earth" in contrast to celestial, which means "of the heavens.' The root of terrestrial is the Latin terra, which means "earth." This derivation has troubled some students who associate the earth with Babylon, or the fallen, telestial world. But Paul made it clear he was speaking of the earth from which Adam was originally made (see 1 Corinthians 15:45, 47), that is, the earth as Eden, or paradise. And the Eden state, or paradisiacal glory, is what this earth will receive again during the Millennium, when it will be returned to the terrestrial glory in which it was first created (see Articles of Faith 1:10).

72. These are they who died without law.

The different degrees of glory that one may receive in the resurrection will be positively or negatively influenced by the amount of knowledge a person was faithful to on the one hand, or against which a person sinned on the other. There will be different standards of accountability for those who (a) knew the fulness of the gospel, (b) had a portion of the gospel through the teachings of the New Testament and of traditional Christianity, (c) had the preparatory gospel of the law of Moses,<sup>58</sup> or (d) had no revealed principles of gospel or law at all. This last category will consist mainly of the heathen nations of the world (see D&C 45:54),<sup>59</sup> as the poetic version confirms: "The heathen of ages that never had hope." When the ignorant heathen sin, they do not sin against the revealed word of God, for they never had it. Thus, they are judged more leniently and have greater cause for hope in the resurrection than those who may have had a revealed law of some kind, but who sinned against it. Merely being a heathen, however, does not guarantee a person terrestrial glory nor does it limit them to that kingdom. For, "all who have died without a knowledge of this gospel [including the heathens], who would have received it If they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God" (D&C 137:7).<sup>1</sup> Many

such heathens will accept the gospel in the spirit world and will ultimately receive celestial glory (compare Matthew 8:11). On the other hand, the wicked heathen, while they may not have violated revealed laws and commandments, can still sin against their own consciences and against whatever light they do have (see D&C 84:46-47; John 1:9). And the unrepentant wicked of all nations, heathen or not, LDS or not, will receive telestial glory (see D&C 76:102-6). These wicked are those who in violation of the law given them, on whatever level, seek to become their own law instead (see D&C 88:35). They make their own rules. In the resurrection, a large portion of those who inherit the terrestrial world will be righteous heathens who were not wicked, but who also would not have accepted the gospel and joined the Church even if they had had the chance, and who did not accept the gospel in the spirit world.

73. And also.

In addition to the category of righteous heathens, there are other categories of persons who also inherit terrestrial glory.

73. The spirits of men.

The term men is used here, as elsewhere, for human beings of both sexes.

73. Kept in prison.

A prison is any place you can't leave when you want to, and in the spirit world even the righteous are held captive by the chains of death (see D&C 138:16-18). The spirits of the righteous cannot leave paradise. Rather, they wait for deliverance from death, and they look upon absence from their bodies as bondage (see D&C 138:15, 49-50). Thus, the phrase "spirit prison" applies to the entire spirit world, including "paradise," and not merely to that part of the spirit world where the wicked suffer in hell. "Spirit world" and "spirit prison" are synonymous terms. The spirit prison includes both paradise, where the spirits of the righteous rest and wait in pleasant surroundings for their glorious resurrection, and hell (see D&C 76:84), where the spirits of the wicked suffer for their sins until their resurrection.

73. Whom the Son visited.

See the remarkable account of President Joseph F Smith concerning his vision of this great event in Doctrine and Covenants 138.

73. Be judged according to men in the flesh.

The spirit world allows people a continuation of their probationary state, so that they may learn, repent, and possibly receive a greater reward in eternity than their performance in mortality would otherwise merit. Joseph Smith praised this "continued duration for completion, in order that the heirs of salvation may confess the Lord and bow the knee." Any additional progress made in the spirit world, including acceptance of vicarious ordinances, may then be credited to an individual just as though it had been achieved while still in the flesh. The poetic version reads, "And then were the living baptiz'd for their dead, That they might be judg'd as if men in the flesh."<sup>64</sup>

74. Who received not the testimony of Jesus.

This revelation distinguishes between a full knowledge of the gospel on the one hand and a more generic testimony of Jesus Christ on the other." Many good non-LDS Christians in the world have firm testimonies of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world, but will not accept baptism and the fulness of the gospel. Knowledge and acceptance of the fulness of the gospel is not necessary for having a testimony of the divinity of Jesus Christ. From before the Restoration and to the present day, thousands of righteous Christian missionaries, armed only with the Bible, have spread their testimony of Jesus throughout the world. Those who accepted or "received" the testimony of Jesus when they heard it in the flesh will have the further opportunity of accepting the fulness of the gospel in the spirit world, and may eventually receive celestial glory. Those honorable men and women of the earth, however, who rejected the testimony of Jesus Christ when they heard it

in the flesh may still repent of their error and accept the lordship of Christ in the spirit world. If they do this much but will not accept baptism and the fulness of the gospel, they will receive at least a terrestrial glory in the resurrection. On the other hand, no one who has a testimony of Jesus but is not valiant in that testimony may obtain celestial glory (see v. 79). "Received not" here evidently means "rejected it when they heard it" rather than "didn't have a chance to hear it." This is supported by the reading of the poetic version: "They receiv'd not the truth of the Savior at first; But did, when they heard it in prison, again."<sup>66</sup> Thus, it would seem that those honorable people who reject the basic testimony of Jesus when they hear it in the flesh but later accept it in the spirit world, will inherit eternal glory generally terrestrial glory wherein they may enjoy the presence of Jesus forever as he administers that kingdom (see v 77; D&C 88:32-33; 138:32-33, 58-59).

75. Honorable men of the earth.

The terrestrial kingdom is inhabited by good people, people who were good neighbors and who lived according to the light they had. At some point, whether in this life or in the spirit world, these people accept the testimony of Jesus, and as a result they will rise in the first resurrection. They are worthy of enjoying the presence of Jesus in eternity. These terrestrial beings, basically good though they may be, would not either in this life or in the spirit world accept the fulness of the gospel, having allowed themselves to be misled by human arguments and reasoning. For this reason they will not receive celestial glory.

76. Receive of his glory.

Terrestrial beings will bask in the glory of Jesus Christ, but they will never be able to make his glory their own. They will enjoy the presence of Christ, but they will never become like him.

76. The presence of the Son.

The terrestrial kingdom is not hell. Neither is it a place of sadness or of deprivation, for those who receive terrestrial glory rise in the first resurrection, the resurrection of the just. In fact, the usual non-LDS concept of heaven pretty closely matches the LDS understanding of the terrestrial kingdom—a place where good people dwell in joy with Jesus forever but without family ties and without the possibility of actually becoming what Jesus is. In order to receive more than the terrestrial, to return to the presence of the Father and to receive as joint-heirs with Christ all that the Father has, it is necessary to accept the fulness of the gospel. The poetic version reads, "They are they, that come into the presence of Christ, But not to the fulness of God, on his throne."<sup>67</sup>

76. Bodies terrestrial.

Terrestrial bodies cannot handle or "abide" the full glory of God. Like a too-thin wire receiving too much electrical power, they would burn up- Therefore, they are given as much glory as they can handle, but a lesser glory than the celestial, just as the moon is less bright than the sun.

79. Not valiant in the testimony of Jesus.

Just as ignorance of the gospel presents no permanent obstacle to the righteous who always pursue more light (see D&C 137:7), even so a testimony of Jesus or of his gospel is no advantage for the slacker. There is a difference between merely having a testimony and actually living by it. If what we know doesn't move us to make appropriate choices in life, then we are not living up to our testimony; we are not valiant. Many Christians believe in Jesus, but do not act according to their belief by serving him and keeping his commandments. Many Latter-day Saints have testimonies of the gospel, but will not accept callings in their wards or keep the commandments in their personal lives. Whether members or nonmembers, those who are not valiant, whose commitment does not match their testimony, need not expect more than terrestrial glory Those who receive the terrestrial kingdom have a testimony of Jesus but were not sufficiently motivated by that testimony either to accept the gospel when the Spirit bore witness (non-LDS) or to live it conscientiously thereafter (LDS).

### 81. The telestial.

The term telestial occurs in scripture only in Doctrine and Covenants 76 and 88. It is not found in the Bible or anywhere else before 1831. Joseph Smith here added a new word to the English language. It is possible that the term was derived from the Greek prefix tele, which means "at a distance" or "far away" as the word telephone means "a faraway voice," or television means "distant viewing." That would make the telestial kingdom mean something like "the farthest or most distant" kingdom of glory. This etymology is only speculative, however.

### 81. Received not the gospel of Christ.

Again, "received not" here probably means "rejected" or "would not receive," that is, when they had the chance— Those who inherit the telestial kingdom reject both the fulness of the gospel as found in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and also the more basic testimony of Jesus. Terrestrial glory requires at least a basic testimony of Jesus, but celestial beings won't accept even that. The poetic version reads, "These are they that receiv'd not the gospel of Christ, Or evidence, either, that he ever was "<sup>69</sup>

### 81, Who deny not the Holy Spirit.

Though the telestial beings have been wicked, there is one sin they do not commit. They do not deny the Holy Ghost.<sup>69</sup>

### 81. Who are thrust down to hell.

The word hell has more than one meaning in the scriptures and in contemporary LDS usage. In this context it refers to the spiritual state of the wicked, rebellious, and unbelieving between their death and resurrection. During that time their spirits are subject in the spirit world to the power of Satan and his angels, for this was their demonstrated preference while still in the flesh. If one chooses Satan's path in life, it leads one into Satan's power at death. "What is the damnation of hell? To go with that society who have not obeyed His commands?" Fortunately this hell does not last forever (see the "until" in vv. 85, 106) ' but will eventually give up its captive spirits at the resurrection (see D&C 19:6; 2 Nephi 9:12; Revelation 20:13). Hell is a temporary state of intense but appropriate suffering for one's own sins, which is usually experienced between death and resurrection. In many cases, however, the pains of hell may begin in this life (see Alma 14:6; 36:13-16). Yet it is possible even for the wicked, after they have suffered appropriately for their sins—or "paid the uttermost farthing" (Matthew 5:26)—to repent, to bow the knee, to accept redemption through Christ, and finally to receive telestial glory (see LDS Bible Dictionary, s.v "hell"). Thus, a loving God does not—as the religions of men insisted in Joseph's day—torture the wicked and the unbaptized forever and ever. Eventually Christ redeems all human beings, including the wicked, rebellious, and unbelieving, from death and from hell, upon the condition of repentance. "Hell . . . is a place prepared for the teaching, the disciplining of those who failed to learn here upon the earth what they should have learned.... No man will be kept in hell longer than is necessary to bring him to a fitness for something better. When he reaches that stage, the prison doors will open and there will be rejoicing among the hosts who welcome him into a better state" (see also D&C 29:38). In hell, between death and resurrection, those who chose Satan in life are delivered into his power. By their own choice, they have sold themselves as slaves to the devil who has become their lord and master. God respects the agency he has given us, and if we freely choose the lordship of Satan during life, then at death our choice must be respected, and we must be given into the power of the evil one we have chosen. The wicked who are delivered to Satan in hell cannot be raised up at the first resurrection, the resurrection of the just, which takes place at the beginning of the Millennium. Rather, their bodies will remain in the graves and their spirits will continue to suffer enslavement to Satan in hell until the second resurrection (see D&C 88:101). Only then, at the end of the Millennium, will Christ finally redeem the wicked who have repented of their poor choices and who seek deliverance from their former master, the devil. The word redeem means to buy back," In the second resurrection, even the wicked are finally bought back from the power of the devil by the atonement of Christ. Even though the wicked have suffered in hell for their own sins, still they must turn to Christ and accept his sacrifice in order to change masters, in order to be bought back, or redeemed, from Satan's ownership. Thus, there is no degree of glory, not even that of the faintest and most distant star, that does not depend entirely upon the infinite atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.



86. Who receive not of his fulness ... but of the Holy Spirit:

Telestial beings will never really know the Son. Though they will finally acknowledge Jesus' lordship, they will not enjoy his direct presence in eternity, as will terrestrial beings. The Godhead will administer the affairs of the telestial world through the person of the Holy Spirit and through ministering angels sent to them from the terrestrial world. The logic of this is impeccable. The telestial beings rejected both the fulness of the Father, which is accessible through the gospel, and the fulness of the Son, which comes through the testimony of Jesus (see v. 82). They did not, however, deny the Holy Spirit (see v 83). Thus, they may receive "of the Holy Spirit," but not the presence or power of the Father or the Son. This does not mean that the Son or the Holy Spirit will permanently inhabit the terrestrial and telestial kingdoms. Both these members of the Godhead will be exalted, celestial beings in eternity and will enjoy all the blessings of exaltation, including the company and fellowship of other exalted beings. It is likely, however, that the Son and the Holy Spirit will administer the affairs of the terrestrial and telestial kingdoms, respectively, just as they administer affairs upon the earth right now, through chosen intermediaries and perhaps, at times, through personal contact.

87. The terrestrial through the ministration of the celestial:

The many kingdoms of our Father's house will be governed and will enjoy communication with their presiding authorities in ways very much like the present priesthood government of the Church upon the earth. As the Lord reveals his will to the prophets, and they to the General Authorities, and they to area authorities, and they to stake and mission authorities, and so on, so in heaven lower kingdoms will be governed by communication and instruction from higher kingdoms in an orderly manner from the top to the bottom. And the will of God will be done in all things and in all kingdoms. Elder Melvin J. Ballard has written, "We must not overlook the fact that those who attain to the higher glories may minister unto and visit and associate with those of the lesser kingdoms. While the lesser may not come up, they may still enjoy the companionship of their loved ones who are in higher stations.'

87. For they shall be heirs of salvation.

Once again: the telestial kingdom is not hell. Neither is it a place of sadness or of deprivation, for those who inherit the telestial kingdom rise in the resurrection to a heavenly glory. They are saved from all their enemies, including physical and spiritual death, sin, hell, and the devil. They receive as much divine glory as their natures can stand, and their joy will be full (see D&C 88:31), though it will be the fulness of thimbles or of teacups rather than the fulness of barrels or of oceans or of the infinity of space.

89. Surpasses all understanding.

Even the least glory in the lowest of Gods kingdoms is beyond our mortal comprehension. First, imagine what the glory of the celestial kingdom must be like; then realize that what you have imagined falls far, far below the reality of the faintest degree of telestial glory. "It is a doctrine fundamental in Mormonism that the meanest sinner, in the final judgment, will receive a glory which is beyond human understanding, which is so great that we are unable to describe it adequately. Those who do well will receive an even more glorious place... "The Gospel is a gospel of tremendous love. Love is at the bottom of it. The meanest child is loved so dearly that his reward will be beyond the understanding of mortal man.'" The poetic version refers to the three heavenly kingdoms as "great, greater, greatest."

89. No man knows it.

Among mortals, no one can know the glory of even the telestial kingdom except through direct revelation.

89. In might, and in dominion.

"'Might' refers to the ability to do, or perform whatever must be done; 'dominion' refers to the extent of the field of action. The terrestrials have more intelligence, more authority, more strength, and a larger expanse in which to operate, than the telestials."<sup>76</sup>

89. Where God, even the Father, reigns upon his throne.

The God who presides over the celestial kingdom is God the Father. All who attain that kingdom, even the Son, will give all glory and reverence to the Father (see vv 93, 107). This, it will be recalled, is something that Satan was unwilling to do (see Moses 4:1-3). We, who are the offspring of God, have the ability to add to the glory of God through our achievements and accomplishments, just as mortal parents can be built up by the achievements of their children. As God enlarges us, he himself is glorified (see Moses 1:39).<sup>w</sup> Then, if we can avoid the satanic impulse to glorify ourselves for the progress we make (see Moses 4:1), and rather give all glory to the God who made all things possible and through whom all things are accomplished (see D&C 76:61),<sup>v</sup> then we will in turn be glorified by God himself with all the powers, dominion, and privileges of his own kingdom. As we in humility give God all praise, honor, laud, and glory, he in turn exalts us to sit upon the throne of his glory."

94. Church of the Firstborn.  
See verse 541"

94. They see as they are seen.

Because God through his grace has given these individuals his fulness and has brought them into his very presence, they interact with him there directly—not as equals, for he still reigns over them, but on equal terms, face to face. It would also seem that celestial beings interact with one another on the same terms, knowing as they are known, without guile or hidden agendas.

94. He makes them equal.

All the sons and daughters of God who are exalted in the celestial kingdom are equal with each other and with Christ in receiving all the power and might and dominion of that kingdom (see D&C 88:107). This is the celestial principle upon which the law of consecration rests- In order to establish Zion upon the earth, "every man [must be] equal according to his family according to his circumstances and his wants and needs" (D&C 51:3"; see also D&C 70:14; 78:5-6; 82:17-19). This celestial principle is the same in eternity, This does not necessarily mean that celestial beings will all be the same or that their situations in eternity will be identical, for there, as here, one individual's family wants, needs, and other circumstances may differ from another's. Consequently, their individual, celestial stewardships or kingdoms may likewise be different.<sup>v</sup> All will have, however, equal access to all the corporate resources of the exalted family. The Lord Jesus Christ also observes the eternal principles of the law of consecration. His eternal consecration is essentially himself—his own perfection, his own merits, his own righteousness. In sharing these, his "earnings," with us, he raises us to his level, thus making us equal to himself as well as to each other, and making us joint-heirs with him of all that the Father has (see D&C 88:107; Romans 8:17). In consecrating ourselves and our resources for the establishment of Zion here in mortality, we are following the example of Jesus Christ in consecrating himself and the "earnings" of his infinite atonement for the good of all in eternity.

96-98. The glory of the celestial/terrestrial/telestial is one.

That is, celestial glory is one distinct level or class of glory. Terrestrial glory is another distinct type of glory, and telestial glory is yet a third distinct type. Even though individuals within the telestial kingdom may differ from one another in glory as much as one star differs from another in size or brightness, they are all still of the same order, class, or type of glory (see 1 Corinthians 15:39-41). No one mistakes a star for the moon or the moon for the noonday sun.

99-100. These are they who are of Paul, and of Apollos ... and some of another.

The divine impulse is unity; the satanic impulse is division (compare D&C 38:27)<sup>43</sup> Zion is established when the Saints are of one heart and one mind (see Moses 7:18), and Zion is lost when the Saints divide up into individual special interests. In the New Testament Church this wicked impulse for division was manifested

by those in Corinth who accepted some Church leaders while rejecting others or who accepted some doctrines while resisting others as they pursued their own individual agendas (see 1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:3-9). Thus, they divided the unity of the Church and of the gospel into rival factions and parties—of Paul, of Apollos, of Cephas, and such. The Old Testament names in Doctrine and Covenants 76:100 witness to the same wicked impulse toward factionalism among the members in earlier dispensations. Similarly, there are some in the Church today who will sustain some leaders but not others and who treat the restored gospel as though it were a buffet lunch—accepting the leaders, doctrines, and policies they like and rejecting the ones they do not. But if the Saints cannot learn to become one in Jesus' Church upon the earth, we need not suppose we will do so in eternity.

101. Received not the gospel.

There are some telestial persons in the LDS Church and in other Christian churches who do not really have testimonies of the fulness of the gospel or even of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, though they would appear to. In reality, these persons are followers of men and believe in the teachings of men. They strive to turn the Church to the prevailing views of Babylon. Such persons merely use the church membership as a mask while they pursue their own individual ends in the service of a different master. The poetic version of the vision says of them, "They went their own way, and they have their reward," and "In darkness they worshipp'd; to darkness they go."

101.

See verses 63-67; Doctrine and Covenants 45:45; 78:21.

103.

These are they who. In a parallel list of characters, the book of Revelation adds: the fearful, the unbelieving, the abominable, murderers, and idolaters (see Revelation 21:8; 22:15).

104-5. Who suffer the wrath of God on earth ... eternal fire.

The reference here is to the wicked who will be living on the earth and who will be burned to death at the second coming of Christ (see also v 106). Their physical suffering from this very real and very literal fire will last, however, only until they are dead. It is called "eternal" fire because it is the just punishment of an eternal God (see D&C 19:6-12). Additionally once the wicked are dead, their spirits will be consigned to hell, and "eternal fire" is also used as a figurative expression for the spiritual suffering they will experience in hell between their death and their resurrection. This hell is also located "on earth" now, though separated by a veil from the mortal and temporal world of our experience.

106. Until the fulness of times.

Once again, this verse teaches us that there is an eventual exit from hell. When Christ has completed all his work, the captives in hell will be set free and will be resurrected to the telestial kingdom. This will take place only after the great Millennium and after Satan has been put in chains and cast out forever.

106. Perfected his work.

Perfected is used in its biblical sense to mean "completed." The Greek and Hebrew words sometimes translated as perfect in the Bible usually mean "complete," "whole," or "mature."

106-7.

Compare 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.

106. He shall deliver up the kingdom.

When Jesus Christ has completed his stewardship assignment and has redeemed all that was fallen and has redeemed and reconciled it all to God, he will then turn all things over to his Father and render the glory of his accomplishments to the Father (see D&C 19:19; Moses 4:2; Revelation 1:6). The Father will thus be further glorified and enlarged by the immortality and eternal life brought to pass for so many of his children (see Moses 1:39). Christ will be installed upon the throne of his Father, where the righteous will reign with him as joint-heirs, and the glorified Father will assume an even more glorious state."

107. Have trodden the wine-press alone.

The winepress is a double symbol representing the dual roles of Christ as both Savior and as judge. As a symbol of divine justice, the winepress represents Christ's work in crushing all his enemies beneath his feet as if they were grapes in a vat and directing them to drink the wine or the results of his victory over them. The poetic version says, "Till Christ shall have trodden all enemies down."<sup>80</sup> In this role as conqueror and judge, the redness of Jesus' garments (see Isaiah 63:1-4; D&C 133:48, 50) comes from the blood of the wicked whom he justly tramples down at his second coming "like him that treadeth in the winefat" (Isaiah 63:2) and who are forced to drink the bitter wine of his victory and his justice by suffering for their sins in hell. As a symbol of Christ's saving atonement, however, the winepress represents the Savior himself being pressed therein until his blood is shed in the Garden of Gethsemane. Gath in Hebrew means "winepress," and semane means "oil" or "richness." Thus, Gethsemane means "winepress of richness." Jesus as the "true vine" (John 15:1,5; 1 Nephi 15:15; Alma 16:17) enters the garden of the winepress, Gethsemane, and there is pressed like grapes in a vat with the hideous weight of the sins and pains of the world. Under that tremendous load, his blood, like the juice pressed from grapes, is squeezed through his very skin, and he bleeds at every pore (see D&C 19:18; Mosiah 3:7; Luke 22:44). In his role as Savior, the redness of Jesus' garments comes from his own blood shed in the garden and on the cross in our behalf so that we might not suffer (see D&C 133:48). In partaking of the sacrament, the early Saints drank wine squeezed in a press in remembrance of the symbolic wine of his blood that was squeezed from his body and shed for us in the press of Gethsemane.' Further, Jesus is described as having "trodden the wine-press alone" because on the one hand he alone conquers all things as victor, and because on the other hand he alone suffered all things as victim. Beyond this, we must remember that the Savior endured his infinite agony in the garden alone. When the worst came, there was no one to help him or comfort him—the Spirit left him, and even his Father withdrew from him, to leave him utterly and horribly alone in his infinite agony (see Matthew 27:46).

109. Innumerable as the stars in the firmament:

It is sad to note that the number of individuals who receive telestial glory will be so great that it will be hard to number them. Still, they will be heirs of salvation, and will praise God forever for raising them beyond what they once were and for bringing them glory and joy beyond mortal comprehension (see v. 89).

109. These all shall bow . . . confess.

These seems here to refer specifically to the heirs of the telestial kingdom, a view supported by the poetic version. All those in the celestial and terrestrial kingdoms would by this time have been raised in the first resurrection and would have already acknowledged Jesus as their Lord by their previous acceptance of the gospel or the testimony of Jesus. Of those who will be saved, all that are left at this point, at the second resurrection, the resurrection of the unjust, are these telestial rebels—who must accept Christ as their ruler and acknowledge his power in order to be redeemed at last from the power of the devil. Among all the innumerable hosts of the saved in all the kingdoms of glory, every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ and that his is the only name in eternity through which they may be saved. Such bowing and confessing is not the same as having a testimony of Jesus; it merely recognizes the practical necessity of submission to his power. The celestial and terrestrial heirs will have made their confession and obeisance before or at the first resurrection. The telestial beings will do it before or at the second resurrection. Note how radical this doctrine would have seemed in 1832. When the Christian world insisted that the wicked would burn in hell forever, Joseph Smith revealed that they will all finally bend the knee and confess the Savior and then be redeemed in heavenly glory

110. Him who sits upon the throne.  
This is Jesus Christ.,

112. And they shall be servants.

All those saved in any degree of glory, including the telestial, will be servants of God in eternity and will be faithfully employed in his work.

112. Where God and Christ dwell they cannot come.

Resurrected bodies are not all of one type. There are distinctly different types or kinds of bodies (see 1 Corinthians 15:40-41)-<sup>b</sup> Once a person has been resurrected as a celestial, terrestrial, or telestial body, they are inseparably connected to it. While they may make eternal progress as one type of body or another, it would seem problematic for them to escape from being one type to be changed into another type—for the differences between the types of resurrected bodies may be as eternal as the resurrection itself. Human beings have the potential to receive any type of resurrected body they desire and will work for—until the resurrection. But once that event takes place, there is no indication that changes can be made from one type of body or of glory to another. Just as resurrected plants or fish remain in their own class and will never progress to become exalted human beings, so those resurrected in lesser kingdoms will remain in their own class and never progress to become exalted. President George Albert Smith observed: "There are some people who have supposed that if we are quickened telestial bodies, that eventually, throughout the ages of eternity, we will continue to progress until we will find our place in the celestial kingdom, but the scriptures and revelations of God have said that those who are quickened telestial bodies cannot come where God and Christ dwell, worlds without end." Elder Spencer W. Kimball agreed with this when he declared: "After a person has been assigned to his place in the kingdom, either in the telestial, the terrestrial or the celestial, or to his exaltation, he will never advance from his assigned glory to another glory. That is etemal!"<sup>40</sup>

112. Worlds without end.

In both the Old and New Testaments the same Hebrew and Greek words are used for eternity, age, and world.' Thus, "worlds without end" also means "eternities without end" or "forever and ever." In the idiom of the ancient scriptures, a "world" is as much, if not more, a period of time as it is a place.

114. The mysteries of his kingdom.

See verse 7.

114. Not lawful for man to utter.

Joseph and Sidney saw much, much more in this great vision than is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76, and much of what they saw was not to be published to the world or even to the membership of the Church. A later comment of Joseph's to this effect is recorded in History of the Church: "Paul ascended into the third heavens, and he could understand the three principal rounds of Jacob's ladder—the telestial, the terrestrial, and the celestial glories or kingdoms, where Paul saw and heard things which were not lawful for him to utter. I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I per-mined, and were the people prepared to receive them. The Lord deals with this people as a tender parent with a child, communicating light and intelligence and the knowledge of his ways as they can bear it.'" "Not lawful ... to utter" indicates knowledge received by one individual that he or she is then prevented by covenant or by commandment from revealing to others, even if they are also faithful members of the Church. In 1832 this would have included, but would not be limited to, most of the information Latter-day Saints now receive lawfully in the temples of God.. "Could we read and comprehend all that has been written from the days of Adam, on the relation of man to God and angels in a future state, we should know very little about it. Reading the experience of others, or the revelation given to them, can never give us

a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God. Knowledge of these things can only be obtained by experience through the ordinances of God set forth for that purpose. Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject:"

117-18. This privilege of seeing and knowing .. while in the flesh.

This is referring to the privilege granted here to Joseph and Sidney. This passage refers to receiving first-person experience of God rather than only having faith in the words or experiences of others. It is knowing the Father and the Son directly, personally, and empirically through the mediation of the Holy Spirit." This is the great privilege of those for whom the veil is parted because of their faith, that they may see God and come into his presence while yet in the flesh. For this experience it is necessary to be filled with the Holy Spirit, whose indwelling presence changes our nature and preserves our mortal bodies in their contact with divine glory (compare D&C 130:22).

**Notes:**

2. See Delbert L. Stapley, in Conference Report, Sept.-Oct. 1967, 73-74.
3. History of the Church, 1:245.
4. In Juvenile Instructor, 15 May 1892,303-4.
5. See "Philo Dibble's Narrative," 81.
6. History of the Church, 1:252-53.
7. In Journal of Discourses, 16:42.
8. See Phelps, "A Vision," 2.
9. See "Ancient Poetry", 81-85.
10. In Journal of Discourses, 22:146-47.
11. See Commentary on D&C 19:3,6; 76:112.
12. Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 1:12.
13. See Commentary on D&C 6:7, 11; 8:11.
14. Smith, History of the Church, 3:389-90.
15. Smith, "Ancient Poetry," 82 (v. 11).
16. Smith, History of the Church, 5:402.
17. See Commentary on D&C 1:23.
18. See Commentary on v 40.
19. See Commentary on D&C 63:18.
20. David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Apr. 1967,85.
21. Smith, "Ancient Poetry," 82 (v 17).
22. See also Commentary on D&C 88:6-13,41-50.
23. Smith, "Ancient Poetry" 83 (vv. 19-20).
24. See also Commentary on D&C 25:1.
25. Smith, "Ancient Poetry," 83 (y 21).
26. Cannon, "Discourse by President George Q. Cannon," 563-64.
27. See also Commentary on D&C 67:10.
28. See Commentary on v 26.
29. See also Commentary on v 35.
30. Teachings of Spencer W Kimball, 23.
31. Teachings, 357.
32. Smith, Teachings, 358.
33. Smith, Teachings, 358.
34. See Commentary on D&C 63:17; compare also Teachings, 357.  
34 See Commentary on D&C 29:41; 63:17.
35. Smith, "Ancient Poetry," 83 (v. 31)
36. Smith, "Ancient Poetry" 83 (v. 33).
37. See Commentary on v 24.
38. See Commentary on D&C 88:6-13, 41-42.
39. Smith, "Ancient Poetry," 83 (v 34).

40. See Commentary on vv. 32,35.
41. See Commentary on 19:6-7, 10-12.
42. Teachings, 24.
43. See Smith, Teachings, 181.
44. 1:283.
45. See Commentary on vv. 51,74-75.
46. See Commentary on vv 60-61, 69; D&C 20:30; Maxwell, All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience, 34-35.
47. Smith, "Ancient Poetry," 84 (v. 43).
48. See Commentary on D&C 68:12.
49. See also Commentary on vv. 59-60.
50. Smith, "Ancient Poetry" 84 (v. 44).
51. Smith, "Ancient Poetry" 84 (v 45).
52. See also Mosiah 5:7; 27:25; Ether 31:14; Moroni 7:19; Moses 6:68; 7:1; Matthew 5:9, 45; John 1:12; Romans 8:16-17, 21; 9:8, 26; Galatians 3:26; 1 John 3:9-10.
53. See Smith, Teachings, 348; Commentary on v 53; D&C 20:30.
54. Smith and Sjodahl, Doctrine and Covenants Commentary, 458.
55. See also Commentary on D&C 63:18.
56. See Commentary on D&C 88:2-3.
57. Smith, "Ancient Poetry," 84 (v 52).
58. See Commentary on v 69.
59. See also Commentary on D&C 45:54.
60. Smith, "Ancient Poetry" 84 (v 54).
61. Emphasis added.
62. See Smith, Teachings, 310.
63. History of the Church, 1:252.
64. Smith, "Ancient Poetry" 84 (v 55).
65. See Commentary on vv. 51-52,82,101.
66. Smith, "Ancient Poetry" 84 (v 56).
67. Smith, "Ancient Poetry," 84 (v 57).
68. Smith, "Ancient Poetry," 84 (v. 59).
69. See Commentary on VV. 35,86.
70. Smith, History of the Church, 4:555.
71. See also Commentary on D&C 19:6.
72. James E. Talmage, in Conference Report, Apr. 1930,97.
73. Hinckley Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin Joseph Ballard, 257
74. Widtsoe, Message of the Doctrine and Covenants, p. 167.
75. Smith, "Ancient Poetry," 85 (v. 63).
76. Smith and Sjodahl, Doctrine and Covenants Commentary, 468.
77. See Smith, Teachings, 348.
78. See also Commentary on v 61.
79. See Smith, Teachings, 347-48.
80. See also Commentary on v. 54.
81. Emphasis added.
82. See Commentary on D&C 51:3.
83. See Commentary on D&C 76:28.
84. Smith, "Ancient Poetry" 85 (vv. 71-72).
85. See Smith, Teachings, 347-48.
86. Smith, "Ancient Poetry," 85 (v 74).
87. Neal A. Maxwell, Ensign, August 1987,72.
88. See Commentary on D&C 76:96-98.
89. In Conference Report, Oct. 1945,172.
90. Miracle of Forgiveness, 243-44.
91. See Commentary on D&C 19:3,6.
92. 5:402.
93. Smith, History of the Church, 6:50. 94. See Commentary on v 35.

**2001**

**LDS Church Curriculum**

**Section 76 - The Vision of the Degrees of Glory**

**LDS Institute Manual, Doctrine and Covenants**

**Historical Background**

It had been over a year since the Prophet Joseph Smith began a revision of the Bible, and the months of January and February 1832 found him again involved in this assignment.

Through his study of the scriptures, many questions and problems relative to the Biblical account were resolved through revelation. One such question had to do with the term heaven. The Prophet wrote: “Upon my return from Amherst [Ohio] conference, I resumed the translation of the Scriptures. From sundry revelations which had been received, it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of man, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled. It appeared self-evident from what truths were left, that if God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body the term ‘Heaven,’ as intended for the Saints’ eternal home must include more kingdoms than one. Accordingly, on the 16th of February, 1832, while translating St. John’s Gospel, myself and Elder Rigdon saw the following vision: [ D&C 76 ].” ( History of the Church, 1:245.)

Philo Dibble was an eyewitness to the reception of this revelation. He wrote that “the vision which is recorded in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants was given at the house of ‘Father Johnson,’ in Hiram, Ohio, and during the time that Joseph and Sidney were in the spirit and saw the heavens open, there were other men in the room, perhaps twelve, among whom I was one during a part of the time—probably two-thirds of the time,—I saw the glory and felt the power, but did not see the vision.

“The events and conversation, while they were seeing what is written (and many things were seen and related that are not written,) I will relate as minutely as is necessary.

“Joseph would, at intervals, say: ‘What do I see?’ as one might say while looking out the window and beholding what all in the room could not see. Then he would relate what he had seen or what he was looking at. Then Sidney replied, ‘I see the same.’ Presently Sidney would say ‘what do I see?’ and would repeat what he had seen or was seeing, and Joseph would reply, ‘I see the same.’

“This manner of conversation was reported at short intervals to the end of the vision, and during the whole time not a word was spoken by any other person. Not a sound nor motion made by anyone but Joseph and Sidney, and it seemed to me that they never moved a joint or limb during the time I was there, which I think was over an hour, and to the end of the vision.

“Joseph sat firmly and calmly all the time in the midst of a magnificent glory, but Sidney sat limp and pale, apparently as limber as a rag, observing which, Joseph remarked, smilingly, ‘Sidney is not used to it as I am.’” ( Juvenile Instructor, May 1892, pp. 303–4.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote: “Nothing could be more pleasing to the Saints upon the order of the kingdom of the Lord, than the light which burst upon the world through the foregoing vision. Every law, every commandment, every promise, every truth, and every point touching the destiny of man, from Genesis to Revelation, where the purity of the scriptures remains unsullied by the folly of men, go to show the perfection of the theory [of different degrees of glory in the future life] and witnesses the fact that that document is a transcript from the records of the eternal world. The sublimity of the ideas; the purity of the language; the scope for action; the continued duration for completion, in order that the heirs of salvation may confess the Lord and bow the knee; the rewards for faithfulness, and the punishments for sins, are so much



beyond the narrow-mindedness of men, that every honest man is constrained to exclaim: ‘ It came from God .’” ( History of the Church, 1:252–53.)

President Wilford Woodruff said of the vision that it “gives more light, more truth, and more principle than any revelation contained in any other book we ever read. It makes plain to our understanding our present condition, where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going to. Any man may know through that revelation what his part and condition will be. For all men know what laws they keep, and the laws which men keep here will determine their position hereafter; they will be preserved by those laws and receive the blessings which belong to them.” (In Journal of Discourses, 22:146–47.)

While it is often called “the vision,” Doctrine and Covenants 76 is a series of visions combined into one grand revelation: a vision of the glory of the Son ( vv. 20–24 ); a vision of the fall of Satan and the sufferings of those who follow him, who are sons of perdition ( vv. 25–49 ); a vision of those who inherit the celestial glory and come forth in the resurrection of the just ( vv. 50–70 ); a vision of those who inherit the terrestrial glory ( vv. 71–80 ); and a vision of those who inherit the telestial glory ( vv. 81–89 ). A comparison of the three degrees of glory is also given.

### **Notes and Commentary**

D&C 76:1–4 . “Beside Him There Is No Savior”

As do many sections of the Doctrine and Covenants, this vision begins with an affirmation of the power, glory, and majesty of Jesus Christ. It is fitting that the Lord would begin this revelation of the various eternal rewards with the reminder that only in Him is there power to save, that none can “stay his hand” ( D&C 76:3 ), that none can stop Him from accomplishing His work, which is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” ( Moses 1:39 ).

D&C 76:5–10 . “I . . . Delight to Honor Those Who Serve Me in Righteousness”

In these verses the Lord indicates that if a person fears Him (that is, respects, reverences, and obeys Him) and serves Him to the end, He will be delighted to honor that person. The honors include:

1. A great reward (see D&C 76:6).
2. Eternal glory (see v. 6).
3. Revelation of all mysteries of God’s kingdom, both past and present (see v. 7; see also Notes and Commentary on D&C 6:7, 11 for the definition of mystery).
4. Knowledge of His will concerning all things in the kingdom (see v. 7).
5. Knowledge of the wonders of eternity (see v. 8).
6. Knowledge of many generations (see v. 8).
7. Great wisdom (see v. 9).
8. Understanding that reaches to heaven and which the world cannot equal (see v. 9).
9. Enlightenment by the Spirit and power of God (see v. 10).

The mention of these promises at the beginning of this revelation is significant, for Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon indicated that they were not allowed to write all that they were shown (see vv. 113–15 ). Not only is it unlawful for man to reveal these things, but it is impossible for him to do so because they are so glorious that man is incapable of making them known (see vv. 115–16 ). The Savior states, however, that those who will “purify themselves before him” through the power of the Holy Spirit shall have the “privilege of seeing and knowing [these things] for themselves” ( vv. 116–17 ).

D&C 76:15–19 . “While We Meditated”

The Prophet and Sidney Rigdon were meditating when this revelation came.

President Marion G. Romney said:

“As I have read the scriptures, I have been challenged by the word ponder, so frequently used in the Book of Mormon. The dictionary says that ponder means ‘to weigh mentally, think deeply about, deliberate, meditate.’ . . .

“ Pondering is, in my feeling, a form of prayer. It has, at least, been an approach to the Spirit of the Lord on many occasions.” (In Conference Report, Apr. 1973, p. 117; or Ensign, July 1973, p. 90 .)

At least two other great visions came as a direct result of pondering. Nephi says that he was “pondering in mine heart” the things of his father’s dream when he was “caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea into an exceeding high mountain” ( 1 Nephi 11:1 ). And President Joseph F. Smith said that he received his vision of the spirit world as he sat in his room “pondering over the scriptures; and reflecting” ( D&C 138:1–2 ).

President David O. McKay taught the value of meditation: “I think we pay too little attention to the value of meditation, a principle of devotion. . . .

“Meditation is one of the most secret, most sacred doors through which we pass into the presence of the Lord. Jesus set the example for us. As soon as he was baptized and received the Father’s approval—‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’ ( Matt. 3:17 )—Jesus repaired to what is now known as the Mount of Temptation where, during forty days of fasting, he communed with himself and his Father and contemplated the responsibility of his own great mission. One result of this spiritual communion was such strength as enabled him to say to the tempter: ‘Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.’ ( Matt. 4:10 .)” (In Conference Report, Apr. 1967, p. 85.)

D&C 76:20–24 . The Testimony of Eyewitnesses

This testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon is a modern witness of the reality of the existence of the Father and the Son. Joseph and Sidney not only saw but heard, and their testimonies stand as a witness to all people. The phrase “last of all” is explained by Smith and Sjodahl as follows: “This is the last testimony to the fact that He lives, a resurrected and glorified Being; not the final testimony but the last up to the time of this vision” (Commentary, p. 448).

D&C 76:24 . Worlds without Number Were Created by the Lord

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, commenting on Jesus as the Creator, said that “our Lord’s jurisdiction and power extend far beyond the limits of this one small earth on which we dwell. He is, under the Father, the Creator of worlds without number. ( Moses 1:33 .) . . .

“Those who have ears to hear, find this doctrine taught in the following scripture: [ D&C 76:20–24 ].

“In addition to the plain meaning of this passage, we have an explanation of it given by the Prophet Joseph Smith. He paraphrased, in poetical rhyme, the entire record of the Vision, and his words covering this portion were:

‘ . . . And I heard a great voice bearing record from heav’n,  
He’s the Saviour and Only Begotten of God;  
By him, of him, and through him, the worlds were all made,  
Even all that careen in the heavens so broad.’”

(McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 65–66.)

D&C 76:26 . Lucifer Was an Angel of God, a Son of the Morning

President George Q. Cannon, commenting on Satan’s title as a son of the morning, said: “Some have called him the son of the morning, but here it is a son of the morning—one among many, doubtless. This angel was a mighty personage, without doubt. The record that is given to us concerning him clearly shows that he occupied a very high position; that he was thought a great deal of, and that he was mighty in his sphere, so much so that when the matter was debated concerning the earth and the plan of salvation, he was of sufficient importance to have a plan, which he proposed as the plan by which this earth should be peopled and the inhabitants thereof redeemed. His plan, however, was not accepted; but it was so plausible and so attractive that out of the whole hosts of heaven one-third accepted his plan and were willing to cast their lot with him. [ Moses 4:1–4; D&C 29:36–37 .] Now, the difference between Jesus and Lucifer was this: Jesus was willing to submit to the Father.” (In *Millennial Star*, 5 Sept. 1895, pp. 563–64.)

D&C 76:26 . What Do the Names Lucifer and Perdition Mean?

Lucifer’s name means “light bearer” or “shining one.” The word perdition means “loss or destruction” (see Young, *Concordance*, s.v. “Lucifer,” “Perdition”). Lucifer fell from his position as a glorious being to a position of utter loss and destruction (see Revelation 12:1–11; Moses 4:1–4 ). Knowing that one of Satan’s names is Perdition helps us understand the title “son of perdition.”

D&C 76:29 . Who Has Satan Singled Out As His Enemies?

This verse warns that Satan will seek to make war with the Saints (cf. Revelation 12:17 ). Although Satan has great power, it is limited. The Prophet Joseph Smith stated: “There are three independent principles; the Spirit of God, the spirit of man, and the spirit of the devil. All men have power to resist the devil. They who have tabernacles, have power over those who have not.” ( *Teachings*, pp. 189–90.)

President George Q. Cannon testified that every man has power enough to resist Satan. “The Lord our God has sent us here to get experience in these things so that we may know the good from the evil and be able to close our hearts against the evil. . . . It is true that some have greater power of resistance than others, but everyone has the power to close his heart against doubt, against darkness, against unbelief, against depression, against anger, against hatred, against jealousy, against malice, against envy. God has given this power unto all of us, and we can gain still greater power by calling upon Him for that which we lack. If it were not so, how could we be condemned for giving way to wrong influences?

“There could be no condemnation for our doing what we could not help; but we can help yielding to wrong influences and being quarrelsome and selfish. We can help giving way to the spirit of theft, and we can resist the spirit of lust. God has given us power to resist these things, that our hearts may be kept free from them and also from doubt; and when Satan comes and assails us, it is our privilege to say, ‘Get thee behind me, Satan, for I have no lot nor portion in you, and you have no part in me. I am in the service of God, and I am going to serve Him, and you can do what you please. It is no use you presenting yourself with your

blandishments to me. You come and try to insinuate into my heart evil thoughts about the servants of God or about the work of God, and I will not listen to you; I will close my heart against you. . . .’

“Whenever darkness fills our minds, we may know that we are not possessed of the Spirit of God, and we must get rid of it. When we are filled with the Spirit of God, we are filled with joy, with peace and with happiness no matter what our circumstances may be; for it is a spirit of cheerfulness and of happiness.” ( Gospel Truth, 1:19–20.)

D&C 76:31 . To What Extent Must a Person Know God’s Power and Be a Partaker Before He Becomes a Son of Perdition?

To become a son of perdition one must sin against the Holy Ghost, but before that is possible, one must receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Elder Melvin J. Ballard explained that “unto the Holy Ghost has been given the right and the privilege of manifesting the truth unto men as no other power will. So that when he makes a man see and know a thing he knows it better than he shall ever know anything else; and to sin against that knowledge is to sin against the greatest light there is, and consequently commit the greatest sin there is.” ( Millennial Star, 11 Aug. 1932, pp. 499–500.)

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith further explained why sin against the Holy Ghost is so serious: “The Spirit of God speaking to the spirit of man has power to impart truth with greater effect and understanding than the truth can be imparted by personal contact even with heavenly beings. Through the Holy Ghost the truth is woven into the very fibre and sinews of the body so that it cannot be forgotten.” (“The Sin against the Holy Ghost,” Instructor, Oct. 1935, p. 431.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith asked, concerning those who become sons of perdition, “What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against Him. After a man has sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy. This is the case with many apostates of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” ( Teachings, p. 358.)

Elder Spencer W. Kimball wrote: “The sin against the Holy Ghost requires such knowledge that it is manifestly impossible for the rank and file to commit such a sin” ( Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 123).

Of apostates who had committed the unpardonable sin, the Prophet Joseph Smith said: “When a man begins to be an enemy to this work, he hunts me, he seeks to kill me, and never ceases to thirst for my blood. He gets the spirit of the devil—the same spirit that they had who crucified the Lord of Life—the same spirit that sins against the Holy Ghost.” ( Teachings, p. 358.)

People do not come to such a state in a moment. Elder Joseph Fielding Smith described the path that some follow, which would cause them to hate God and his servants: “The change of heart does not come all at once, but is due to transgression in some form, which continues to lurk in the soul without repentance, until the Holy Ghost withdraws, and then that man is left to spiritual darkness. Sin begets sin, the darkness grows until the love of truth turns to hatred and the love of God is overcome by the wicked desire to destroy all that is just and true. In this way Christ is put to open shame, and blasphemy exalted.” ( Instructor, Oct. 1935, p. 432.)

Such people have placed themselves outside the redemptive powers of Christ (see Hebrews 6:4–9; 10:26–29; Matthew 12:31–32 ). They cannot partake of His mercy because they cannot incline themselves to repent, having totally lost the Spirit of God. Their sin “is an offense so heinous that the sinner is unable to repent; and this is what makes his case hopeless. If he could repent, he could be forgiven; but being incapable of

repentance, he cannot be reached by the pardoning power.” (Orson F. Whitney, *Improvement Era*, Mar. 1920, p. 413.)

“In the realms of perdition or the kingdom of darkness, where there is no light, Satan and the unembodied spirits of the pre-existence shall dwell together with those of mortality who retrogress to the level of perdition. These have lost the power of regeneration. They have sunk so low as to have lost the inclinations and ability to repent.” (Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 125.)

D&C 76:35 . How Might Anyone “Crucify” the Only Begotten Son of the Father and “Put Him to an Open Shame”?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie stated that “commission of the unpardonable sin consists in crucifying unto oneself the Son of God afresh and putting him to open shame. ( Heb. 6:4–8; D. & C. 76:34–35 .) To commit this unpardonable crime a man must receive the gospel, gain from the Holy Ghost by revelation the absolute knowledge of the divinity of Christ, and then deny ‘the new and everlasting covenant by which he was sanctified, calling it an unholy thing, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace.’ ( Teachings, p. 128.) He thereby commits murder by assenting unto the Lord’s death, that is, having a perfect knowledge of the truth he comes out in open rebellion and places himself in a position wherein he would have crucified Christ knowing perfectly the while that he was the Son of God. Christ is thus crucified afresh and put to open shame. ( D. & C. 132:27 .)” ( *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 816–17.)

Concerning the degree to which such people become filled with the spirit of Satan, Elder Charles W. Penrose said: “Those who have followed [Satan] so that they become imbued with his spirit, which is the spirit of destruction, in opposition to the spirit which brings life, are his. The spirit of murder enters their hearts; they are ready to put to death even the Son of God, if His existence in life comes in their way.” (In Conference Report, Oct. 1911, p. 51.)

The scriptures sometimes use the phrase “shedding innocent blood” in reference to the actions of those in this condition. President Joseph Fielding Smith explained that the shedding of innocent blood is not confined to taking lives of the innocent, but is also included in seeking to destroy the word of God and putting Christ to open shame. Those who have known the truth and then fight against the authorized servants of Jesus Christ also fight against Him, and thus are guilty of His blood. “Shedding innocent blood is spoken of in the scriptures as consenting to the death of Jesus Christ and putting him to open shame.” (Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 1:68.)

D&C 76:37 . What Is the Second Death?

The term second death as used here refers to the spiritual death that will come upon those sons of perdition who have been resurrected. Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: “Spiritual death is to be cast out of the presence of the Lord, to die as to the things of righteousness, to die as to the things of the Spirit. Spirit beings as such never die in the sense of annihilation or in the sense that their spirit bodies are disorganized; rather, they continue to live to all eternity either as spirits or as resurrected personages. . . .

“Eventually, all are redeemed from spiritual death except those who have ‘sinned unto death’ ( D. & C. 64:7 ) , that is, those who are destined to be sons of perdition. John teaches this by saying that after death and hell have delivered up the dead which are in them, then death and hell shall be ‘cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death .’ ( Rev. 20:12–15 .) And thus the Lord said in our day that the sons of perdition are ‘the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power’ ( D. & C. 76:37 ) , meaning any power after the resurrection.” ( *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 757–58; see also Notes and Commentary on D&C 63:17; 64:7 .)

D&C 76:38–39 . Will Those Born into Mortality Who Become Sons of Perdition Receive a Resurrection?

President George Q. Cannon explained: “A careful reading of these verses, . . . and especially of the preceding paragraphs, will show that the Lord does not, in this language, exclude even the sons of perdition from the resurrection. It is plain that the intention is to refer to them explicitly as the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power: ‘for all the rest shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead, through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb.’ This excluded class are the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power, and ‘the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, after the suffering of his wrath.’

“This is by no means to say that they are to have no resurrection. Jesus our Lord and Savior died for all, and all will be resurrected—good and bad, white and black, people of every race, whether sinners or not; and no matter how great their sins may be, the resurrection of their bodies is sure. Jesus has died for them, and they all will be redeemed from the grave through the atonement which he has made.” ( Juvenile Instructor, Feb. 1900, p. 123.)

D&C 76:40–43 . “This Is the Gospel”

The word gospel (Anglo-Saxon for “good story”) is translated from the Greek evangelion, which means “good tidings” or “glad tidings” (Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon, p. 257). In the New Testament the verb meaning “to preach or bear witness of the gospel” is evangelidzo, literally, “to bring good news, to announce glad tidings” (Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon, p. 256). Doctrine and Covenants 76 gives a summary of what the gospel, or glad tidings, consists of, namely, that all who will may be saved by the atoning power of Jesus Christ.

D&C 76:44–49 . It Is Futile to Discuss the Fate of Sons of Perdition

It appears that in the early days of the Restoration some attempted to teach the destiny of the sons of perdition. The Prophet Joseph Smith responded by writing: “Say to the brothers Hulet and to all others, that the Lord never authorized them to say that the devil, his angels, or the sons of perdition, should ever be restored; for their state of destiny was not revealed to man, is not revealed, nor ever shall be revealed, save to those who are made partakers thereof: consequently those who teach this doctrine have not received it of the Spirit of the Lord. Truly Brother Oliver declared it to be the doctrine of devils. We, therefore, command that this doctrine be taught no more in Zion. We sanction the decision of the Bishop and his council, in relation to this doctrine being a bar to communion.” ( Teachings, p. 24.)

D&C 76:44 . How Can the Sons of Perdition “Reign” in Eternity?

Smith and Sjodahl explained: “The Lord is the sovereign ruler. He reigns. Sin is said to reign, when men submit to its behests. Grace is also said to reign ( Rom. 5:21 ). The Saints will reign with Christ. But here the sons of Perdition are said to ‘reign’ with the Devil and his angels in eternity, in the place where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. The conflict between Lucifer and the Son has been, from the beginning, for sovereignty. Men have ranged themselves on one side or the other. The Saints are, and will be, citizens and officials in the Kingdom of God and there they will ‘reign’, as citizens in a free country. The sons of Perdition are, and will remain, citizens and officials in the kingdom of Lucifer. But that kingdom will, finally, be confined to Gehenna . There they will ‘reign’, under such laws and rules as obtain in the kingdom of the Devil, and of which we have had numerous illustrations in human history, during the dark ages of ignorance, superstition, tyranny, and iniquity. Think of a place where the evil passions of human beings and evil spirits rage, unrestrained by the influence of the gospel! Such is the kingdom of the Devil, where the sons of Perdition will reign.” (Commentary, pp. 454–55.)

D&C 76:48 . Are the Sons of Perdition “Ordained” to Be Such?

“Not foreordained, in the sense of pre-elected by God, to condemnation. God has ordained that rebellion against Him shall result, if persisted in to the end, in misery, but He has not foreordained anyone to that fate. A legislature may ordain that thieves must be imprisoned and murderers killed, but that does not mean that it has foreordained any individual, or any number of individuals, to do that which ends in imprisonment, or death. The sons of Perdition pursue their course according to their own choice, and not as victims of inexorable destiny.” (Smith and Sjodahl, Commentary, p. 455.)

D&C 76:50 . What Is the Resurrection of the Just?

There are two major resurrections: the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust. President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote about the resurrection of the just:

“In modern revelation given to the Church, the Lord has made known more in relation to this glorious event. There shall be at least two classes which shall have the privilege of the resurrection at this time: ‘First, those who shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever’; and second, honorable men, those who belong to the terrestrial kingdom as well as those of the celestial kingdom.

“At the time of the coming of Christ, ‘They who have slept in their graves shall come forth, for their graves shall be opened; and they also shall be caught up to meet him in the midst of the pillar of heaven. They are Christ’s, the first fruits, they who shall descend with him first, and they who are first caught up to meet him; and all this by the voice of the sounding of the trump of the angel of God.’ These are the just, ‘whose names are written in heaven, where God and Christ are the judge of all. These are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood.’

“Following this great event, and after the Lord and the righteous who are caught up to meet him have descended upon the earth, there will come to pass another resurrection. This may be considered as a part of the first, although it comes later. In this resurrection will come forth those of terrestrial order, who were not worthy to be caught up to meet him, but who are worthy to come forth to enjoy the millennial reign.” ( Doctrines of Salvation, 2:296.)

This first resurrection will extend into the Millennium and include all those worthy of the celestial kingdom who live and die during the thousand years.

D&C 76:53 . What Does It Mean to Be Sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie defined the Holy Spirit of Promise as “the Holy Spirit promised the saints, or in other words the Holy Ghost. This name-title is used in connection with the sealing and ratifying power of the Holy Ghost, that is, the power given him to ratify and approve the righteous acts of men so that those acts will be binding on earth and in heaven. ‘All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations,’ must be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, if they are to have ‘efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead.’ ( D&C 132:7 .)

“To seal is to ratify, to justify, or to approve . Thus an act which is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise is one which is ratified by the Holy Ghost; it is one which is approved by the Lord; and the person who has taken the obligation upon himself is justified by the Spirit in the thing he has done. The ratifying seal of approval is put upon an act only if those entering the contract are worthy as a result of personal righteousness to receive the divine approbation. They ‘are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true .’ ( D. & C. 76:53 .) If they are not just and true and worthy the ratifying seal is withheld.” ( Mormon Doctrine, pp. 361–62; see also Notes and Commentary on D&C 132:7 .)

D&C 76:54 . What Is the Church of the Firstborn?

“Those who gain exaltation in the celestial kingdom are those who are members of the Church of the Firstborn; in other words, those who keep all the commandments of the Lord. . . .

“The Lord has made it possible for us to become members of the Church of the Firstborn, by receiving the blessings of the house of the Lord and overcoming all things. Thus we become heirs, ‘priests, and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory,’ who shall ‘dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever,’ with full exaltation.” (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:41–42.)

Certain apostates have taken this sacred name upon themselves, blasphemously claiming to have met all of these requirements, when they are in fact in a state of wickedness and rebellion.

D&C 76:72–74 . Do Those Who Receive the Gospel in the Spirit World Inherit the Terrestrial Kingdom?

Those who hear the gospel in mortality and do not accept it but lead otherwise honorable lives will inherit the terrestrial kingdom. Those who do not have the opportunity to hear the gospel in mortality but accept it in the spirit world can inherit the celestial kingdom.

Joseph Smith learned through another revelation that “all who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God” ( D&C 137:7 ). Those “who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh” ( D&C 76:74 ) are those who heard the gospel in mortality and rejected it. If they “afterwards received it” ( v. 74 ), that is, in the spirit world, they will go to the terrestrial kingdom.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught the foolishness of believing that a person can reject the gospel in this life, accept it in the next, and still inherit celestial glory. “This life is the time and day of our probation. After this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed.

“For those who do not have an opportunity to believe and obey the holy word in this life, the first chance to gain salvation will come in the spirit world. If those who hear the word for the first time in the realms ahead are the kind of people who would have accepted the gospel here, had the opportunity been afforded them, they will accept it there. . . .

“. . . Those who reject the gospel in this life and then receive it in the spirit world go not to the celestial, but to the terrestrial kingdom.” (“The Seven Deadly Heresies,” in *Speeches of the Year, 1980* [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1981], pp. 77–78.)

Elder Theodore M. Burton said: “There are many in this world who lived and died without ever having an opportunity to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. We know that there are many men and women who die unbaptized, because some teacher, missionary, or leader who should have taught them was so poorly trained, so lacking in faith, and so unprepared to bear personal witness of Jesus Christ that the hearer never understood the message as he should have done. Should such people be damned forever for lack of proper instruction, because of an accident of birth, or because of the inadequacies of others? I say: ‘No!’ God is a God of justice and love and mercy. Every man is entitled to a just chance to know and accept Jesus Christ or to reject him if he feels the price of acceptance is too high” (in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1964, 72).

D&C 76:79 . What Does It Mean to Be Valiant in the Testimony of the Savior?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie asked:



“What does it mean to be valiant in the testimony of Jesus?”

“It is to be courageous and bold; to use all our strength, energy, and ability in the warfare with the world; to fight the good fight of faith. . . . The great cornerstone of valiance in the cause of righteousness is obedience to the whole law of the whole gospel.

“To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to ‘come unto Christ, and be perfected in him’; it is to deny ourselves ‘of all ungodliness,’ and ‘love God’ with all our ‘might, mind and strength.’ ( Moro. 10:32 .)

“To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to believe in Christ and his gospel with unshakable conviction. It is to know of the verity and divinity of the Lord’s work on earth.

“But this is not all. It is more than believing and knowing. We must be doers of the word and not hearers only. It is more than lip service; it is not simply confessing with the mouth the divine Sonship of the Savior. It is obedience and conformity and personal righteousness. ‘Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.’ ( Matt. 7:21 .)

“To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to ‘press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men.’ It is to ‘endure to the end.’ ( 2 Ne. 31:20 .) It is to live our religion, to practice what we preach, to keep the commandments. It is the manifestation of ‘pure religion’ in the lives of men; it is visiting ‘the fatherless and widows in their affliction’ and keeping ourselves ‘unspotted from the world.’ ( James 1:27 .)

“To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to bridle our passions, control our appetites, and rise above carnal and evil things. It is to overcome the world as did he who is our prototype and who himself was the most valiant of all our Father’s children. It is to be morally clean, to pay our tithes and offerings, to honor the Sabbath day, to pray with full purpose of heart, to lay our all upon the altar if called upon to do so.

“To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to take the Lord’s side on every issue. It is to vote as he would vote. It is to think what he thinks, to believe what he believes, to say what he would say and do what he would do in the same situation. It is to have the mind of Christ and be one with him as he is one with his Father.” (In Conference Report, Oct. 1974, pp. 45–46; or Ensign, Nov. 1974, pp. 33–35 .)

D&C 76:81–85 . Those Who Inherit the Telestial Glory Will Pass through Hell

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained:

“That part of the spirit world inhabited by wicked spirits who are awaiting the eventual day of their resurrection is called hell . Between their death and resurrection, these souls of the wicked are cast out into outer darkness, into the gloomy depression of sheol, into the hades of waiting wicked spirits, into hell. There they suffer the torments of the damned; there they welter in the vengeance of eternal fire; there is found weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth; there the fiery indignation of the wrath of God is poured out upon the wicked. ( Alma 40:11–14; D. & C. 76:103–106 .)

“Hell will have an end. Viewing future events, John saw that ‘death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.’ ( Rev. 20:13 .) Jacob taught that this escape from death and hell meant the bringing of the body out of the grave and the spirit out of hell. ‘And this death of which I have spoken, which is the spiritual death,’ he said, ‘shall deliver up its dead; which spiritual death is hell; wherefore, death and hell must deliver up their dead, and hell must deliver up its captive spirits, and the grave must deliver up its captive bodies, and the bodies and the spirits of men will be

restored one to the other.’ ( 2 Ne. 9:10–12 .) It was in keeping with this principle for David to receive the promise: ‘ Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell .’ ( Psalms 16:10; Acts 2:27 .)

“After their resurrection, the great majority of those who have suffered in hell will pass into the telestial kingdom; the balance, cursed as sons of perdition, will be consigned to partake of endless wo with the devil and his angels. . . .

“Who will go to hell? This query is abundantly answered in the scriptures. Since those going to a telestial kingdom travel to their destination through the depths of hell and as a result of obedience to telestial law, it follows that all those who live a telestial law will go to hell.” ( Mormon Doctrine, pp. 349–50.)

D&C 76:89–106 . Why Will Those Who Inherit the Telestial Kingdom Receive a Glory That “Surpasses All Understanding”?

All who receive the telestial kingdom will have paid a price for this glory. The fact that after they pay this price they inherit a telestial glory is evidence of the Father’s love and mercy. Elder John A. Widtsoe wrote:

“The [Doctrine and Covenants] explains clearly that the lowest glory to which man is assigned is so glorious as to be beyond the understanding of man. It is a doctrine fundamental in Mormonism that the meanest sinner, in the final judgment, will receive a glory which is beyond human understanding, which is so great that we are unable to describe it adequately. Those who do well will receive an even more glorious place. Those who dwell in the lower may look wistfully to the higher as we do here. The hell on the other side will be felt in some such way.

“The Gospel is a gospel of tremendous love. Love is at the bottom of it. The meanest child is loved so dearly that his reward will be beyond the understanding of mortal man.” ( Message of the Doctrine and Covenants, p. 167.)

Only the sons of perdition, who deny the truth and openly defy God (see D&C 76:31 ), will be denied a kingdom of glory (see Notes and Commentary on D&C 76:31–49 ).

D&C 76:107 . “I Have Overcome and Have Trodden the Wine-Press Alone”

Notes and Commentary for Doctrine and Covenants 133:50 explains the meaning of treading the wine press.

D&C 76:111 . “Every Man Shall Receive According to His Own Works”

“We are not preaching the gospel with the idea of trying to save people in the terrestrial world. Ours is the salvation of exaltation. What we are trying to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ is to bring people back again, through the power of the priesthood and the ordinances of the Church, as sons and daughters of God, receiving a fulness of the Father’s kingdom. That is our endeavor.” (Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 2:190–91.)

D&C 76:116 . They Are Only to Be Seen and Understood by the Power of the Holy Spirit

The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote: “Could we read and comprehend all that has been written from the days of Adam, on the relation of man to God and angels in a future state, we should know very little about it. Reading the experience of others, or the revelation given to them, can never give us a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God. Knowledge of these things can only be obtained by experience through the ordinances of God set forth for that purpose. Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject.” ( History of the Church, 6:50.)

**2001**

**Randy Alcorn, Evangelical Author**

**Christ's story about treasure in field is object lesson concerning heavenly treasure. No matter how great value of that earthly fortune, it would be worthless in eternity. In fact, it's exactly this kind of treasure that people waste their lives pursuing. Jesus appealing to what we do value—temporary, earthly treasure—in order to make analogy about what we should value—eternal, heavenly treasure**

**The Randy Alcorn Treasure Principle**

### **Introduction**

All your life, you've been on a treasure hunt. You've been searching for a perfect person and a perfect place. Jesus is that person; heaven is that place. So if you're a Christian, you've already met the person, and you're already headed to the place.

But there's a problem. You're not yet living with that person, and you're not yet living in that place!

You may attend church regularly, pray, and read the Bible. But life can still be drudgery, can't it? You dutifully put one foot in front of the other, plodding across the hot, barren ground, longing for a joy you cannot find, a treasure that eludes you.

Jesus told a story like that. It's about a hidden treasure that, once discovered, brings life-changing joy. But before we get started on our little journey, I want you to know something. Some books try to motivate giving out of guilt.

This isn't one of them.

This book is about something else—the joy of giving.

The Treasure Principle has long been buried. It's time to unearth it. It's a simple yet profound idea—with radical implications. Once you grasp it and put it into practice, nothing will ever look the same. And believe me, you won't want it to.

When you discover the secret joy of the Treasure Principle, I guarantee you'll never be content with less.

### **Buried Treasure**

**He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose. Jim Elliot**

A first-century Hebrew walks alone on a hot afternoon, staff in hand. His shoulders are stooped, sandals covered with dirt, tunic stained with sweat. But he doesn't stop to rest. He has pressing business in the city.

He veers off the road into a field, seeking a shortcut.

The owner won't mind—travelers are permitted this courtesy.

The field is uneven. To keep his balance he thrusts his staff into the dirt.

Thunk. The staff strikes something hard.

He stops, wipes his brow, and pokes again.

Thunk. Something's under there, and it's not a rock.

The weary traveler tells himself that he can't afford to linger. But his curiosity won't let him go. He jabs at the ground. Something reflects a sliver of sunlight.

He drops to his knees and starts digging.

Five minutes later, he's uncovered it—a case fringed in gold. By the looks of it, it's been there for decades. Heart racing, he pries off the rusty lock and opens the lid.

Gold coins! Jewelry! Precious stones of every color! A treasure more valuable than anything he's ever imagined.

Hands shaking, the traveler inspects the coins, issued in Rome over seventy years ago. Some wealthy man must have buried the case and died suddenly, the secret of the treasure's location dying with him. There is no homestead nearby. Surely the current landowner has no clue that the treasure's here. (By the way, parables have one central purpose. The point of this one is not to command taking advantage of a landowner's ignorance, but to respond joyfully at finding buried treasure.)

The traveler closes the lid, buries the chest, and marks the spot. He turns around, heading home—only now he's not plodding. He's skipping like a little boy, smiling broadly.

What a find! Unbelievable! I've got to have that treasure!

But I can't just take it—that would be stealing. Whoever owns the field owns what's in it. But how can I afford to buy it? I'll sell my farm...and crops...all my tools...my prize oxen. Yes, if I sell everything, that should be enough!

From the moment of his discovery, the traveler's life changes. The treasure captures his imagination, becomes the stuff of his dreams. It's his reference point, his new center of gravity. The traveler takes every new step with this treasure in mind. He experiences a radical paradigm shift.

This story is captured by Jesus in a single verse: "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field" (Matthew 13:44).

Some believe this passage speaks of people finding the treasure of Christ and His kingdom. Many believe it speaks of Jesus giving His life to obtain the treasure of the subjects and kingdom He rules. In either case, it certainly envisions the joy of finding great and eternal treasure that far surpasses the costs to obtain it.

As we will see, the biblical basis for the treasure principle is not this passage, but Matthew 6:19–21. Nevertheless, Matthew 13:44 serves as a vivid picture of the joy of surrendering lesser treasures to find greater ones.

### **The Money Connection**

The parable of hidden treasure is one of many references and illustrations Jesus made using money and possessions. In fact, 15 percent of everything Christ said relates to this topic—more than His teachings on heaven and hell combined.

Why did Jesus put such an emphasis on money and possessions?

Because there's a fundamental connection between our spiritual lives and how we think about and handle money.

We may try to divorce our faith and our finances, but God sees them as inseparable.

Years ago I came to this realization on an airplane while reading Luke 3. John the Baptist is preaching to crowds of people who've gathered to hear him and be baptized. Three different groups ask him what they should do to bear the fruit of repentance. John gives three answers:

1. Everyone should share clothes and food with the poor (v. 11).
2. Tax collectors shouldn't pocket extra money (v. 13).
3. Soldiers should be content with their wages and not extort money (v. 14).

Each answer relates to money and possessions. But no one asked John about that! They asked what they should do to demonstrate the fruit of spiritual transformation. So why didn't John talk about other things?

Sitting there on that airplane, I realized that our approach to money and possessions isn't just important—it's central to our spiritual lives. It's of such high priority to God that John the Baptist couldn't talk about spirituality without talking about how to handle money and possessions.

The same thing began to jump out at me in other passages.

Zacchaeus said to Jesus, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount" (Luke 19:8).

Jesus' response? "Today salvation has come to this house" (v. 9). Zacchaeus's radical new approach to money proved that his heart had been transformed.

Then there were the Jerusalem converts who eagerly sold their possessions to give to the needy (Acts 2:45; 4:32–35). And the Ephesian occultists, who proved their conversion was authentic when they burned their magic books, worth what today would be millions of dollars (Acts 19:19).

The poor widow steps off the pages of Scripture by giving two small coins. Jesus praised her: "She, out of her poverty, put in everything" (Mark 12:44).

In stark contrast, Jesus spoke of a rich man who spent all his wealth on himself. He planned to tear down his barns and build larger ones, storing up for himself so he could retire early and take life easy.

But God called the man a fool, saying, "This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?" (Luke 12:20).

The greatest indictment against him—and the proof of his spiritual condition—is that he was rich toward himself, but not rich toward God.

When a rich young man pressed Jesus about how to gain eternal life, Jesus told him, "Sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me" (Matthew 19:21). The man was obsessed with earthly treasures. Jesus called him to something higher—heavenly treasures.

Jesus knew that money and possessions were the man's god. He realized that the man wouldn't serve God

unless he dethroned his money idol. But the seeker considered the price too great. Sadly, he walked away from real treasures.

### **Smart or Stupid?**

This young man wasn't willing to give up everything for a greater treasure, but our traveler in the field was. Why?

Because the traveler understood what it would gain him. Do you feel sorry for the traveler? After all, his discovery cost him everything. But we aren't to pity this man; we're to envy him! His sacrifice pales in comparison to his reward.

Consider the costs-to-benefits ratio—the benefits far outweigh the costs.

The traveler made short-term sacrifices to obtain a long-term reward.

**“It cost him everything he owned,” you might lament.  
Yes, but it gained him everything that mattered.**

If we miss the phrase “in his joy,” we miss everything.

The man wasn't exchanging lesser treasures for greater treasures out of dutiful drudgery but out of joyful exhilaration. He would have been a fool not to do exactly what he did.

Christ's story about treasure in the field is an object lesson concerning heavenly treasure. Of course, no matter how great the value of that earthly fortune, it would be worthless in eternity. In fact, it's exactly this kind of treasure that people waste their lives pursuing. Jesus is appealing to what we do value—temporary, earthly treasure—in order to make an analogy about what we should value—eternal, heavenly treasure.

David spoke of such treasure: “I rejoice in your promise like one who finds great spoil” (Psalm 119:162). God's promises are eternal treasures, and discovering them brings great joy.

In Matthew 6, Jesus fully unveils the foundation of what I call the Treasure Principle. It's one of His most-neglected teachings:

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19–21)

Consider what Jesus is saying:

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth.” Why not? Because earthly treasures are bad? No. Because they won't last.

Scripture says, “Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle” (Proverbs 23:5).

What a picture. Next time you buy a prized possession, imagine it sprouting wings and flying off. Sooner or later it will disappear.

But when Jesus warns us not to store up treasures on earth, it's not just because wealth might be lost; it's

because wealth will always be lost. Either it leaves us while we live, or we leave it when we die. No exceptions.

Imagine you're alive at the end of the Civil War. You're living in the South, but you are a Northerner. You plan to move home as soon as the war is over. While in the South you've accumulated lots of Confederate currency. Now, suppose you know for a fact that the North is going to win the war and the end is imminent. What will you do with your Confederate money?

If you're smart, there's only one answer. You should immediately cash in your Confederate currency for U.S. currency—the only money that will have value once the war is over. Keep only enough Confederate currency to meet your short-term needs.

As a Christian, you have inside knowledge of an eventual worldwide upheaval caused by Christ's return. This is the ultimate insider trading tip: Earth's currency will become worthless when Christ returns—or when you die, whichever comes first. (And either event could happen at any time.)

Investment experts known as market timers read signs that the stock market is about to take a downward turn, then recommend switching funds immediately into more dependable vehicles such as money markets, treasury bills, or certificates of deposit.

Jesus functions here as the foremost market timer. He tells us to once and for all switch investment vehicles. He instructs us to transfer our funds from earth (which is volatile and ready to take a permanent dive) to heaven (which is totally dependable, insured by God Himself, and is coming soon to forever replace earth's economy). Christ's financial forecast for earth is bleak—but He's unreservedly bullish about investing in heaven, where every market indicator is eternally positive!

There's nothing wrong with Confederate money, as long as you understand its limits. Realizing its value is temporary should radically affect your investment strategy. To accumulate vast earthly treasures that you can't possibly hold on to for long is equivalent to stockpiling Confederate money even though you know it's about to become worthless.

According to Jesus, storing up earthly treasures isn't simply wrong. It's just plain stupid.

### **A Treasure Mentality**

Jesus doesn't just tell us where not to put our treasures. He also gives the best investment advice you'll ever hear: "Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:20).

If you stopped reading too soon, you would have thought Christ was against our storing up treasures for ourselves.

No. He's all for it! In fact, He commands it. Jesus has a treasure mentality. He wants us to store up treasures. He's just telling us to stop storing them in the wrong place and start storing them in the right place!

"Store up for yourselves." Doesn't it seem strange that Jesus commands us to do what's in our own best interests? Wouldn't that be selfish? No. God expects and commands us to act out of enlightened self-interest. He wants us to live to His glory, but what is to His glory is always to our good. As John Piper puts it, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him."

Selfishness is when we pursue gain at the expense of others. But God doesn't have a limited number of treasures to distribute. When you store up treasures for yourself in heaven, it doesn't reduce the treasures available to others.

In fact, it is by serving God and others that we store up heavenly treasures. Everyone gains; no one loses.

Jesus is talking about deferred gratification. **The man who finds the treasure in the field pays a high price now by giving up all he has—but soon he'll gain a fabulous treasure.**

As long as his eyes are on that treasure, he makes his short-term sacrifices with joy. The joy is present, so the gratification isn't entirely deferred. Present joy comes from anticipating future joy.

What is this "treasure in heaven"? It includes power (Luke 19:15–19), possessions (Matthew 19:21), and pleasures (Psalm 16:11). Jesus promises that those who sacrifice on earth will receive "a hundred times as much" in heaven (Matthew 19:29). That's 10,000 percent—an impressive return!

Of course, Christ Himself is our ultimate treasure. All else pales in comparison to Him and the joy of knowing Him (Philippians 3:7–11). A person, Jesus, is our first treasure. A place, heaven, is our second treasure.

Possessions, eternal rewards, are our third treasure. (What person are you living for? What place are you living for? What possessions are you living for?)

"Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven." Why? Because it's right? Not just that, but because it's smart.

Because such treasures will last. Jesus argues from the bottom line. It's not an emotional appeal; it's a logical one:

Invest in what has lasting value.

You'll never see a hearse pulling a U-Haul. Why?

Because you can't take it with you.

Do not be overawed when a man grows rich, when the splendor of his house increases; for he will take nothing with him when he dies, his splendor will not descend with him. (Psalm 49:16–17)

John D. Rockefeller was one of the wealthiest men who ever lived. After he died someone asked his accountant, "How much money did John D. leave?" The reply was classic: "He left...all of it."

If that point is clear in your mind, you're ready to hear the secret of the Treasure Principle.

### **The Treasure Principle**

Jesus takes that profound truth "You can't take it with you" and adds a stunning qualification. By telling us to store up treasures for ourselves in heaven, He gives us a breathtaking corollary, which I call the Treasure Principle:

**You can't take it with you—but you can send it on ahead.**

It's that simple. And if it doesn't take your breath away, you're not understanding it! Anything we try to hang on to here will be lost. But anything we put into God's hands will be ours for eternity (insured for infinitely more than \$100,000 by the real FDIC, the Father's Deposit Insurance Corporation).

If we give instead of keep, if we invest in the eternal instead of in the temporal, we store up treasures in heaven that will never stop paying dividends.



**Whatever treasures we store up on earth will be left behind when we leave.  
Whatever treasures we store up in heaven will be waiting for us when we arrive.**

Financial planners tell us, “When it comes to your money, don’t think just three months or three years ahead. Think thirty years ahead.” Christ, the ultimate investment counselor, takes it further. He says, “Don’t ask how your investment will be paying off in just thirty years. Ask how it will be paying off in thirty million years.”

Suppose I offer you one thousand dollars today to spend however you want. Not a bad deal. But suppose I give you a choice—you can either have that one thousand dollars today or you can have ten million dollars one year from now, then ten million more every year after that. Only a fool would take the thousand dollars today. Yet that’s what we do whenever we grab onto something that will last for only a moment, forgoing something far more valuable that we could enjoy later for much longer.

Of course, there are many good things God wants us to do with money that don’t involve giving it away. It is essential, for instance, that we provide for our family’s basic material needs (1 Timothy 5:8). But these good things are only a beginning. The money God entrusts to us here on earth is eternal investment capital. Every day is an opportunity to buy up more shares in His kingdom.

It’s a revolutionary concept. If you embrace it, I guarantee it will change your life. As you store up heavenly treasures, you’ll gain an everlasting version of what that man found in the treasure hidden in the field.

Joy.

**2002**

**Bruce Wilkinson, Evangelical Professor and Author**

**We think that if God does reward us for serving Him, His reward will be a general commendation that will apply to everyone equally and won’t change our future opportunities in His kingdom. But the truth of the Second Steward is that God will reward our work for Him, but it will be in direct proportion to how much we have multiplied our life for Him. His response will have a major and eternal impact on our future.**

**A Life God Rewards: Why Everything You Do Today Matters Forever**

**Chapter 5: The Question of Your Life**

Whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.... For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. Mark 10:43, 45

When you get there, what do you think your most powerful desire in heaven will be?

It took eighty thousand men to give me a clue.

I was part of a capacity crowd of Christian men gathered in Detroit’s cavernous Silverdome stadium. When the speaker finished, the worship team stepped up to lead us in the hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy"

What started as a quiet refrain increased in volume with each verse. When we finished the hymn we started over, this time louder. Eventually the stadium seemed to shake—from the playing field to the highest tier—with the sound of our worship.

Holy, holy, holy!  
Lord God Almighty!

Early in the morning  
our song shall rise to Thee;  
Holy, holy, holy!

We sang it on our knees. We sang it with our arms stretched high. We sang it with our heads thrown back and at the top of our lungs. The worship went on and on until we lost all sense of time and our fingertips seemed to touch the edge of heaven. Just when I thought the volume would blow the stadium roof off, the arena erupted in thunderous applause to God.

I thought that beautiful roar sounded a lot like heaven.

Never had I reached so deep into my soul to worship the Lord. Yet the deeper my expression of worship became, the more desperate I felt to do something more. At one point I turned and shouted to a friend, "I want to worship more deeply, but I can't find any place to go!"

Years later, the sound of those men's voices united in praise still echoes in my memory. I remember, too, what I felt in my own heart that day. And I can imagine when I'm worshiping in the very presence of God with an innumerable host, I'll feel it a hundred times more. That's why I think in heaven I'll feel something close to...desperation.

Does that word surprise you?

When you and I stand together in the presence of God—knowing and seeing who He is and all that He has done in His sovereign power to move us from birth to "that Day" — we will pour out our thanks and praise to Him, joyfully doing our best to shake the rafters of heaven.

But I'm also convinced that we will desperately long to do something more.  
That's what this chapter is about.

### **What You Will Crave**

The words and example of Jesus, along with my experience in the Silverdome, convince me that in heaven we will desperately crave to serve.

When we see our Savior, we will be swept up in a consuming, eternity-long desire to respond in love to Jesus—and worship and praise won't be enough. We will want to do something for Him.

Think about it: When you and I love someone with all our heart, words are wonderful and precious, but we're compelled to go beyond words to action. We long to give, to help, to protect, to serve.

Words weren't enough for God, either. He loved every person in His world so much that He did something dramatic: He gave His Son in order to save us (John 3:16). And Jesus said that the greatest expression of love is to do something—"to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13).

In this chapter we'll see the direct connection between how well we manage our life for God on earth and how much our Lord will graciously allow us to serve Him in heaven.

### **The Question Of Your Life**

Again and again, Jesus told stories about servants commissioned to take care of a valuable asset that belonged to the master (for example, money, fields, or vineyards). A helpful word to describe this role and one the Bible uses is steward.

What distinguishes a steward from a servant? Both a steward and a servant serve someone, both have a responsibility, and both work for a wage. The difference is that a steward has been charged with managing his master's assets. In Jesus' stories, we often see a pattern: The servant/steward is charged with managing something important for his master while the master is away for an extended period.

Picture the key events of a steward's service in a timeline:

You can easily identify the one step where the steward has the chance to either fail or succeed at his mission and impact his future—it is his "opportunity"

Jesus told parables about stewards for an important and specific reason: He would soon be going away. During His absence, the business of His kingdom on earth would be delegated to His followers. They would be commissioned to spend their lives greatly increasing His kingdom. In the future He would return, ask for an accounting, and reward His servants "each according to his works" (Matthew 16:27).

Note the progressive steps in each of these parables:

- The Commission of the Steward
- The Opportunity of the Steward
- The Master Returns
- The Reward of the Steward
- The Master Leaves

If you are a Christian, you are in the same circumstance as the early followers of Jesus.

You have been commissioned to manage an asset for your Master. Your asset is your life—the sum of your talents, strengths, personality, and interests. Your opportunity is to manage your life in such a way that you greatly increase your Master's kingdom. Your Master has not yet returned, and every day you should answer this question:

### **How will I steward what my Master has placed in my care?**

In fact, every day you are answering this question. In the parables we're about to look at, this truth is quietly but plainly evident. Whether you act intentionally on your commission or not, you are deciding by your actions and attitudes how you will steward your opportunity for God.

Since our Master is not physically present, good stewardship always requires faith—faith that our Master is who He said He is, faith that what He asked us to do matters now and will matter when He returns, and faith that He will return.

No wonder the Bible uses the word faithful more than any other to describe the conduct of a good steward. Paul said that the one nearly defined the other: "It is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2).

### **"Do Business Till I Come"**

Jesus' two best-known parables about stewardship, the Parable of the Minas and the Parable of the Talents, both start with ordinary people in ordinary situations but quickly enter into surprising territory.

In the Parable of the Minas, found in Luke 19, a nobleman must leave town. He calls ten servants and gives each one a mina (about three years' wages). The stewards' assignment? "Do business till I come" (v. 13).

When the nobleman returns, he calls for an accounting. The first servant reports a tenfold increase on his investment of his master's mina. The master responds, "Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities" (v. 17).

The second servant reports a fivefold return, and the master gives him an exactly proportionate reward: "You also be over five cities" (v. 19). Yet what is most notable is what the master doesn't say to him—he doesn't say, "Well done," or "good servant," or even "because you were faithful in a very little." The lesser level of commendation shows that the

Master knew the servant could have done more to multiply his mina.

The third steward simply returns the mina he was given, explaining that he kept the money safely hidden at home.

### **A Life God Rewards**

Imagine his shame when his master calls him a "wicked servant" (v. 22), then takes his one mina and gives it to the servant who already had ten! The nobleman explains his action with a startling statement: "To everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him" (v. 26).

Does the nobleman's response seem fair to you?

When I teach on this parable, audiences often rush to defend the third servant. "Wasn't he just being careful?" they say "Besides, he didn't lose anything." Yet it doesn't take long, as we talk about how we make decisions as parents, managers, or owners, for us to agree: We invariably give the greatest future opportunity to the person who has proven to be the most productive with the present opportunity.

Fortunately for us, Jesus' parable shows the responses of all three stewards—and we can discover life-changing insights from each.

### **Great Expectations**

Let's look at three common misbeliefs about stewardship among Christians today and the corresponding truth Jesus wants us to see:

We think that even though God gave us our gifts and talents, He is not bothered if we don't make the most of every opportunity.

But the Truth of the First Steward shows us that God expects us to take the resources of our lives and greatly multiply them for His kingdom.

We think that if God does reward us for serving Him, His reward will be a general commendation that will apply to everyone equally and won't change our future opportunities in His kingdom.

But the Truth of the Second Steward is that God will reward our work for Him, but it will be in direct proportion to how much we have multiplied our life for Him. His response will have a major and eternal impact on our future.

We think that if we don't serve God with what He's given us, the worst that could happen would be no reward.

But the Truth of the Third Steward is that if we do not use what God has placed in our care for Him, we will suffer loss—of both the potential reward we could have earned, and the opportunity to serve God more fully in eternity.

### **Ten-Mina Man**

I remember when the radical implications of these truths exploded into my mind and heart. Although I was very familiar with the parable, I'd never asked myself: Am I a ten-mina steward?

The question launched a season of sober reevaluation and radical change in my life. Finally, a breakthrough came. I chose to believe that since a ten-mina life was God's purpose for me, I would take it as the best measure of stewardship in my life. I committed to God that by His grace I would become a ten-mina man for Him.

But maybe by now you're thinking, I don't have many talents or opportunities, so how can I bring God much return for my life? And does that mean I won't have the chance to serve Him much in eternity?

An encouraging answer from Jesus is found in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30). The story follows the same pattern as the Parable of the Minas. But this time, three stewards are each given different amounts of money—"to each according to his own ability" (v. 15).

In this case, two servants double what they have been given. Yet when the master returns, he gives the same commendation and reward to both. Why? Because a servant's reward is based on total results in light of potential. The master tells both servants the same thing:

Well done, good and faithful servant;  
you were faithful over a few things,  
I will make you ruler over many things.  
Enter into the joy of your lord.  
verses 21, 23

In the same way, Jesus will reward you and me on the basis of what each of us did with what we were given.

Are you a seamstress or the leader of a nation? A factory worker or a young mother? A village pastor or a builder? Every disciple has the same opportunity for productivity now, and the same opportunity for great reward later. In fact, your future is as promising and important as the future of the most gifted person in history.

For Sheila, a mother of toddlers, ten-mina living has meant turning sincere intentions into a sensible plan—a weekly friendship group for struggling young moms in her neighborhood.

For Mark, a developer in Arizona, ten-mina living has meant redefining what "do business" implies. Increasingly, he is rearranging his workload so he can spend the majority of his time providing building services at no cost to mission projects in Central America.

For Jennifer, who went blind at the age of fifteen, ten-mina living has meant that boundary lines have become starting lines. She now calls her blindness "my difficult gift" and is reaching thousands through music and speaking.

I hope you never again think of faithfully serving God as merely not sinning a lot, doing "business as usual," or just not quitting. True faithfulness as a steward is much closer to extraordinary entrepreneurial excellence!

### **The Steward's Reward**

I opened this chapter telling you why I believed we will desperately want to serve God in heaven. Doing is a servant's language of devotion. In heaven, more opportunity to do God's will through loving service will be our highest reward.

Exactly how much opportunity will faithful stewards receive in heaven? So much that in the upside-down kingdom of heaven, the highest word for serving is ruling. We can trace this surprising reversal to the Garden of Eden. Remember that at Creation God made both woman and man for a particular task—to serve Him on earth by stewarding His creation. Jesus confirmed this purpose when He told His disciples that their reward in heaven for serving Him here would be to sit on twelve thrones and judge the tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28).

Ruling in heaven will have nothing in common with the corruption and manipulation we're so used to seeing in displays of power on earth! When the curse of sin is removed and you and I are restored to our creation purpose, we will be free to rule for God to our fullest powers while bringing only the highest good to ourselves and to others.

Ruling is also the reward for serving we see in Jesus' parables of faithful stewards. Did you notice? In the mina

parable, the highest reward for service was to "have authority over ten cities" (Luke 19:17). And in the Parable of the Talents, the reward is similar—"I will make you ruler over many things" (Matthew 25:21, 23).

Serve faithfully here, rule perfectly there.

My friend, I challenge you to see your true calling today and to seize the opportunity that is right in front of you. Don't waste another day living for less. Your commission for Jesus is as big as the world (Mark 16:15). Your opportunity is now Serve Him faithfully on earth and you will be wonderfully, fully, perfectly prepared to do what you will desperately crave to do in heaven.

And on that Day, you will hear Jesus tell you from His heart,  
"Well done, good and faithful servant ...  
enter into the joy of your Lord."

**2002**

**Craig J. Hazen, Evangelical Professor at Biola University**

**The Apologetic Impulse In Early Mormonism: More Reasonable Beliefs about the Afterlife  
The New Mormon Challenge**

The Historical Roots of the New Mormon Challenge, in Book "The New Mormon Challenge"

**More Reasonable Beliefs**

Another important factor that early converts declared to be influential was that the LDS preachers seemed to be clearing up intractable doctrinal conflicts and controversies that appeared ever-present on the religious landscape of the new republic—especially in revival regions such as western New York. Joseph Smith's several statements in the canonical account of his "first vision" present this at the outset as a key problem to be solved by any restoration of the true faith. Smith recalled that his mind was at times greatly excited, the cry and the tumult were so greatly incessant. The Presbyterians were most decided against the Baptists and Methodists, and used all their powers of both reason and sophistry to prove their errors, or, at least to make people think they were in error. On the other hand, the Baptists and Methodists in their turn were equally zealous in endeavoring to establish their own tenets and disprove all others. In the midst of this tumult of opinions, I often said to myself: What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together?"

Although there is much to doubt about Smith's rendition of his encounter with the divine "personages" in the woods of Palmyra, no one doubts that the apparent religious tumult of his day was a real and significant driving force for him in devoting his life to a breakaway religious cause. To the interested observer at the time, the Christian denominations—that in retrospect had tremendous commonality of belief—seemed to be as different as Muslims and Buddhists might seem to us today. The inter- and intra-denominational battles were noteworthy for their rancor." Hence for those truly concerned about the states of their souls, this was a situation of grave concern. There was also a sense that the "priests" and "professors" of traditional Christianity had led the faithful astray on a number of doctrines that simply did not concur with the way the world looked in the more enlightened and democratic age of the early 1800s. Authoritative alternatives to traditional stances on these problems in theology were therefore alluring to thoughtful seekers.

For instance, the LDS notion of a universal atonement of Christ was especially attractive. In a reaction to the "Calvinist-Baptist" doctrine that seemed to be offering a range of "unreasonable" ideas like a capricious God, no human freedom, original sin, and salvation only for the predestined, the idea that one could rescue God and man from such apparent injustices was utterly intriguing. Also attractive was the throwing out of the idea of salvation as a passive religious experience and replacing it with "salvation imminently accessible and immediately available." Nathan O. Hatch has observed that the populist religious movements of the day

seemed to many to be offering a more reasonable approach to some of the difficult issues, and that the Mormons were no different. "The argument against Calvinism pitted enlightened common sense against scholastic metaphysics of the educated elite," Hatch wrote. "As people became more insistent on thinking theologically for themselves, the carefully wrought dogmas of Calvin, Edwards, and Hopkins were dismissed as 'the senseless jargon of election and reprobation.'" Hatch cited several confused seekers of the era who were relieved to hear the "Methodist gospel" over against the Calvinist teaching that left so many questions unanswered. Said one Billy Hibbard of a Methodist preacher he encountered, "I heard for the first time, a doctrine that I could understand. There was no contradiction, but he could prove his doctrine from scripture and reason!"<sup>56</sup> Humorous barbs from frontier preachers about Calvinist orthodoxy became standard fare, setting the stage well before Smith began his ministry. Popular songs with lyrics such as the following circulated:

If this be the way,  
As some preachers say,  
That all things were ordered by fate;  
I'll not spend my pence,  
To pay for nonsense,  
If nothing will alter my state."

The Mormons joined in this chorus, but as in other areas of popular religious thought at the time, they went several steps further than many of the competing primitivists in the denouncement of strict Calvinist theology. Smith seemed to have a tremendous sense for the populist religious "marketplace," and he put his prophetic stamp of approval on a collection of doctrines and methods of delivery that hit the mark with religious seekers—at least enough to get his movement off the ground." For instance, in addition to doing away with predestination and reinstating a commonsense notion of human freedom to respond to the gospel—something with which other restorationists were in line—he also included certain aspects of universalism likely gleaned from his father, Joseph Smith Sr., and his grandfather, Asael Smith, that were unusually attractive in his part of the country." The notion of universal salvation could take on different details depending on which group was proffering it, but all of them worked toward banishing the notion of eternal conscious punishment in a place of unfathomable torment." Universalism was one of the strongest points of intersection between the Enlightenment and Protestant theology and was an important component in what I have elsewhere called the "village Enlightenment—the way in which religious people in rural areas and on the frontier co-opted and modified concepts from the elite Enlightenment to serve their own needs"

If one were clever enough to make a biblical case for some type of universalism (no easy task, but many thought they had achieved it <sup>62</sup>), one would have a powerful tool to solve a number of problems that troubled thinking people. The LDS conception of the afterlife was just such a tool. The only humans that would ultimately be lost were a handful of "cognizant apostates" who "suffered themselves through the power of the devil to be overcome," or in other words, "the sons of perdition who deny the Son after the Father has revealed him?" "All others," wrote modern LDS apostle Bruce R. McConkie, "are saved from death, hell, the devil, and endless torment."<sup>65</sup> This was obviously not a pure universalism in that some—the very few most diabolical and recalcitrant, who simply would not mm no matter what light was given them—would be lost. Ironically, although Mormonism has traditionally embraced a modified universalism, the Book of Mormon itself contains what must be read as anti-universalist rhetoric. On closer examination, though, one could argue that its main focus seems to be against those who believe in no punishment at all after death for the wicked—a notion that some groups of universalists were also against because of its apparent injustice toward the truly wicked <sup>65</sup> Either way, early convert Zerah Pulsipher found in Mormonism just what he had been looking for—a spiritually vital religion that for the most part excluded "souls left in Hell fire to all eternity." He had heard about "an ancient record or Golden Bible" and thought "it might be something that would give light to my mind upon principles that I had been thinking of for years." Pulsipher "read it through twice and gave it a thorough investigation and believed it was true."<sup>66</sup>

Although the Book of Mormon seemed to have a mixed message on universalism, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon removed any lingering ambiguity concerning the LDS position on the final destination of the dead in an 1832 revelation on the topic (D&C 76) that helped set the course for the Mormon view to the present day.<sup>67</sup> Everyone in the next life (except for the small handful of "sons of perdition") would ultimately enter (perhaps after a limited time in a purgatorial setting) one of the "three degrees of glory" of which even the lowest level (the telestial) has a glory that "surpasses all understanding" (D&C 76:89). Given the options offered by religious competitors, Smith and Rigdon may have revealed the most attractive formula on the frontier. They seemed to include the best aspects of all the afterlife scenarios available: postmortem opportunities for salvation, limited punishment for those who really deserve it, and eventual paradise for everyone except (as a popular sense of justice demanded) the devil, his demons, and their intractable followers. Whether it was intentional or not, this "degrees of glory" revelation, which included the "Celestial kingdom" as the highest level and the "Terrestrial kingdom" in the middle,<sup>68</sup> provided the answer to another important question that was probably being asked by early seekers: Why must I join the church if in the end all are going to be saved anyway? Answer: to have a shot at the highest state of glory."

The universal nature of the atonement taught in the early LDS movement offered answers to other troubling questions—especially about the eternal destiny of several classes of people. What was the final fate of innocent children? Those not able to respond? Those who had never heard the gospel? Getting a definitive answer to these questions from the Bible, and traditional Christian theology seemed unlikely—especially in the chaotic environment of the burned-over district. The Bible simply did not address the questions directly, and the answers different Protestant church leaders derived by inference from the text contained elements of doubt by scriptural necessity. Not so in the LDS system.<sup>70</sup> Perhaps one of the greatest comforts that the average person found in the Book of Mormon in a day when childhood mortality was many times higher than it is today was a definitive answer to the first question. The death of young children was a ubiquitous source of pain and grief for people of the time; hence, the authority of the reported words of Christ himself in Moroni 8 must have been a profound comfort. The text taught that "little children are whole" and "alive in Christ," for they are "not capable of committing sin"; and it reassured parents that if they only "repent and be baptized, and humble themselves" they will be "saved with their little children."<sup>71</sup>

A similar message answered the perennial question about the ultimate fate of the unevangelized, that is, those who had never had the proper opportunity to hear and respond to the LDS gospel. As Smith and Rigdon prophesied in 1832 and again in 1836, All who have died without a knowledge of this Gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom."<sup>72</sup> In Smith's thinking, though, an official LDS baptismal rite could not be waived even for those departed before the Restoration. Hence, in a revelation that seemed to tie up the loose ends of the LDS system—and that certainly went further than any religious competitor on the scene--Smith instituted baptism for the dead, which opened the door to all generations past to have their encounter with the Mormon message of salvation. In an 1840 letter and an 1841 revelation, Smith provided a means by which living saints could be baptized on behalf of departed relatives (and several decades later, on behalf of just about anyone) to ensure their full opportunity to be saved. "You will undoubtedly see its consistency and reasonableness," Smith wrote after preaching on it for the first time in a heartfelt response to a woman who had lost an unbaptized son, for "it presents the Gospel of Christ in probably a more enlarged scale than some have imagined it"—an assertion that would certainly have been a dramatic understatement to Smith's non-LDS contemporaries." The expanse of the salvation opportunities enchanted early converts like Benjamin Brown, who found the LDS position on the afterlife far more compelling than the other options such as "the Universalist system," which before his introduction to Mormonism he considered "the most reasonable of the various denominations."<sup>74</sup>

The apologetic power of the LDS claim to have solved many of the problems at the root of the Christian infighting simply cannot be minimized. In 1837 Apostle Parley Pratt capitalized on this power in his little book, *A Voice of Warning* perhaps the most important early noncanonical Mormon book, in which he included a chapter entitled "A Contrast Between the Doctrine of Christ and the False Doctrines of the Nineteenth Century." In juxtaposed columns, Pratt set forth the "Doctrine of Men" on one side and the LDS



answer called the 'Doctrine of Christ' on the other—an arrangement that he thought provided an apologetic rout of apostate Christianity. This book circulated widely and, as LDS document scholars Peter Crawley and Chad Flake maintained, "erected a standard for all future Mormon pamphleteers ... which would be used by others for the next hundred years."75 Missionaries like Pratt "competed directly and intensely for converts, confident that their message could stand up well in head-to-head encounters with other proselyters."8

The persuasive power of popular doctrinal repackaging may have had a greater affect on potential converts than other aspects of the early Mormon faith. Indeed, Steven C. Harper reiterated an important point made by historian of Mormonism, Klaus Hansen, twenty years earlier. Based on the words of early converts, it was not the supernatural origins of the Book of Mormon, the modern prophet, and priesthood authority that seemed to help most people to embrace the extraordinary doctrines held by the Latter-day Saints. Rather, it was the reverse. The extraordinary doctrines and the popular problems that they seemed to solve helped many along the road to the acceptance of all the rest." The offering of ostensible solutions to age-old theological conundrums was one of the strongest points of resonance within the popular Enlightenment culture and was heralded by the LDS evangelists of the time. These proffered solutions played the role of a stepladder for many to get over the implausibility of Smith's visions, his prophethood, and the fantastic story of his discovery and translation of the Book of Mormon.

**2002**

**Asher Intrater, Messianic Jewish Leader in Isreal**

**Rewards in Heaven**

**Revive Isreal.org Website**

The ultimate destiny of every man is either eternal bliss in paradise or eternal torment in the lake of fire. There is no middle ground.

Revelation 20:15

"Anyone not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

The difference between these two final options is what motivates us to preach the gospel. Everyone will be saved or damned.

Among those who are being saved there are also different levels of reward. When Yeshua taught on prayer, fasting, and charity, he said that if we do these things with a pure heart, then we would receive reward in the world to come. If on the other hand, our motives were not pure, our reward would be canceled.

Matthew 6:4,6,18

"Your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

The people he is talking about here are "believers." This is not a difference between being damned or saved, but rather a difference as to what reward you will receive in paradise. Each time we do righteous deeds with a pure heart, we store up for ourselves reward in heaven. To the degree that we act hypocritically, our rewards are nullified.

Since each action has a cumulative reward, every person will receive a different level of reward in the world to come.

In order to be saved, we must receive forgiveness of sins by faith in Yeshua's sacrifice for us on the cross. Anyone who rejects the saving grace of Yeshua is damned (Mark 16:16). He who does believe in Yeshua passes out of this judgment and receives salvation (John 5:24). God does not seek to damn anyone, but He who rejects the offer of eternal life is in effect damned of his own (John 3:18).

In the sense of being condemned, a true believer in Yeshua is not "judged." However, there is another meaning to the word "judge" which is not referring to damnation or salvation, but to reward and punishment. In this sense every believer will be judged.

II Corinthians 5:10

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the Body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

This statement of the Apostle Paul was made to born-again, spirit-filled believers. He included himself in this judgment when he said, "we."

If all saved people will live eternally in paradise, and if paradise is such a perfect place, how could there be different levels of reward there? Let us examine four areas:

### **1. Position of authority**

The world to come is a real society. Everyone will have a job. There will be positions of leadership and government.

Luke 19:17

"Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities."

Luke 19:19

"You also be over five cities."

Luke 19:24

"Take the portion away from him, and give it to him who has ten."

Some people will have authority over thousands (like ten cities). Others will have lesser positions (like five cities). Others will have jobs with no authority at all (like the one whose portion was taken away).

### **2. Magnitude of Glory**

In the world to come, we will live in resurrected bodies. These bodies will be glorified, meaning that they will shine with light like stars by the power of God. But like the stars, not every person's body will shine with the same degree of glory.

I Corinthians 15:39-42

"There are celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead."

The difference between our bodies now and our bodies after the resurrection will be like the difference between the earth (which doesn't shine) and a star (which does shine). However, there is another difference. "For one star differs from another star in glory (vs. 41)." Just as there is a difference in the magnitude of light coming from each star, so will it be in the resurrection. Each person's body will have a different degree of light shining from it - some more; some less.

### **3. Proximity to Yeshua**

While all true believers will be physically present in the world to come, and while everyone will have access to meet Yeshua, not everyone will have the same proximity to Him on a day-to-day basis. John and James' mother once came asking a request from Yeshua.

Matthew 20:21

"Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom."

While Yeshua could not grant her request, He did affirm the fact that there will be a certain "assigned seating" arrangements at events in the kingdom of God. As a citizen of Israel, I have general access to meet with the Prime Minister. However, only those on his immediate staff can meet with him every day. Only those with higher positions in the government can easily obtain an appointment with him. The degree of one's accessibility to Yeshua is considered a great reward in the kingdom of God.

#### **4. Heavenly "Treasure"**

Sometimes people say, concerning money, "You can't take it with you." That is not entirely true. Just as there are banks on earth, there is some type of "banking" system in heaven.

Matthew 6:20

"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and thieves do not break in and steal."

You make a deposit in your account in heaven by giving money to others. I don't know if there is an actual "currency" in the world to come. However, there must be some kind of "treasure" or what Yeshua said would be meaningless. Whatever that "treasure" is, there must be different degrees to which it can be "stored up." There will be different quantitative rewards in the world to come.

When referring to rewards according to our works, we must remember that God looks at the heart and not at the outward appearance. Many things that seem to be great works in the eyes of men are nothing in the eyes of God. And many deeds that seem to be worthless in the eyes of men are of great value to God. Yeshua said of the poor widow who gave two small coins that she gave more than the great sums of money given by the wealthy (Luke 21:3). In what sense did she give more? Her gift was considered greater for its deposit in the heavenly bank because it took more faith and love to give it.

So it is with many other kinds of works. A great evangelist may be motivated by worldly ambition and even though he was used by God to save thousands, he may receive little reward in the world to come (Phil. 1:16). Another may only "succeed" in giving one cup of water, but thereby receive the same reward as a prophet (Matt. 10:41)! If you are just faithful in the very little thing that God has put in your path, you may receive an enormous reward in the world to come.

Some people think that it is unbiblical and selfish to be motivated by rewards in the world to come. But that is not true. It is wrong to be motivated by the honor of man rather than the honor of God (John 5:44), and by the carnal rewards of this life rather than the eternal rewards of the world to come (Hebrews 11:25-26).

In fact, the Bible says that we cannot even please God unless we believe that He will reward those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). Behavioral science correctly teaches that rewards encourage certain behavior and punishments discourage. Yet the very concept of reward and punishment, both temporal and eternal, comes from God.

There will also be certain punishments among those who receive eternal life. How can there be punishments when a person is saved? Any sin that is repented of by a believer is washed by the blood of Yeshua and erased. Yet sin that is not repented of will receive punishment. Five of the seven churches in the book of Revelation received rebukes from Yeshua. He was not speaking primarily of their losing salvation, but of losing their rewards. By punishment here I do not mean damnation, but rather chastisement.

The Bible speaks of Yeshua having a "rod" that comes out of His mouth. By this I understand that the primary chastisement of believers in the world to come will not be torment by fire nor even physical

beatings, but rather a firm and honest rebuke by Jesus, which will be witnessed by millions in the Day of Judgment.

Yeshua will not give us false compliments or flattery. If we have disobeyed Him, failed to fulfill our destiny, or simply led a carnal lifestyle, He will speak bluntly and authoritatively to the point. I would rather be burned with fire or receive a thousand lashes than to hear a word of disapproval from the lips of Yeshua on "that day."

Luke 12:47-48

"That servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few."

This passage is not speaking of the damned. (That is covered in verse 46.) In any case, receiving a few more or less beatings could not apply to someone who would spend eternity in the lake of fire. There are degrees of responsibility and commitment in the kingdom of God. We are held responsible for what we know. The level of punishment is meted out accordingly.

So in the kingdom of God there will be different levels of reward and punishment. Some will receive more. Some will receive less. Some will receive nothing at all.

I Corinthians 3:14-15

"If anyone's work that he has built on [the foundation which is Jesus Christ] endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved."

We are saved through faith in Yeshua. That is our foundation. With that foundation a person builds his life with a quality like gold or silver, wood or hay. According to the life we live, we will be rewarded or not rewarded; we will be praised or rebuked.

There is an urgency to tell unbelievers that a day of judgment is coming where they will face either eternal damnation or salvation. There is likewise an urgency to tell believers that a day of judgment is coming - not for damnation or salvation, but for reward and punishment in the kingdom of God.

**2002**

**Wayne Jackson, Editor, "Christian Courier" (Church of Christ)  
Are There Degrees of Blessedness and Punishment in Eternity?  
Christian Courier Magazine**

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**"Will There Be Differing Degrees Of Rewards In Heaven And Different Levels Of Punishment In Hell?"**

Before we address the question directly, some preliminary observations would be helpful.

(1) The Bible is very clear in affirming that God is a being of absolute goodness. The Psalmist declared: "Good and upright is Jehovah?" (25:8; cf. 100:5). Whatever God does, therefore, is good — whether or not man can understand it (Isa. 55:8-9).

(2) God is also just. Justice is one of the elements that lies at the very foundation of his sovereign rule (Psa. 89:14). The Judge of the earth always “does what is right” (Gen. 18:25). As finite beings with limited understanding, however, we are unable to appreciate fully this reality.

When Job went through his anguished ordeal, in moments of weakness, he thought that God occasionally deals unjustly with people. He charged that Jehovah is not always good; sometimes, the patriarch alleged, he mocks “at the calamity of the innocent” (9:23). Later, when confronted with the power and wisdom of the Creator (chapters 38-41), Job confessed that his uninformed accusations had obscured the true plan of the Almighty (42:2-3).

(3) Those who spend eternity estranged from the presence of the Lord (cf. Mt. 25:41; 2 Thes. 1:7-9), will do so because that is what they deserve. The “wages” of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), and eternal “death” is separation from the good and gracious Maker of mankind (Rev. 20:14-15).

(4) Those who have accepted the loving favor of God, by humbly submitting to his revealed will (regardless of the time period in which they have lived), will enjoy the bliss of eternal life, i.e., everlasting communion with the Lord. The guilt of sin is removed from the submissive sinner, by virtue of the atoning death of Jesus of Nazareth (Gal. 4:4; Heb. 9:15-17).

On the other hand, those who reject the offer of salvation will not enjoy the reward of heaven (cf. Heb. 2:1ff; cf. 5:8-9; 1 Pet. 4:17).

Let us now address the first part of our question. Will there be degrees of reward in heaven? We believe that both scripture and common sense answer affirmatively.

There is no evidence that the human spirit, as to its basic constitution, will be changed by the experience of death. If it is the case, therefore, that we are capable of different levels of satisfaction and enjoyment now, depending upon our capacity for such, it follows that such likely will be the case in the eternal order of things. This seems to be a logical inference. How could most modern Christians, with their limited range of experiences, possibly appreciate heaven to the same degree as someone like the apostle Paul, who suffered so much for his eternal crown (cf. 2 Cor. 11:24ff)?

The Scriptures, in many places, seem to imply varying levels of reward for the redeemed. Everyone in heaven will be supremely happy, but the capacity of some would appear to be greater — by virtue of their sacrifices and spiritual development. Let us consider a few passages.

### **Degrees of Reward**

In speaking of the heavenly order of things, Daniel wrote that those who “are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (12:3). Note the term “many,” as compared to fewer. There clearly is implied a level of reward commensurate with one’s evangelistic labors.

Albert Barnes noted that the suggestion is that the righteous will “be honored in proportion to their toils, their sacrifices, and their success” (Notes on Daniel, New York: Leavitt & Allen, 1853, p. 450).

Another scholar has written that the glorious reward of the righteous “is in proportion to the works that are done” (H.C. Leupold, Exposition of Daniel, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1969, p. 532)

In one of his parables, Jesus told of a nobleman who entrusted to each of ten servants an equal quantity of money with which to do business while he was away in a distant land (see Lk. 19:12ff). When he returned, they were called to account for their stewardship. One fellow had multiplied his investment ten-fold and was granted authority over ten cities. Another had increased his trust by five; similarly, he was rewarded with five

cities. Finally, one man had done nothing with his allotment, and so lost it. For our purpose here, simply note that the two men who had increased their investments were rewarded according to their respective results.

The Scriptures affirm that Christ, at the time of his return will “repay each person according to what he has done” (Mt. 16:27 ESV). The preposition kata (“according to”) implies a norm, standard by which “rewards or punishments are given” (F.W.Danker, et al., Greek-English Lexicon, University of Chicago, 2000, p. 512). If this does not signify a proportionately fair dispersal, language scarcely has any meaning.

Paul was thrilled to know that, at the time of the Lord’s return, he would have both joy and glory on behalf of those whom he had helped in their journey to heaven (1 Thes. 2:19-20). By way of contrast, however, the apostle cautioned the Corinthians about the manner in which they seek “materials” for the make-up of the Lord’s spiritual house, the church (see 1 Cor. 3:10ff). He urged them to consider the quality of those on whose behalf they labored (i.e., earnest people, versus the superficial) for the time would come when that construction material would be put to the test, the quality being revealed.

Paul noted that if a man’s “work” (i.e., his converts; cf. 1 Cor. 9:1) did not abide, though he himself might be saved, he would suffer “loss.” The loss would be the joy and glory (cf. 1 Thes. 2:19-20) of knowing that his labor was fruitful eternally (cf. Gal. 4:11). The implication is plain — the more of our converts who endure, and finally arrive in heaven, the greater our joy and reward will be.

### **Degrees of Punishment**

On the opposite side of the equation, there is the matter of degrees of punishment. If anything, the Bible is even more decisive on this issue.

Jesus informed the citizens of certain communities in Galilee that in the day of judgment, it would be “more tolerable” for certain people of the ancient world (e.g., Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom) than for them (Mt. 11:20-24; cf. 10:15). The word “tolerable” means “bearable, endurable.” In the Greek Testament the word represents a comparative format. The difference was in the opportunities each had enjoyed. Judgment was to be balanced against this factor.

Christ told about a certain master who took a trip. While he was away, his servants, who had been charged with various responsibilities, disobeyed him. When the Lord returned, and discovered that some had knowingly been disobedient, while others had disobeyed in ignorance, he punished them according to the level of their culpability (Lk. 12:47-48). There is perhaps no clearer passage than this, that teaches degrees of punishment.

During the course of his trial, Jesus informed Pilate: “He who delivered me unto you has the greater sin” (Jn. 19:11). Does not justice require a greater punishment for a greater sin?

A man who set aside the law of God under the Mosaic regime, was executed without mercy. The writer of the book of Hebrews declares that the one who tramples on the Son of God and who treats, as a common thing, the blood by which he was sanctified, will deserve a much “worse” punishment (Heb. 10:26-31). The principle is this: there is a greater level of responsibility for those who live under the better covenant, and there will be appropriate punishment meted out for those who, through apostasy, reject that which they previously embraced.

The apostle Peter wrote regarding those who had “escaped the defilements of the world” by virtue of their knowledge of the truth, i.e., obedience to the gospel (2 Pet. 2:20-22; cf. 1 Pet. 4:17). He warned that should they become entangled again in these defilements, and overcome, their “last state” (their apostate condition) would be “worse” than the first (the pre-conversion state). Ominously, he says it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back to their former

lifestyle. This, most assuredly, teaches a greater level of punishment for apostate Christians than for those who never knew the truth.

James provides a word of caution appropriate to this topic. “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness” (3:1 ESV). Is there any question about the implication of that warning?

“The main thought in vv. 1-12 is the greater responsibility of teachers and the extremely dangerous character of the instrument [the tongue] which they have to use? Greater responsibility brings greater judgment” (James B. Adamson, *The Epistle of James*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976, p. 141).

### **Conclusion**

And so, the answer to the original question is, “Yes.” There will be degrees of just reward — in terms of both blessedness and punishment. Intelligent people will endeavor to live the obedient life so as to achieve the greatest plateau of enjoyment of which they are capable, and therefore avoid the horrible alternative.

**2002**

**Craig Miller, Scholar of LDS History**

**Did Emanuel Swedenborg Influence LDS Doctrine? (excerpts)**

**Sunstone Symposium August 7-10, 2002**

### **Part**

#### **Unique Similarities**

As far as I know the following similarities appear only in the LDS religious tradition and the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg. One or two such similarities would be an interesting coincidence, three completely unexpected, and four a strong indication that there is something much more to the similarities than mere chance. An analogy might be that a unique gene in two otherwise very dissimilar individuals may still be an indication that common ancestry is a either a high probability or an absolute certainty.

1. There are three heavens (D&C 76, Heaven and Hell chapter 5). Swedenborg divided the heavens into three: the celestial, spiritual, and natural heavens, with divisions so absolute that direct communication is generally not possible without divine help. Those of lower heavens in general cannot see the inhabitants of the higher heavens. Communication does occur between higher and lower realms, but those of the lower heavens are, in general, less aware of its occurrence. The communication originates from what Swedenborg calls “correspondences,” which means that all things of a lower order are symbols or allegories of higher realities. God Himself, for example, can be understood through careful and reverent observation of His creations.

The LDS parallel of Swedenborg’s heavens are the celestial, terrestrial, and telestial kingdoms. Swedenborg’s terms for the heavens are all biblical, and can be found in the scriptures that Mormons believe refer to these heavens, 1 Cor 15:40-42. The counterpart of Swedenborg’s spiritual heaven is the LDS terrestrial heaven, which despite its name, is not depicted as being earthlike in LDS scripture. To describe the lowest of the heavens Joseph Smith invented a new term, telestial. Swedenborg stated that the heavens were arranged in layers around the central Sun of heaven, or the Lord God Jesus Christ. The natural heaven is the furthest from the center.

3. There are three heavens in the celestial glory or kingdom (D&C 131:1, *Arcana Coelestia* 9993). Swedenborg states that there are three heavens, the celestial, spiritual and natural, and two kingdoms of heaven, the celestial and the spiritual. The organizational relationship between the three heavens and two kingdoms is complex and has long been a source of discussion among students of Swedenborg. In *Arcana Coelestia* 9993 [2], Swedenborg states that the celestial kingdom has three divisions, and also stated in

Arcana Coelestia 5922 [2] that the celestial kingdom is the celestial heaven. Through the Lord's direction and by means of angels that communicate between them they act in unison. Mormons understand D&C 131:1 to mean that the celestial heaven, "glory" in D&C 131:1, is divided into three heavens. Swedenborg also used the word "glory" to refer to kingdoms (Arcana Coelestia 5922 [2]). While, again, the exact interpretation of the three heavens-two kingdoms distinction remains a matter of discussion in the New Church, the parallels with LDS doctrine are still obvious.

7. Likens the celestial, spiritual (terrestrial?), and natural (testitial?) heaven to the sun, moon, and stars (D&C 76:50,71,81, 88:7-9, Heaven and Hell 117-120, 129, Apocalypse Revealed 65). I place this at the end of the list because there is a significant difference embedded in the similarity, namely that Swedenborg speaks of the heavens and their illumination while LDS scriptures speak of the bodies of the inhabitants of those heavens. Nevertheless, the aspects of the teachings that are similar are unique in Christianity and not clear in the King James version of 1 Cor 15:40-42. Allegorically, Swedenborg likens both the nature of each heaven as well as the illumination in the sky of each heaven to the sun, moon, and stars (Heaven and Hell 119). He states that the sun of the celestial heaven and the moon of the spiritual kingdom is the Lord (Heaven and Hell 118). Swedenborg states that the communities of the natural heaven appear as stars in the sky to inhabitants of the world of spirits (Apocalypse Revealed 65). In the Joseph Smith translation of I Cor 14:40-42 and in Doctrine and Covenants 76:70,71,81; the resurrected bodies of those in the celestial, terrestrial, and testitial heavens are likened to the sun, moon, and stars. In Doctrine and Covenants 88:7,8, the Lord is said to be the light of the sun and is in the sun and also the light of the moon and is in the moon. Verse 9 states that He is also the source of the light of the stars but does not state the He is in the stars. It could well be that these verses speak of the spiritual realms more than the physical.

**2005**

**Lutheran Church Missouri Synod  
Degrees of Heaven / Hell  
Lutheran Website**

Q. In our Bible study today we discussed if there are degrees or levels in heaven and hell. It was also suggested that hell is not eternal. Are there scriptural references to support these points?

A. In its report on The "End Times," the Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations says regarding hell: "In both "body and soul" unbelievers will suffer eternal separation and condemnation in hell (Matt 18:8; 25:46; Mark 9:43; John 3:36; 2 Thess. 1:9; Jude 13; Rev. 14:11). Indescribable torment will be experienced consciously, the degree determined by the nature of the sins to be punished (Matt. 11:20-24; 23:15; Luke 12:47-48)."

Regarding heaven and "degrees of glory" the Commission says: "Eternal life is pictured in the Scriptures as a state of never-ending "blessedness." This means, on the one hand, that Christians will live forever in perfect freedom from sin, death, and every evil (Is. 25:8; 49:10; 1 Cor. 15:26, 55-57; Rev. 2:7, 11; 20:14; 21:4). At the same time, they will experience the unending joy of being with God in the new heavens and new earth (e.g., Revelation 21-22; Ps. 16:11). Forever eliminated is the possibility of falling away from God. This blessedness will bring with it the joy of being in eternal communion with fellow believers, whom we have reason to believe we shall recognize (cf. Matt. 17:3). And, there will be no limitations or degrees attached to the enjoyment of the happiness to be experienced, though there will be degrees of glory corresponding to differences of work and fidelity here on earth, producing praise to God but no envy (see 2 Cor. 9:6; Matt. 20:23)."

**2005**



**Robert L. Millet, BYU Professor of Religion**  
**Degrees of Glory**  
**A Different Jesus? The Christ of the Latter-day Saints**

This idea is not totally foreign to other Christians. In the words of popular writer Bruce Wilkinson, "Although your eternal destination is based on your belief [in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior], how you spend eternity is based on your behavior while on earth." Thus "The Unbreakable Link" is stated as follows: "Your choices on earth have direct consequences on your life in eternity." Discipleship flows from true conversion. That is, "Doing is a servant's language of devotion." In short, "there will be degrees of reward in heaven." Jonathan Edwards stated that "There are many mansions in God's house because heaven is intended for various degrees of honor and blessedness. Some are designed to sit in higher places there than others; some are designed to be advanced to higher degrees of honor and glory than others are." Similarly, John Wesley spoke of some persons enjoying "higher degrees of glory" hereafter. "There is an inconceivable variety in the degrees of reward in the other world.... In worldly things men are ambitious to get as high as they can. Christians have a far more noble ambition. The difference between the very highest and the lowest state in the world is nothing to the smallest difference between the degrees of glory."

**2005**

**Dr. Richard L. Bushman, Latter-day Saint Scholar of LDS History**  
**"The Vision," in Chapter Ten: Exaltation (1832-33)**  
**Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling (195-202)**

The glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth.  
Doctrine and Covenants [1835], 82:6

In the middle of February 1832, Joseph received a revelation that introduced a new understanding of what he called "the economy of God."<sup>1</sup> During the previous years, the revelations had dealt primarily with establishing the Church and building the City of Zion. They established policy, made assignments, or dealt with current Church problems. The emphasis was on this world. Gathering to Zion received more attention than preparing for the afterlife. The revelations promised an inheritance on earth with little mention of a reward in heaven. A long February revelation, called "The Vision," returned to the questions of human destiny initially addressed in the 1830 revelation of the Book of Moses. "The Vision" dealt with life after death for the first time since the Book of Mormon. It was the first of four revelations over the next fifteen months introducing the theme of exaltation.<sup>2</sup> To the fundamentals of sin and atonement, the exaltation revelations added visions of life after salvation. After redemption by Christ, after death, after entry into heaven, what then? With "The Vision," exaltation took its place alongside the Zion project as a second pillar of Mormon belief.

Until 1832, an apocalyptic message of sin and ruin had run through the revealed texts. In the Book of Mormon, two civilizations collapse. In the Book of Moses, the earth weeps for the world's sins. The Zion revelations described devastating catastrophes in the world's immediate future. All had a somber cast. The four exaltation revelations looked beyond the sorrows of this world to the serene expanse of "eternal wisdom." They were more Promising than threatening, more light than dark.

Out of the exaltation revelations came a new idea of salvation. Protestant evangelicals were preoccupied with the Fall, sin, grace, faith, and redemption; they said little about heaven. Salvation consisted of bridging the abyss between humans and the divine. To be accepted by God was heaven enough. Mormonism too bridged the abyss. Salvation through Christ appeared on page after page of the Book of Mormon and again in the summary of beliefs prepared at the organization of the Church.<sup>3</sup> "The Vision" went on from there, dwelling less on reconciliation with God than on achieving the highest realms of God's glory. Heaven contained degrees of

glory. The aim was to be exalted to the highest degree, to receive what the revelations called "the fulness," meaning the fulness of God's glory.<sup>4</sup>

By the standards of systematic theology, all of Joseph's exaltation revelations are undisciplined and oracular, like the Bible itself. He did not address a set of outstanding issues, as Jonathan Edwards did in combating eighteenth-century Deism and Arminianism. The exaltation revelations never reply to other texts, give reasons, or make arguments. They are tangled and spontaneous, connecting here and there with other writings like the Swedish theologian Emanuel Swedenborg's discourses on heaven or the Universalists' doctrine of universal salvation, but without engaging in debate. They stand alone, energetic and illuminating, disorderly. Interpretation involves piecing together the pans into a coherent whole and must be undertaken provisionally with no assurance that even believing Mormons will concur.

### **“The Vision”**

The degrees of glory revelation came in answer to a question about a New Testament passage. As he and Rigdon revised the Bible, Joseph puzzled out the plain meaning of the text. When stumped, he would ask for a revelation.<sup>5</sup> In January 1832, Joseph inquired about 1 Corinthians 7:14, concerning the marriage of believers and unbelievers. In reply to his inquiry, a brief revelation about the effects of mixed marriages on children was received. A month later, John 5:29 posed another problem: where was the justice of God in dealing out rewards and punishments? The passage said the dead "shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." The scripture raised the question of how God could divide people into stark categories of saved and damned when individuals were so obviously a mix in ordinary life. "It appeared self-evident," Joseph wrote, "that if God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body, the term `heaven,' as intended for the Saints eternal home, must include more kingdoms than one."<sup>6</sup>

The question Joseph posed was a classic post-Calvinist puzzle. For over a century Anglo-American culture had struggled to explain the arbitrary judgments of the Calvinist God who saved and damned according to his own good pleasure with little regard for human effort. In severe Calvinism, striving made no difference until God bestowed grace on an aspiring soul. Moral behavior was the product of God's redeeming race, not the reason for His forgiveness and acceptance. Human effort alone counted for nothing.

During the preceding century, the Calvinist notion of arbitrary sovereignty had come to seem incongruous and offensive. In politics, the requirement of reasonable authority, respectful of human rights, underlay the revolutionary movements of the eighteenth century. In religion, theologians and preachers worked to make God appear just, loving, and reasonable, while preserving the semblance of traditional Calvinist doctrines. Calvinism still flourished in sophisticated forms in theological circles, but people were asking questions much like Smith's.<sup>7</sup> Is God's judgment of humanity consistent with His benevolent character?

The resulting revelation was received in the usual way: in plain sight, with others looking on. More surprising, Sidney Rigdon and Joseph, according to the text, viewed the vision together. Sitting on chairs with perhaps a dozen men watching, they spoke in a plural voice:

We, Joseph Smith, jr. and Sidney Rigdon, being in the Spirit on the sixteenth of February, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and thirty two, by the power of the Spirit our eyes were opened, and our understandings were enlightened, so as to see and understand the things of God.

Together they saw the "glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father," and jointly bore witness.

And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him, that he lives; for we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that

he is the only begotten of the Father; that by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created; and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.<sup>8</sup>

Rigdon never commented on the experience, though an eyewitness writing in 1892 said Rigdon was drooping by the end while Joseph was still fresh. "Brother Sidney is not as used to it as I am," Joseph is reputed to have said.<sup>9</sup>

The words "economy of God in his vast creation through out all eternity," written in a note on the manuscript, referred to the state of human spirits after the resurrection. "The Vision" divided the spirits into four broad categories: three "kingdoms" of glory and one of no glory. The realm of no glory was the destination of the "sons of perdition," those who had once partaken of the glory of the Lord and rebelled against it. These rebels were worse than bad. They were souls who knew God's power, like Satan, who once "was in the bosom of the Father" and rebelled against Him. The sons of perdition suffered the devil to overcome them and "to deny the truth, and defy my power." Sinning against the light, these were "doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity."<sup>10</sup>

These lost ones stand in contrast to the conventionally wicked "liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie." These souls, the revelation said, will suffer on earth, and undergo the "vengeance of eternal fire" in hell after death, but in the last resurrection, after Christ has perfected his work on earth, they too are resurrected into a kingdom of glory, the "telestial."<sup>11</sup> Theirs is to be a lesser glory, no more than the brightness of stars compared to the sun, but still a glory "which surpasses all understanding."<sup>12</sup>

The grade above the telestial, the "terrestrial kingdom," receives the "honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men: these are they who receive of his glory, but not of his fulness." They are the believing Christians who are not valiant in the faith. At the top is the "celestial kingdom," the "church of the first-born," for believers in Jesus who accept all the ordinances, keep the commandments, and overcome by faith. "Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God: wherefore all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs, and they are Christ's and Christ is God's."<sup>13</sup>

"The Vision" showed God to be just by granting rewards and punishments in three divisions, roughly corresponding to human experience. The telestial kingdom contained visible sinners who flouted God's commandments; the terrestrial kingdom housed good people who observed Christian conventions but failed to receive the truth in its fulness; and the celestial kingdom was for those who accepted the fulness of the Gospel. Each group had its place, with room for even finer gradations in the telestial kingdom, where glories differed as stars differ in brightness.

The three heavens scheme came from Paul's teaching on the resurrection:

There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

So also is the resurrection of the dead.<sup>14</sup>

Building on Paul, "The Vision" made the three resurrected glories of sun, moon, and stars into three heavenly

realms. The same scripture inspired eighteenth-century Swedish scientist and visionary Emanuel Swedenborg to divide the heavens into three parts, "celestial," "spiritual," and "natural," equivalent to sun, moon, and stars. Like Joseph and Rigdon, Swedenborg thought the sharp division of the afterlife into heaven and hell underestimated God's desire to bless his children.<sup>15</sup> Since Swedenborg attracted the attention of New England intellectuals (his *Treatise Concerning Heaven and Hell* had its first American edition in 1812), his ideas may conceivably have drifted into Joseph Smith's environment, but it was more likely the passage from Paul sparked the revelations of both men.<sup>16</sup> Joseph later taught that there were three "heavens or degrees" within the celestial kingdom, further dividing the economy of God.

The most radical departure of "The Vision" was not the tripartite heaven but the contraction of hell. In Joseph and Rigdon's economy of God, the sinners ordinarily sent to hell forever remained there only until "Christ shall have subdued all enemies under his feet" Then they are redeemed from the devil in the last resurrection to find a place in the telestial kingdom. Only those rare souls who know God's power and reject it suffer everlasting punishment. God redeems all save these sons of perdition, "the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power."<sup>17</sup>

The doctrine recast life after death. The traditional division of heaven and hell made religious life arbitrary. One received grace or one went to hell. In Joseph's afterlife, the issue was degrees of glory. A permanent hell threatened very few. The question was not escape from hell but closeness to God. God scaled the rewards to each person's capacity. Even the telestial glory, the lowest of the three, "surpasses all understanding."<sup>18</sup>

A later revelation further softened divine judgment. In December 1832 the elders were told that glory was granted according to the law each person could "abide," whether celestial, terrestrial, or telestial. One's glory, it was implied, was tailored to one's capacity. "He who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom, cannot abide a celestial glory." The glory one received was the glory one found tolerable. "For what doth it profit a man," the section concluded, "if a gift is bestowed upon him, and he receive not the gift? Behold he rejoices notin that which is given unto him." One's place in heaven reflected more one's preference than a judgment. "Intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth." The last judgment matched affinities."<sup>19</sup>

The three degrees doctrine resembled the Universalists' belief that Christ's atonement was sufficient to redeem everyone, or, alternately, that a benevolent God would not eternally punish his own children. No sinners were beyond salvation. The Universalists derived their name from the doctrine that salvation was as universal as Christ's atoning sacrifice was powerful. Though sinners might be punished for a time as a form of discipline, Christ would ultimately save everyone. Joseph's grandfather Asael Smith was among many small farmers and workers attracted to Universalist doctrine.<sup>20</sup> In a sense, "The Vision" perpetuated Smith family doctrine.

Strange to say, the Book of Mormon argued against universal salvation. A teacher of universalist doctrine, Nehor, was labeled a heretic in the Book of Mormon, and his followers, a band of rebellious priests called the Order of Nehor, disrupted Nephite society. Alma, a preeminent prophet, refuted universal salvation in a discourse to his son Corianton, and another prophet, Lehi, delivered an elaborate philosophical discourse to show that the law must impose punishment on transgressors or good and evil had no meaning.<sup>21</sup> In opposition to universal salvation, the Book of Mormon envisioned the afterlife as heaven or hell.

In a perplexing reversal, a revelation received in the very month the Book of Mormon was published contradicted the book's firm stand. The revelation said that the phrase "endless torment" did not mean no end to torment, but that "Endless" was a name of God, and "endless punishment" meant God's punishment.<sup>22</sup> Torment for sins would be temporary, just as the Universalists taught. In this mg-of-war between the Book of Mormon and the revelations, "The Vision" reinforced the Universalist tendency against the Book of Mormon's anti-universalism.

Where was Joseph Smith coming down on the question of universal salvation? Contradictory as they sound, the universalist tendencies of the revelations and the anti-universalism of the Book of Mormon defined a middle ground where there were graded rewards in the afterlife, but few were damned. "The Vision" did not actually endorse universal salvation any more than the Book of Mormon did. It imposed permanent penalties for sinning, rewarded righteousness with higher degrees of glory, and assigned the sons of perdition to permanent outer darkness. But "The Vision" also eliminated the injustices of heaven-and-hell theology. The three degrees of glory doctrine lay somewhere between the two extremes.

Whatever these oscillations meant for Joseph, "The Vision" confused Mormons who saw only its universalist bent. For most Christians, universal salvation exceeded the limits of acceptable orthodoxy. One Mormon reflected later that "my traditions were such, that when the Vision came first to me, it was so directly contrary and opposed to my former education, I said, wait a little; I did not reject it, but I could not understand it."<sup>23</sup> Others who were "stumbling at it" did object. At a conference in Geneseo, New York, held to deal with the controversy, one brother declared "the vision was of the Devil & he believed it no more than he believed the devil was crucified." Ezra Landon was cut off from the Church for insisting "the vision was of the Devil came from hel[I]." Eventually, Joseph counseled missionaries against publicizing "The Vision" prematurely. The first missionaries to England were told to stick to the first principles of the Gospel. Other members found it thrilling. William Phelps immediately published "The Vision" in the Church newspaper in Missouri.<sup>24</sup>

The three degrees doctrine aside, "The Vision" incorporated common Protestant beliefs about heaven. There was nothing in it like the idiosyncratic details the angels revealed to Swedenborg. In Swedenborg's heaven, people were said to have a clergy and worship in churches. Maidens embroidered flowers on white linens. People lived like innocent children without clothing. They underwent growth, struggle, and change.<sup>25</sup> Avoiding all such description, "The Vision" used language common to Protestants. The words of a Salem pastor in 1819 might have appeared in Joseph's revelation. Because of faith in Christ, Brown Emerson wrote, "believers will share in his honor and blessedness." Christians are "exalted, as joint heirs with the Son of God, to all the glory and felicity of the heavenly kingdom!" The saved would be raised to "celestial thrones, with crowns of glory on their heads, and unwithering palms in their hands, reigning kings and priests unto God!"<sup>26</sup> "Fulness," "glory" and "kings and priests," all well-known New Testament words, were the language of "The Vision." Joseph's statement that the inhabitants of the celestial kingdom were those "into whose hands the Father has given all things" would not have shocked other Christians. Many could have accepted the declaration of "The Vision" that residents of heaven would be, in the words of John's Revelation, "priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory."<sup>27</sup>

The difference lay in the emphasis. Protestant sermons on heaven spoke mostly of surcease from sorrows and the joy of knowing Christ. "Pietists, Puritans, Methodists, and others," two historians of heaven have written, "created a powerful model of paradise as an ethereal world filled with psalm-singing or silent contemplation."<sup>28</sup> The emphasis was on serenity and joyful peace. Ideas highlighted in "The Vision," like the possibility of becoming "joint heirs with Christ" and partaking of his glory, were minor Protestant themes. Joseph's revelation, by contrast, paraphrases one biblical scripture after another on the exalted condition of humans in the celestial heavens. They enjoy godly power, dominion, and rank. "They who dwell in his presence ... know as they are known, having received of his fulness and of his grace; and he makes them equal in power, and in might, and in dominion." In context, "equal" implied equal with God, even though all were to bow "in humble reverence and give him glory forever and ever." And most startling, "as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God: wherefore all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs, and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's."<sup>29</sup> "Fulness" was the critical word in Joseph's exaltation revelations. The word implied that no blessing, power, or glory of God would be withheld from worthy humans.

Joseph loved "The Vision." "Nothing could be more pleasing to the Saints, upon the order of the kingdom of the Lord," he wrote later, remembering only the favorable reception,

than the light which burst upon the world, through the foregoing vision.... The sublimity of the ideas; the purity of the language; the scope for action; the continued duration for completion, in order that the heirs of salvation, may confess the Lord and bow the knee; The rewards for faithfulness. & the punishments of sins, are so much beyond the narrow mindedness of men, that, every honest man is constrained to exclaim; It came from God.<sup>30</sup>

His enthusiasm may have come from the altered relationship with God implied by the revelation. The perfection of the stern and mysterious Calvinist God distanced Him from His children. The law erected an impassable barrier, requiring perfect compliance. In "The Vision" the workings of heaven were made intelligible, and the law became less a set of forbidding commandments than of instructions on how to reach heaven. The laws were helpful and informative rather than distancing. Knowledge made heaven accessible.

**Notes:**

1 Joseph and Rigdon were preaching against Booth until January 10, 1832, when a revelation commanded them to return to translation. ManH A-1, in *PJS*, 1:370; *D&C* [1835], 29:2 (*D&C*, 73:3-4). On the "economy of God," see Woodford, "Historical Development," 2:935.

2 *D&C*' [1835] 91, 4, 7, 82 (1)6C, 76, 84, 88, 93).

3 The summary stated that "by the transgression of these holy laws, man became sensual and devilish, and became fallen man. Wherefore, the Almighty God gave his only begotten Son." *BofC*, 24:14-15 (*D&C*, 20:20-21).

4 Ostler, "Mormon Concept of Grace," 57-84, esp. 70-71.

5 Grant Underwood, an editor of *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, hypothesizes that possibly Joseph first revised John 5:29, then received the revelation, then revised the passage further. Personal communication with the author.

6 ManH A-1, in *PJS*, 1:37-72; *D&C* [1835], 91:3 (*D&C*, 76:15-17).

7 The strains in Calvinist theology and in attitudes toward authority are analyzed in Wright, *Universalism in America*; Foster, *New England Theology*; and Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims*.

8 *D&C*' [1835], 91:3 (*D&C*, 76:11, 20, 22-24).

9 Philo Dibble said about twelve men were in the room when the vision was given. Joseph and Rigdon seemed to be looking out a window and describing what they saw. "Recollections of the Prophet," 303-304. For a question about the authenticity of Dibble's story, see Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon*, 119, n. 17.

10 Woodford, "Historical Development," 2:935; *D&C* [1835], 91:3-4 (*D&C*, 76:31-33).

11 Unlike "celestial" and "terrestrial," words in common usage, "telestial" was not a known word. It has the ring of *telos*, meaning "end" or "uttermost," a Greek word that appears in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 15:24, a few verses before a passage on bodies celestial and terrestrial in verse 40. Speaking of the order of resurrection beginning with the righteous, Paul writes, "then cometh the end [*telos*] when he [Christ] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." Jed Woodworth pointed out this connection.

12 *D&C* [1835], 91:8, 7 (*D&C*, 76:104-106, 81, 89).

13 *D&C* [1835], 91:6, 5 (*D&C*, 76:75-76, 54, 51-53, 58-59). See also Psalms 82:6, and John 1:12 and 10:34.

14 1 Corinthians 15:40-42.

15 McDonnell and Lang, *Heaven*, 199-200. The three heavens in "The Vision" echo Paul's reference to a man caught up into the "third heaven" in 2 Corinthians 12:2.

16 Although there is no evidence Joseph read the books on heaven, by 1839 he knew about Swedenborg's ideas. Hunter, *Edward Hunter*, 51. On the Swedenborg connection, see Meyers,

- "Swedenborgian and Mormon Eschatology," 58-64, and Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 174, 217-18, 520, n. 319.
- 17 Clayton, *Journal*, May 16, 1843 (D&C, 131:1); D&C [1835], 91:7,4 (D&C, 76:106, 85, 37, 44.
- 18 D&C [1835], 91:7 (D&C 76:89). Grant Underwood has argued that Mormons disregarded the doctrine of the three degrees of glory in the 1830s and 1840s, sticking with the standard heaven and hell. "Persistent Protestantism," 93-97.
- 19 D&C [1835], 7:5, 7, 10 (D&C 88:22, 33, 40). The same sentiment is voiced in Alma's expostulation in the Book of Mormon: "he that knoweth good and evil, to him it is given according to his desires; whether he desireth good or evil, life or death, joy or remorse of conscience." BofM, 303 (Alma 29:5).
- 20 Miller, *Universalist Church*, The doctrine of hell was equally repulsive to the Unitarians. Channing, *Works*, 3:221. Universal salvation met resistance too. Saum, *Pre-Civil War America*, 44-47.
- 21 BofM, 211-23, 263, 265-67, 283, 337-40 (Alma 1:4, 16; 14:18; 15:15; 16:11; 21:4; 4<sup>2</sup>). Cf. BofM, 337, 63-64 (Alma 41:10-13; 2 Nephi 2:10-13). For an elaboration of the anti-Universalism in the Book of Mormon, see Vogel, "Anti-Universalist Rhetoric," 21-52. A rejoinder is Tanner, "Anti-Universalist Rhetoric?" 418-33.
- 22 BofC, 16:7,11-12 (D&C, 19:6, 10, 12).
- 23 Materials on the rocky reception of "The Vision" are assembled in Woodford, "Historical Development," 2:929-33, and Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 216.
- 24 Murdock, *Diary*, 27-29; ManH B-1, 792; E&MS, July 1832, [10-11]. Probably Phelps was responsible for putting "The Vision" into poetic verse in 1843. Hicks, "Poetic Paraphrase," 63-84.
- 25 McDannell and Lang, *Heaven*, 199-203.
- 26 Emerson, *Departed Saints*, 11.
- 27 D&C [1835], 91:5 (D&C, 76:56); Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:6. Cf. 1 Peter 1:3.
- 28 Hoge, *Heavenly Rest*, 17-25; Nott, *Future Habitation of Believers*, 5-7; McDannell and Lang, *Heaven*, 199.
- 29 D&C [1835], 91:7, 5 (D&C, 76:95, 93, 58-59). Cf. 1 Corinthians 13:12; John 1:17; Revelation 1:16; Psalms 82:6; John 10:34; Romans 8:16-17.
- 30 ManH A-1, in *PJS*, 1:372.

## 2005

### **Elder B. Renato Maldonado, LDS Area Authority Seventy, South America North Area Messages from the Doctrine and Covenants: The Three Degrees of Glory Ensign Article**

#### **Apr 2005, 62–65:**

More than any other book, the Doctrine and Covenants helps us understand the nature of life after death. The Savior taught, "In my Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:2). The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that "mansions" may be understood to mean "kingdoms"—those kingdoms in which we will dwell in the life after this. He said: "It should be—'In my Father's kingdom are many kingdoms,' in order that ye may be heirs of God and joint-heirs with me. ... There are mansions for those who obey a celestial law, and there are other mansions for those who come short of the law, every man in his own order." 1

As scientific knowledge increases, it will become more evident that there is order in the universe and that all things are governed by harmonious and immutable laws. Perfect order exists in everything in nature from the nucleus of the atom to the immensity of space. This is true in spiritual things as well as temporal; therefore, blessings that are spiritual are also governed by spiritual laws. "There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven

... , upon which all blessings are predicated—and when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated” (D&C 130:20–21).

In other words, there is a relationship between obedience and blessings. The Lord has said that we will be blessed and will live in a degree of glory in the next life according to the eternal laws we obey in mortality. “For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory” (D&C 88:22). The same holds true for the terrestrial and telestial kingdoms (see D&C 88:23–24).

As the Prophet Joseph Smith was laboring on what we now call the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, he received a vision later recorded as Doctrine and Covenants section 76. Included in this revelation is a comparison of the three degrees of glory: the celestial, terrestrial, and telestial kingdoms. Following is a brief description of each.

### **The Celestial Kingdom**

The Lord compared celestial glory to that of the sun, “even the glory of God, the highest of all” (D&C 76:70; see also D&C 76:96). Those who will inherit this kingdom must do the following:

- Receive a testimony of Jesus and believe on His name (see D&C 76:51).
- Be baptized by immersion (see D&C 76:51).
- Receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands (see D&C 76:52).
- Obey the commandments and be washed and cleansed of all sins (see D&C 76:52).
- Overcome by faith (see D&C 76:53).
- Be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise (see D&C 76:53).

Those who qualify for the celestial kingdom will receive, among other blessings:

- Be of a company of angels, of the general assembly and church of Enoch and of the Firstborn (see D&C 76:54, 67).
- Receive the fulness, glory, and grace of the Father (see D&C 76:55, 56, 94).
- Be priests and kings of the Most High God (see D&C 76:56–59).
- Overcome all things (see D&C 76:60).
- Dwell forever in the presence of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ (see D&C 76:62).
- Be with Christ at the time of His Second Coming (see D&C 76:63).
- Come forth in the First Resurrection (see D&C 76:64–65).
- Go up unto Mount Zion and unto the heavenly city of God (see D&C 76:66).
- Minister to terrestrial and telestial beings (see D&C 76:87–88).
- Be able to have offspring, or in other words, gain the right to become eternal parents (see D&C 131:4).

The Lord further revealed the important doctrines of salvation for the dead and salvation of little children in the celestial kingdom:

“All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God;

“Also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom; ...

“... All children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven” (D&C 137:7–8, 10). Except for those whose mental abilities prevent them from reaching the age of accountability (see D&C 29:50), the age of accountability is eight (see D&C 68:25).

We do not know much about who will inherit two of the three degrees within the celestial kingdom. However, much has been said about the highest level in the celestial kingdom, or exaltation, because that is



where the Father wants all of His children to live (see Moses 1:39). The Doctrine and Covenants teaches that temple marriage is the key to obtaining exaltation:

“In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;

“And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage];

“And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.

“He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase” (D&C 131:1–4).

“If a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood; ... and if [they] abide in my covenant ...

“Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting ... because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them” (D&C 132:19–20).

### **The Terrestrial Kingdom**

The Lord compared terrestrial glory to that of the moon (see D&C 76:97). It exceeds the telestial in all things (see D&C 76:91). Those who will inherit this kingdom are those who experienced one or more of the following circumstances:

- Died without law (see D&C 76:72).
- Were in spirit prison and received a testimony there but rejected the testimony of Jesus while on the earth (see D&C 76:73–74; see also D&C 138:32).
- Were honorable people who allowed themselves to be blinded by the craftiness of men (see D&C 76:75).
- Were not valiant in their testimonies of Jesus (see D&C 76:79).

Among other blessings and limitations, those who qualify for the terrestrial kingdom will:

- Come forth in the First Resurrection after celestial beings are resurrected. 2
- Receive of God’s glory but not His fulness (see D&C 76:76).
- Enjoy the presence of the Son but not the fulness of the Father (see D&C 76:77).
- Not be able to obtain a crown in the kingdom of God (see D&C 76:79).
- Be ministered to by celestial beings (see D&C 76:87).

### **The Telestial Kingdom**

The Lord compared telestial glory to that of the stars (see D&C 76:81). Those who shall inherit this kingdom are those who:

- Rejected the gospel, the testimony of Jesus, the prophets, and the everlasting covenant (see D&C 76:82, 101).
- Were liars, sorcerers, adulterers, and whoremongers (see D&C 76:103).
- Loved “and [made] a lie” (D&C 76:103).

Among other blessings and limitations, those who inherit the telestial kingdom will:

- Suffer the wrath of God on earth (see D&C 76:104) and not be redeemed from the devil until the last resurrection, which will take place after the Millennium (see D&C 76:85). 3
- Be denied the Savior’s fulness (see D&C 76:86).
- Be able to receive the Holy Ghost through the ministration of beings in higher glories (see D&C 76:86–88).

- Never be able to come where God and Christ dwell (see D&C 76:112).

I am grateful that the Lord revealed these eternal truths through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Such truths help us have a greater understanding of the plan of salvation and a stronger testimony of Jesus Christ. We are blessed to know what our eternal destiny will be if we will keep the commandments and endure to the end.

#### **Notes**

1. History of the Church, 6:365.
2. See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 2:296.
3. *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:297.

**2006**

### **Blake Ostler, Latter-day Saint Scholar and Philosopher Soteriology in LDS Thought - The Vision Exploring Mormon Thought, Vol. 2**

#### **Soteriology in LDS Thought**

##### **LDS Soteriological Terminology (pp. 191-196)**

It is necessary to engage in some scriptural groundwork and exegesis before I can elucidate a theory of atonement. To begin this discussion it is important to get some clarity on the way terms such as redemption, salvation, exaltation, works, and grace function within the LDS community of thought and scripture. My primary goal in laying out these terms is to avoid the types of confusion that lead to mindless and inaccurate charges by many non-Latter-day Saints and to assist Latter-day Saints to address issues of faith with others without creating needless confusion. The scriptures do not contain definitions of these terms and the way they are used in LDS discourse is not univocal. Nevertheless, these terms are presented carefully and meaningfully in a single revelation to Joseph Smith known as "the Vision."

##### **The Vision**

Joseph Smith received "the Vision" on February 16, 1832, and it revolutionized LDS soteriology or theory of salvation. First, it is imperative to note that Joseph Smith's revelations teach that we are "saved" by confessing and recognizing Jesus as the resurrected Christ and Lord through grace. It is simply that according to both Paul and LDS scripture, all persons, literally everyone born, will at some point confess Jesus as Lord. In the Vision, God declared: "All shall bow the knee, and every tongue confess to him who sits on the throne forever and ever; for they shall be Judged according to their works, and every man receive according to his own works his own dominion in the mansions prepared" (D&C 76:110-111; emphasis mine). This scripture of course quotes Isaiah 45:23 and Paul's exhortation in Philippians 2:10-11 which states: "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow ... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." One of the most prominent themes in the Vision is the universality of "salvation"—"that through [Christ] all might be saved whom the Father had put in his power and made by him, who glorifies the Father, and saves all the works of his hands except the sons of perdition who deny the Son after the Father has revealed him" (D&C 76:42-43). Virtually all will be saved—even those who are consigned to hell for a time. The universality of salvation is extended even beyond the grave so that those who don't hear the gospel in this life will at some time recognize Jesus as Lord and thus be saved.

The Vision is a revelation that explains the meaning of John 5:29 which states: "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (Emphasis mine) However, in "translating" the KJV Bible, the wording "was given unto us as follows ... and shall come forth; they who have done good, in the resurrection of the just; and they who have done evil, in the resurrection of the unjust" (76:15-17). The

scriptures in both the Old and the New Testaments agree universally, without exception, that judgment is based on works that one does in the body over the course of his or her entire life. KJV John 5:29 challenges the Christian view of salvation because it divides those who are damned and those who have life based upon whether they have done good or evil rather than upon simply believing in Jesus Christ. Such a statement seemingly contradicts the view held by virtually all Protestants that one is saved from damnation by faith in Christ. It makes salvation dependent on what one does.

To resolve this tension, the translation of John 5:29 in the Vision excises the word "damnation" and replaces it with "unjust," so that salvation from damnation is no longer dependent on works. It also reveals that virtually all persons are, in fact, redeemed at the time they confess Christ; however, all will also receive according to their works in the judgment. The Vision revealed that, in the resurrection, there are varying degrees of light that will quicken or give life to our bodies.

The "vessels of wrath" (D&C 76:33) are those who have no redemption, "having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it, and having denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father, having crucified him unto themselves and put him to open shame" (D&C 76:35). This statement quotes Hebrews 6:4-6 which states: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and having tasted of the heavenly gift, and become partakers of the spirit . . . if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put him to an open shame."

This text was the primary scripture cited by Arminians to demonstrate that the Calvinist doctrine of eternal security - once saved always saved - is contrary to scripture. This extremely small group of former disciples who rebel against Christ are the only ones who shall "not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, after sufferings of his wrath" (D&C 76:38; emphasis mine). They are "sons of perdition" or adopted by the devil and sealed his (D&C 76:25-32). Those who follow Lucifer are adopted as his sons just as those who choose to follow Christ become sons and daughters of Christ. Even the "sons of perdition" at some point confess that Jesus is the Christ; however, they later reject Christ after having known him.

It is also important to note that, in the Vision, "redemption" refers to being ultimately saved from the power of the devil and evil. However, to be redeemed means to be accepted into a saving relationship with Christ through grace; it occurs at the moment one accepts Christ and his or her sins are forgiven. As Joseph Smith's 1843 poetic rendition of the Vision stated, the sons of Perdition "are not redeemed in the time of the Lord; / While all the rest are, through the triumph of Christ, / Made partakers of grace, by the power of his word."<sup>2</sup> The same poetic rendition stated that Christ came: "To lay down his life for his friends and foes, / And bear away sin as a mission of love."<sup>3</sup>

Three kingdoms of glory are revealed in the Vision, the telestial, the terrestrial, and the celestial. A later revelation to Joseph Smith clarified that every person will enjoy that degree of light or "glory" that he or she is willing to accept (D&C 88:22-25). Those who are in the telestial kingdom come forth in the second resurrection (the sorcerers, adulterers, liars, and whoremongers) and are those who "suffer the wrath of Almighty God on earth ... who are cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of God until the fulness of times, when Christ shall have subdued all enemies under his feet" (D&C 76:104, 106; emphasis mine) Thus, even these do not suffer in an eternal hell, but "suffer wrath" until Christ finally reigns and they confess that he is Lord. They do not receive Christ until the conclusion of the final resurrection when they are "saved" (D&C 76:101).

Note that there is a "hell" in LDS thought. The sons of perdition are in a state of hell eternally, and those in the telestial kingdom are in a state of hell until the second resurrection, at which time they are redeemed (D&C 76:106). To be in hell means to suffer the wrath of God.

Those in the terrestrial kingdom are those who "died without law," who die without having received the gospel in this life but who accept it when it is taught to them in "spirit prison" after this life, or who were

honorable men but were "deceived by the craftiness of men." They do not suffer the wrath of God and they do not go to hell. Rather, they remain in "paradise" (as opposed to "spirit prison") immediately after mortal death. They receive "his glory," but not a fulness of glory (D&C 76:72-79).

Thus, accepting the gospel and Jesus as Lord do not mark the distinction between those who go to hell and those who don't; rather, the basis is whether a person is "honorable" in this life. They are "not valiant in the testimony of Jesus, wherefore, they obtain not the crown of the kingdom" (76:79). That is, they were honorable but their honor is not such that it merits designations of superlative honor such as a crown of kingship.

In contrast, those who accept Christ in this life and are valiant in testimony receive all that the Father has. They are those who by keeping the commandments [to be baptized] . . . might be washed and cleansed from their sins. . . They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things—They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory ...Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God. (D&C 76:55-58)

Now for a few clarifications.

"Salvation" in LDS thought (at least in the Vision) means being saved from God's wrath and delivered from the devil and hell. (See also 2 Ne. 9:10-19). All will be saved at some time in this sense except sons of perdition. Salvation must be distinguished from the LDS view of "exaltation" which corresponds to what Protestants typically mean by "glorification" — to be exalted to and be glorified with the glory that God enjoys and to receive all that he has and is. In this sense, they are "sons of God" (D&C 132:19-20).

Salvation results from confessing Christ as the Son of God, while exaltation results from covenant faithfulness and judgment according to works after one has been redeemed and saved. "Redemption" occurs when one believes in Christ and is delivered from hell. We are redeemed from servitude to the devil (D&C 76:85). Note that "salvation" is not dependent on works and is not a result of judgment by works.

Further, once one has been saved, there is no way to fall from salvation except by becoming a son of perdition. Perhaps because of the Vision, LDS thought seems to focus on works rather than grace. However, the Vision never addresses the issues of grace and how one comes to believe or be accepted into the saving relationship with Christ beyond simply assuming that one is saved and redeemed by bowing the knee and confessing that Jesus is the Christ. The focus of the Vision is on the differing rewards received by those who confess Christ and are saved, for, according to this revelation, no person enters into a kingdom of glory and receives according to his or her works until after he or she has confessed Christ.

Joseph Smith's other revelations similarly did not focus on the initial act of coming to believe in Christ or being saved by grace, but in establishing the kingdom of God on earth by a people unified as the body of Christ. Because Joseph Smith's revelations address those who are already saved, already baptized into the kingdom, we sometimes lose sight of the fact that grace is essential to salvation and that salvation is by grace rather than by works.

The other factor that must be carefully noted is that the terms "faith:" "works:" and "salvation" operate very differently in various communities of discourse and tradition.

"Faith in Christ" in the Vision is synonymous with "the testimony of Christ" (D&C 76:51, 74). One can either be valiant in faith or not valiant. In the Vision, salvation comes from bowing the knee and confessing that Jesus is the Christ. The reward that we receive — or the degree of light that gives life to our bodies in the resurrection — is a matter of being "valiant and honorable" as shown by the works we perform.

Kent L. Ringer has surveyed the theme of judgment in Paul and in the Hebrew scriptures, the Pseudepigrapha, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. He shows that judgment and reward are always by works considered over the course of one's life in all of these sources.<sup>4</sup> A failure to attend to the distinction between salvation by grace and judgment and reward by works has led many to mischaracterize LDS thought as a religion of works rather than grace. We are saved by grace, but we are judged and rewarded according to our works.

Thus, the usual complaint that Latter-day Saints seek to save themselves by their works is a failure to pay attention to what the terms "salvation" and "being saved" mean.

"Salvation," or deliverance from death, hell, and divine wrath, comes through faith in Christ. Redemption from death and hell occurs when we bow to Christ and confess that he is Lord.

Everything that we do after that deals with the reward that we will receive based upon the judgment by works. Thus, complaints that Latter-day Saints believe that one "earns salvation" by going to church, paying tithing, attending the temple, being ordained to the priesthood (for men), going on missions, observing the Word of Wisdom, sustaining the prophet, etc., etc., etc.—have misunderstood and mischaracterized LDS soteriological terminology.<sup>5</sup> All of these "good works" relate to God's gifts to us which work in us to grow toward sanctification rather than initial justification by grace unto salvation. In other words, these Christian works of love relate to the reward or degree of glory that we receive and are not a condition of salvation.

**2006**

**Fr. Stephen Salaris, Father in the Antiochian Orthodox Church**

**"Sneak Previews" of the Heavenly Kingdom**

**The Word Magazine**

Courtesy of the May 2006 issue of The Word magazine of the Antiochian Orthodox Church.

One of my favorite things about going to a movie or renting a movie is the "sneak previews." By giving us a foretaste or foreshadowing of the upcoming movie, the preview allows us to decide whether or not we are going to be interested in the fullness of that motion picture event. Wouldn't it be great if the Orthodox Church offered sneak previews? Wouldn't it be great if we could get just a peek at some of the things in our future, such as the second coming of Christ, the kingdom of Heaven, or, even more scary, the horrors of Hell? The fact is that, during the Divine Liturgies of the Church, we do get a foretaste of all of these things — yes, including Hell. To develop my thesis, I need to present some important data, much like the pieces of a puzzle. At the end, we will put all of the pieces together and we, hopefully, will understand my thesis completely. Let's begin.

First of all, there is a curious statement that is made in the Divine Liturgy that many of us may not be aware of, yet it is absolutely fundamental to our understanding of what is happening in each and every Divine Liturgy — be it St. John Chrysostom's or St. Basil's. In the Anaphora (or consecration prayers) of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, right after we hear, "Take eat, this is My Body ...," and "Drink ye all of this: this is My Blood ...," the priest prays, "Having in remembrance, therefore, this saving commandment and those things that have come to pass for us: the Cross, the grave, the resurrection on the third day, the ascension into heaven, the sitting at the right hand, and the second and glorious coming." The text of St. Basil's Divine Liturgy has a similar statement. Immediately following this, the gifts are elevated and then the epiclesis, or consecration prayer, is recited, during which the Holy Spirit changes the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. Now, let's return to that statement about what we are remembering. Yes, we remember the Cross, the Resurrection, the Ascension and all of those events that happened in the past as recorded in the texts of the New Testament, but how can we remember the second coming of Christ? How

can we possibly remember a future event that has not happened yet? To answer these questions, let us turn to our Bibles for the next puzzle piece.

In chapters 4 and 5 of the book of Revelation, we read St. John's vision of the glory of God and of the Lamb. In this vision, St. John sees the twenty-four elders who fall down in worship before the throne of God. He sees fantastic angelic creatures singing, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come." He sees myriads of angels who say with loud voices, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain," and he hears every creature in heaven and on earth offer honor and glory to the Lamb. Many interpreters of these passages say that this vision was inspired by the Eucharistic Liturgy of the Church at the time of St. John. The bread and wine, then, as today, become the Body and Blood of Christ right there on the Holy Table. Behold the slain Lamb of God that sits upon the heavenly throne — the altar itself. (Take note of the fact that the piece of bread that becomes the Body of Christ is referred to as "the Lamb.") In addition, in the prayer that the priest recites during the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts just before the Lord's prayer, one reads, "... look upon us, Your unworthy servants who stand at this holy altar as at Your cherubic throne, upon which lies Your only-begotten Son and our God, in the dread mysteries spread forth thereon ...." If we read chapter 5 of Revelation we can see the parallels between this prayer and the verses which read, "And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain (...) [a]nd I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and in the sea, and all therein, saying, 'To Him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might for ever and ever.'" Every time we Orthodox Christians celebrate a Divine Liturgy, even a Presanctified Divine Liturgy (where the gifts were previously consecrated during the Liturgy of either Chrysostom or Basil), we are privileged to witness the exact same vision as St. John described. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the slain Lamb of God, in the bread and wine of the Eucharist, manifests Himself in the presence of His people, and God's kingdom is made manifest upon the earth. Thus, we are remembering the second coming because our Divine Liturgies provide a "sneak preview" of what the second coming of Christ will be like when He comes to judge the living and the dead.

Our third puzzle piece also comes from the Holy Scriptures. What are the two greatest commandments? The Old Testament tells us that we are to "... love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut. 6:4) and to "... love your neighbor as yourself ...." (Lev. 19:18). In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ re-affirms this in Matthew 22:36-40, Mark 12:28-31 and Luke 10:25-28, even stating, in the passage from Mark's gospel, that "[t]here is no greater commandment than these." Do we, as Orthodox Christians, follow and live these two greatest commandments? Do we truly love God and do we truly love our neighbor as Christ commands us to? We shall see shortly that how we answer these two simple questions determines what we are experiencing in the Divine Liturgy.

Our last puzzle piece is the Orthodox understanding of hell itself. First of all, let me say that hell is not some "closet" into which God throws bad people on Judgment Day, then abandoning them for all eternity. Secondly, hell is not Hades, despite the bad translations in many of our liturgical texts. Hades, the realm of the dead, where all souls went because of the curse of death brought upon us by the transgression of Adam and Even, has been completely and utterly destroyed by Jesus Christ. That's what Holy Week and Pascha are all about. Through the cross, Jesus descended into Hades and took that place of death, darkness, and separation from God, and destroyed it by filling it with His eternal presence, His Divine Light, and His infinite and eternal Love. Now, with death and Hades spoiled by Christ, we look forward to the resurrection from the dead, when our souls will be reunited with our new and glorious bodies and we will stand before the Light and Love of our Almighty God. Most of us think that if we are in the presence of the Light and Love of God then we must be in Heaven; the same place, however, is also Hell. Love burns. St. Isaac of Ninevah describes Hell, stating:

... I say that even those who are scourged in hell are tormented with the scourgings of love (...) that is, the scourges of those who have become aware that they have sinned against love .... The pain which gnaws the heart as the result of sinning against love is sharper than all other torments that

there are. It is wrong to imagine that the sinners in hell are deprived of the love of God. (...) The power of love works two ways: it torments those who have sinned ... but to those who have observed its duties, love gives delight.

Commenting on this text from St. Isaac, Fr. Thomas Hopko writes:

For those who love the Lord, His Presence will be infinite joy, paradise and eternal life. For those who hate the Lord, the same Presence will be infinite torture, hell and eternal death. (...) According to the saints, the “fire” that will consume sinners at the coming of the Kingdom of God is the same “fire” that will shine with splendor in the saints. (...) Thus it is the Church’s spiritual teaching that God does not punish man by some material fire or physical torment. God simply reveals Himself in the risen Lord Jesus in such a glorious way that no man can fail to behold His glory. It is the presence of God’s splendid glory and love that is the scourge of those who reject its radiant power and light. Man’s eternal destiny — heaven or hell, salvation or damnation — depends solely on his response to this love.

Simply put, Hell is standing in the presence of God’s light and love and forgiveness and not wanting it or being completely unable to comprehend it or partake of it. Nothing burns greater than love that you don’t want!

Putting all of our puzzle pieces together, we arrive at this undeniable conclusion — during every single Eucharistic Liturgy, the Lord Jesus Christ manifests Himself before us as the slain Lamb sitting upon the Holy Table that is both the altar and the throne. In doing so, God provides a “sneak preview” of the second coming and a foretaste of the Kingdom when we will be resurrected from the dead — body and soul — and all will stand in His Divine Presence. Then, Jesus will judge the living and the dead, separate the sheep from the goats, and bestow upon us the kingdom of Heaven or the fires of Hell. To determine where we stand in His judgment, each and every one of us must answer honestly, “Do I really love God?” If we don’t believe in the God of the Scriptures, if we don’t believe in the teachings of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, if we loathe coming to Church services, if we ignore the sacramental life, if we just come to Church because that is what nice people do, or because we think Church is a fashion show or that Church is a linguistic and ethnic preservation society, and if we do not actualize the evangelical and apostolic work of the Gospel that Jesus Himself committed us to do, then the answer is, “No, I do not love God.” Then ask, “Do I really love my neighbor as myself?” If we loathe anyone for any reason, if we are unforgiving towards someone for whatever reason, if we can’t stand the other person sitting two pews behind us, or if we neglect the poor, the hungry, the naked, the thirsty, the sick, those in prison, and all of those whom Jesus tells us to love — if we love Him — then the answer is “No, I do not love my neighbor.” If we answer “no” to either or both of these questions, then welcome to Hell! With all its splendor! Feel the fire of the presence of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the angels, the saints, icons, incense, liturgy, that bishop, that priest, the woman who changed your grandmother’s baklava recipe last year at the annual festival, the visitor who sat in your pew, our parents, our relatives, and all of our “friends.” All are gathered together under one roof, there is nowhere to go for all eternity, and the door is locked from the inside with the key of our attitude and our conscience. Oh, the weeping and gnashing of teeth!

On the other hand, if we truly love God then we must love Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Church and Her teachings, the Liturgies and other worship services, and the Sacramental life of the Church. If we love our neighbor then we must seek humility, charity, and forgiveness amongst ourselves and with all humanity and creation, and seek to preach, teach, and spread that love of neighbor via the evangelical and apostolic work of the Church, truly seeking to bring all mankind to the love of God and the knowledge of Christ. If we do this with all our heart, all our soul, and with all our might, then truly wherever and whenever we gather together as a Church it is a foretaste of heaven. Here, the door is always opened so that God’s love can be poured out on all creation and so that all of creation may enter herein. Look around. Do we see an “icon” of heaven or of hell? It’s up to each and every one of us to make the decision for ourselves. Is this where we want to be for

eternity? I hope so. If not, then let us seek during this Lenten season, and at all times, to repent of those things which keep us from the love of God and the love of neighbor, so that we can know in our hearts that our Churches are truly Heaven on Earth and a foretaste of the eternal joy of all the saints. To Jesus Christ, our Lord and God and Savior, who established His Holy Church on this earth to save us and to provide us with the knowledge of the Kingdom to come, to Him we send up glory, honor, and worship, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

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**Marc A. Schindler, Latter-day Saint Scholar**

**Heaven and Hell**

**FAIRlds Website**

McKeever and Johnson state that the LDS believe that "a person is destined for one of six places after death," by which they mean Perdition, or Outer Darkness, the Telestial Kingdom, the Terrestrial Kingdom, and the three levels of the Celestial Kingdom. By failing at the outset to make the critical distinction that these destinies are not determined until after the Judgment, not just after death, they sow the first seeds of confusion which permeate this chapter.

On page 172 McKeever and Johnson make the first error of "preaching to the choir" in the chapter, when they write that the key to understanding LDS soteriology is to "examine the biblical proof texts the Latter-day Saints use...to support their views." Anyone who understands the Restored Gospel will know that we do not base our doctrine upon proof texts<sup>1</sup> from the Bible (or anywhere else, for that matter), but upon latter-day revelation. Since we do not believe our teachings contradict the Bible, it is quite normal (even normative) that we would preach from the scriptures, but they are the reflection of our doctrine, not its source—a confusion all too easy for a Biblicist to make, for whom the relationship between doctrine and scripture goes exactly the other way around.

Heaven, salvation & Exaltation

The first alleged "proof text" examined by McKeever and Johnson is 1 Corinthians 15:40, "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial...". They say that in light of verse 41, where Paul makes the comparison between the light of the sun, the moon and the stars as a simile for the difference in glories between the three kingdoms, that "many scholars believe that Paul was referring to heavenly bodies such as the moon, sun, and stars." Well, yes—that is the whole point of a simile. If I say my true love's eyes are like almonds, I am not writing an agronomy treatise, but, yes, I am referring to almonds. Paul's analogy works like this: "There are A, B, and C...so too is the resurrection of the dead (verse 42)"—a classic simile. To misunderstand such a fundamental literary feature as a simile does not bode well for McKeever and Johnson's understanding of the even more sophisticated literary forms that Paul often employs.

While McKeever and Johnson don't mention the literature-deprived scholars they refer to by name, it so happens that there is plenty of scholarly support for a resurrection of varying degrees of glory. Orr and Walther even title the section of their commentary on this section "Analogies," and write,

Like Immanuel Kant, Paul transfers his vision from the earth to the sky and points out that the myriad bodies there differ from each other and from the earth. Presumably he has in mind that the heavenly bodies shine with their own light while the earthly ones have only reflected light.<sup>2</sup> He gives no further indication of his astronomical thought, and obviously his data are critically limited. Since his express purpose is only to show that many possibilities are open in the realm of reality, his analogy provides a valid illustration.<sup>3</sup>

Likewise Thiselton, pointing out a switch in language which will resonate with Latter-day Saints' understanding of the difference between "body" in a purely physical sense (Greek *sarx*) and "soul" in the sense of body and spirit (Greek *sóma*):



The shift from [sarx; physical body] (v. 39) to [soma; soul] (v. 40) is marked by the introduction of [doxa; glory or splendour] and the allusion to bodies that are super-earthly. Whereas flesh had emphasized the diversity of the 'stuff' of creation, body now calls attention to diversities of form and character. In Calvin's words, the comparison of v. 39 serve the same purpose as those of vv. 37-38 but add the implication that 'whatever diversity we perceive in any particular kind (in quoqua specie) is a sort of foreshadowing of the resurrection....' Chrysostom, Theodoret, Ambrosiaster, and Augustine construe vv. 39 and 40 as clearly anticipating the distinctions supposedly implied by v. 41b, i.e., differences in 'honor' even between individual believers at the resurrection, but this goes beyond the explicit sense of these verses. Tertullian, too, sees Paul's argument here (vv. 39-40) as a decisive logical repudiation of Marcion's wish to substitute a notion of the soul's immortality for bodily resurrection: 'Does he not guarantee that the resurrection shall be accomplished by that God from whom proceed all the examples,' i.e., of diversity within creation and of transformation. Tertullian rightly places the emphasis upon God and God's [sic] resourcefulness as Creator as the ground of this faith.<sup>4</sup>

Incidentally, Thiselton goes on to consider the argument that McKeever and Johnson apparently refer to, that Paul is referring simply to the fact that the resurrected will dwell with God in the heavenly regions (in a cosmological sense), but dismiss it on the grounds that the word Paul uses to translate "body" when he refers to resurrected bodies-and his distinction is clear and consistent-is "soma," a word not applicable to a mere physical body like a planet or star:

However, some interpreters object that Paul would not use [sóma] of an impersonal entity, and that to apply this to astronomical 'bodies' either imports a modern meaning of [sóma] or presupposes a view of astral bodies as quasi-personal, as reflected in some non-Christian first-century religions. Meyer and Findlay, among others, argue this forcefully, insisting that Paul alludes to bodies of angels in v. 40, appealing to supposed parallels in Matt 22:10 and Luke 20:36.<sup>5</sup>

Thus does this eminent Protestant scholar consign McKeever and Johnson's defense to the scrap heap of heresy, even within Protestantism's definition of heresy.

This leaves one possible gap, which, mind you, McKeever and Johnson don't even try to exploit, but for the sake of completeness, and also because the reference deals with their weak parenthetical attempt to link "terrestrial bodies" to the "flesh of men, beasts, fishes, and birds," we'll consider it here. This whole passage in 1 Corinthians 15 talks about the resurrection, specifically, not necessarily about Heaven, per se. However, Paul is talking about the future in a general, soteriological sense (the process of salvation as a whole), and is using the resurrection as the première, or epitome for the whole post-earthly experience. Thiselton explains that Paul's sermon is not to be taken in a strictly time-related locative way (located at a specific point in time):

On the other hand, the three pairs of contrasts-decay and its absence or reversal, humiliation and splendor, and an ordinary human body and a body constituted by the Spirit-give solid ground for conceiving of the postresurrection made of life as a purposive and dynamic crescendo of life, since the living God who acts purposively decrees this fitting mode, rather than envisaging some static ending in which the raised body is forever trapped, as if in the last 'frozen' frame of a film or movie. In the biblical writings the Spirit is closely associated with ongoing vitality, which Paul takes up in v. 45b...

The one necessary exegetical caveat is to note that realm of the Spirit (i.e., [pneumatikon; "spirit-directed"]) does not mean primarily the nonphysical realm (although it certainly includes this), but what befits the transformation of character or pattern of existence effected by the Holy Spirit. Here the biological analogies of transforming a bare seed or grain into fruit, flower, or harvest may take on an aesthetic dimension for illustrative purposes to underline (a) contrast; (b) continuity of identity; and (c) full and radical transformation of form and character.<sup>6</sup>

McKeever and Johnson then say, "One thing for sure, there is no mention of 'bodies telectial.'" No, not in so many words, but Paul's simile is quite clearly tripartite, using the symbolism of the sun, the earth and the stars, so "telectial" (meaning "stellar," or "of stars") is hardly out of harmony with the verse. Because of their Biblicist background, they accuse Joseph Smith of a rather barefaced attempt to "bolster his erroneous doctrine" by inserting the word into the Joseph Smith Translation. However, it's well known that people in the nineteenth century often made what are technically called paraphrases (Thomas Jefferson made one of the New Testament which reflected his proto-Unitarian beliefs, for instance). A paraphrase is not a translation in the secular sense of looking at texts in other languages and then redacting (editing and recombining) the various texts and rendering the resultant consensus in the target language, and this latter, modern sense of translation has never been claimed by Latter-day Saints on behalf of the Joseph Smith Translation-it is, in fact, not canonical for precisely that reason (that is, his paraphrase as a study project was interrupted by his martyrdom so is incomplete at best). In any case, the term fits doctrinally and in the sense of the language Paul uses here, and its insertion would be problematic only for Biblicists (in other words, this is yet another error of "preaching to the choir").

The LDS Concept of Heaven is Biblical

The next "proof text" McKeever and Johnson consider is 2 Corinthians 12:2-4: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such a one caught up to the third heaven..."

They start off in their usual way, with the circular assumption that we are basing our doctrines upon passages like this, rather than teaching doctrine from the scriptures, which is not quite the same thing.. They then skim lightly over the scholarly tradition of Jews in a rather evasive way with the claim:

Using these passages to validate the idea of three kingdoms making up heaven ignores the Jewish tradition Paul would have known. According to that tradition, paradise was the abode of God, the place of eternal joy for God's people. However, Jewish custom never viewed a first or second heaven as alternative eternal destinations. Rather, these referred to the atmospheric heaven (the sky) and the galactic heaven (the universe).<sup>7</sup>

If this sounds remarkably, even anachronistically modern, it's because it is. It turns out not to be Jewish at all: their reference is to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment-era Protestant commentator Matthew Henry, who writes:

It was certainly a very extraordinary honour done him: in some sense he was caught up into the third heaven, the heaven of the blessed, above the aerial heaven, in which the fowls fly, above the starry heaven, which is adorned with those glorious orbs: it was into the third heaven, where God most eminently manifests His glory.<sup>8</sup>

Such a glaring error leads me to believe that perhaps they don't think people will check their footnotes-another sign of the "down-market" audience for which their book seems to be intended.

Even before we examine the Jewish custom that Paul actually would have been exposed to (we can, I trust, excuse Paul for not being exposed to Matthew Henry's commentary), let me point out that even Protestant views about what the "third heaven" is are all over the theological map. (McKeever and Johnson here commit yet another act of co-opting, but this time at the expense of other Protestants.) According to Ronald R. Day, of "Restoration Light,"<sup>9</sup> the first world and heaven were the pre-Flood universe, the second world and heaven are the ones we live in now, and the third world and heaven are yet to come after Christ's second coming.<sup>10</sup>

While it is true that many conservative Protestant groups accept this modern, anachronistic view of Matthew Henry's of an atmospheric heaven, a stellar heaven, and a divine Heaven, not all Protestants believe this is the only possible interpretation. A question-and-answer session on the Website of a relatively liberal non-denominational church known as The Rock shows that many Protestants are acquainted with the genuinely ancient traditions, as given in pseudepigraphal works such as the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Testament of Levi, to the effect that there was a kind of hierarchy of spiritual heavens.<sup>11</sup> The New Testament pseudepigraphal work The Apocalypse of Paul also has this tradition. (See below for specific quotations.)

Glass admits that whereas "Some of the noncanonical writings give detailed descriptions of multiple heavens, up to seven more more [,] Paul was not necessarily thinking of these when he wrote of his mystical transport into the third Heaven (2 Cor. 12.2); an alternate explanation is that the expression indicates a high degree of spiritual exaltation."<sup>12</sup> So we can take our pick: either ancient Jews believed in a hierarchical series of heavens, and a visionary trip through them was a common theme of Jewish (and even Christian) apocalyptic writings, or Paul was using the "third heaven" as the epitome of the highest degree of exaltation—exactly as Latter-day Saints would put it.

In any case, regarding the atmospheric model espoused by Matthew Henry, while some Greeks believed in a variant of this (such as Pythagoras and others), ancient Jews believed no such thing. Did the modern, anachronistic Biblicist view come from a neo-Hellenistic (early post-Christian era Greek philosophies) source, as so much of modern creedal Christian doctrines have, or is this just a coincidence? That's a subject for further study, and outside the scope of this review.

History of the Belief in a Three-part Heaven

Let's take a look at what Jews and early Christians really believed. Before we start, let's point out that simply mining the Church Fathers and pseudepigrapha for references that defend one's point of view is akin to proof-texting and in and of itself, doesn't prove anything. However, even finding one reference in the patristic and pseudepigraphal writings is sufficient to destroy an "argument from absence". That is, if McKeever and Johnson say, in effect, "Jews and early Christians never believed x" and we succeed in finding even one solitary reference to x then we have proven their assertion wrong. Proving that it was a common or even normative (authoritative or orthodox) belief is something else altogether, but fortunately McKeever and Johnson's style of criticism tends to lean towards the absolute: things are either all or nothing. And this kind of position is easy to demolish.

Having said that, it so happens that there is an embarrassment of riches when it comes to sources contemporary with or within a few centuries of Paul, sources that showed consistently what ancient Christians and Jews believed in-enough, as it happens, to establish not just an objection to an argument from absence, but an actual consensus. And that consensus is exactly the opposite of what McKeever and Johnson claim. The following sections examine only a sample of quotes both from modern commentaries and ancient sources to show that the normative belief of early post-Apostolic Christianity and contemporary Judaism was in a multi-tiered Heaven in the LDS sense of different mansions corresponding with the achievement of different levels of earthly valour.

Modern Christian Scholarly Commentary: The Anchor Bible

Orr and Walther have this commentary on the term "third heaven":

The third heaven. The original text (=a) of T Levi [Testament of Levi] 2:7-10; 3:1-4 seems to have conceived of the heavenly spheres as three in number, in the third of which Levi found himself standing in the presence of the Lord and his glory. Later, however, this material was re-worked to refer to a set of four additional heavens, conforming the narrative to the common Jewish and Christian tradition about seven heavens, as in Apoc Mos [Apocalypse of Moses] 35:2; 2 Enoch 3-20; b. Hag [Babylonian Talmud tractate of Hagiga];

Ascension of Isaiah; Apoc Paul [Apocalypse of Paul] 29, etc...The otherworldly journey is a common feature in ancient apocalyptic literature.<sup>13</sup>

Modern Christian Commentary: Daniélou (Roman Catholic)

The LDS commentator Seiach<sup>14</sup> quotes,

Jean Daniélou [a Roman Catholic theologian and cardinal] has recently shown that contemporary Jews had further developed this three-step attainment of God's glory into a system of three heavens: the heaven of God, the heaven of stars, and the heaven of meteors.<sup>15</sup> ....

That this three-tiered heavenly world was also recognized by the original Christians is evidenced by the Savior's mysterious saying that the 'seed of the Kingdom' (i.e. the saved) would bring forth fruit 'some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold' (Mt. 13:8, 23). That this was also an esoteric doctrine, is suggested by the fact that it was introduced by the usual covert signal: 'Who hath ears, let him hear' (Mt. 13:9). As might be expected, 'orthodoxy' soon forgot it, either expanding the three heavens to seven (see below), or reducing them to a single place reserved for 'all' who are 'saved by grace,' without further effort on their part.

Nevertheless, for several centuries, the original Church continued to speak of a graduated system of heavens and rewards, just as the Saviour had taught (Mt. 16:27). The very early Church Father, Papias, for example, understood that the Saviour's three degrees of 'fruitfulness' (Mt. 13:8, 23) corresponded to the Pauline three 'heavens' or 'glories' (1 Cor. 15:41). According to him (as recorded in the first century account of Polycarp),<sup>16</sup> the 'Elders' agreed that 'Those who are deemed worthy of an abode in Heaven shall go there, others shall enjoy the delights of Paradise, and others shall possess the splendor of the City.<sup>17</sup> For everywhere the Saviour will be seen, according as they shall be worthy who see him. But that there is this distinction between the habitation of those who produce an hundredfold, and that of those who produce sixtyfold, and that of those who produce thirtyfold; for the first will be taken up into Heaven; the second class will dwell in Paradise, and the last will inhabit the City; and that on this account the Lord said, 'In my house are many mansions,' for all things belong to God, who supplies all with a suitable dwelling place, even as his word says, that a share is given to all by the Father, according as each is or shall be worthy (Relics of the Elders, 5).

By the 'Elders' Papias meant the Primitive Community, including the Apostles, whose oral traditions he had diligently preserved as he himself heard them. 'If anyone chanced to be a fellow of the Elders,' he wrote, 'I would enquire as to their discourse, what Andrew, or what Peter said, or what Philip, or what Thomas or James or what John or what Matthew or any other of the Lord's disciples...For I did not think that things out of books could profit me so much as the utterances of a voice which liveth and abideth.'<sup>18</sup>

Modern Christian Commentary: Disley (Mainstream Protestant)

Protestant theologian Emma Disley cites many of the early Reformers and their first followers as teaching the concept of differing degrees of glory. She points out at the outset that "the writings of the Father were weightily disposed towards the concept of degrees of reward and punishment" and refers to Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Jerome, and Pope Gregory the Great. She concludes her article:

"For the majority of Protestant writers who addressed the issue, belief in degrees of reward in heaven thus did not conflict with the Protestant insight of justification freely attained through the merits of Christ, since rewards resulted naturally or automatically from good works, which were part of the elect's sanctification."<sup>19</sup>

Modern Christian Commentary: Daley (Catholic)

Brian E. Daley, a Jesuit scholar, cites the following Church Fathers as teaching varying degrees of glory: Irenaeus, Cyprian, Ambrose, and some lesser-known fathers: Macarius, Quodvultdeus (died 453) Bishop of Carthage, and friend of Augustine; Severus, Bishop of Antioch (died 538); and Caesarius, Bishop of Arles.<sup>20</sup>

Modern Christian Commentary: Ryk (Eastern Orthodox)

Twenty-five years ago Marta Ryk wrote an article on deification in Eastern orthodoxy in which she pointed out that there are "diverse degrees of deification."<sup>21</sup>

Modern Jewish Commentary: Dr. Eliezer Lorne Segal (Scholarly Orthodox)

Further evidence of Jewish traditions of a hierarchy of heavens (as opposed to some proto-astronomical interpretation) can be found in an interesting Website, "The Seventh Heaven," by Dr. Eliezer Lorne Segal, who teaches a number of senior-level courses in Judaism in the Religious Studies Department of the University of Calgary (including RS 365 - Medieval Judaism; RS 463 - Jewish Mysticism; RS 465 - Topics in Rabbinic Judaism, RS 201 - World Religions: Western; RS 361 - Second Temple Judaism; RS 363 - Judaism in the Modern World; and RS 367 - Judaism of the Talmud and Midrash [commentaries by Rabbis on the Talmud]).

In his article "The Seventh Heaven"<sup>22</sup> he takes issue with the answer given to a phone-in listener on the local CBC23 Radio One morning program feature called "Good Question." This particular question, about where the term "seventh heaven" comes from, elicited the response that the term comes from "the popular Muslim conception of paradise, which is divided into several celestial levels, awarded according to the degree of righteousness achieved during one's mortal lifetime." Now that, in and of itself, is interesting, but Prof. Segal says it actually predates the rise of Islam by "many centuries" and has "deep roots in Jewish tradition."

Segal says that the Talmudic rabbis were presumably influenced by the fact that the Hebrew word for "heavens" or "sky" appears only in a plural form, shamayim, implying a multiplicity of heavens. The number seven has special significance in Biblical writings, and Jewish sages, Segal reports, "had no trouble finding distinct functions for each of the seven levels." While several had purely "astronomical" functions, the others had distinctly religious functions: "According to their imagery these heavens are actually palaces-'heikhalot'-and the task of the mystic is to ascend as high as he can until he reaches the highest level, where he will be vouchsafed a peek at the throne of God." Thus we have a direct connection with the Enochian tradition of a mystical ascent through the spiritual realms to the Throne of God, and also to the terminology "palaces" or, as the KJV puts it, "mansions."

Modern Jewish Commentary: Tracey Richards (Popular Orthodox)

The Talmud states that all Israel has a share in the Olam Ha-Ba<sup>24</sup>. However, not all "shares" are equal. A particularly righteous person will have a greater share in the Olam Ha-Ba than the average person. In addition, a person can lose his share through wicked actions. There are many statements in the Talmud that a particular mitzvah will guarantee a person a place in the Olam Ha-Ba, or that a particular sin will lose a person's share in the Olam Ha-Ba, but these are generally regarded as hyperbole, excessive expressions of approval or disapproval.

Some people look at these teachings and deduce that Jews try to "earn our way into Heaven" by performing the mitzvot [the covenant to obey the commandments]. This is a gross mischaracterization of our religion. It is important to remember that unlike some religions, Judaism is not focused on the question of how to get into heaven. Judaism is focused on life and how to live it. Non-Jews frequently ask me, "do you really think you're going to go to Hell if you don't do such-and-such?" It always catches me a bit off balance, because the question of where I am going after death simply doesn't enter into the equation when I think about the mitzvot. We perform the mitzvot because it is our privilege and our sacred obligation to do so. We perform them out of a sense of love and duty, not out of a desire to get something in return. In fact, one of the first bits of ethical advice in Pirkei Avot (a book of the Mishnah [part of the Talmud]) is: "Be not like servants who serve their master for the sake of receiving a reward; instead, be like servants who serve their master not for the sake of receiving a reward, and let the awe of Heaven [meaning G-d, not the afterlife] be upon you."

Nevertheless, we definitely believe that your place in the Olam Ha-Ba is determined by a merit system based on your actions, not by who you are or what religion you profess. In addition, we definitely believe that humanity is capable of being considered righteous in G-d's<sup>25</sup> eyes, or at least good enough to merit paradise after a suitable period of purification.<sup>26</sup>

Modern Judaism: Reb Zalman Schachter Shalomi (Conservative Mystical)

When a soul is ready to enter Gan Eden (Paradise, literally the Garden of Eden), it must first be immersed in the River of Light, created from the perspiration that flows from the heavenly hosts as they fervently sing glory to the Highest. This immersion is to empty the soul of any lingering earth images so that it may, without further illusion, see heaven for what it really is.

First the soul enters the lower Gan Eden, which is a paradise of emotional bliss. While on earth most persons are unable to experience more than one dominant emotion at a time. However, the bliss of the souls in the lower Gan Eden is likened to a majestic chord of benign emotions, which the soul feels towards God and towards other souls. In the Hasidic view, heaven is organized into societies. Those souls who share mutual interests are drawn together so they can serve His Blessed Name according to their own specialty and individuality. Each heavenly society is taught by its own rabbi and led to further celestial attainments. Thus, the lower Gan Eden is the heaven of emotional fervor.

Before a soul is raised from the lower to the higher Gan Eden, it must again immerse itself in the River of Light so that it will forget and forsake the furor of the emotions. for the even greater delights of knowing God through understanding. The serving of God with insight through the study of Torah is itself a reward. The societies of the upper Gan Eden are organized into yeshivot (schools! in which a blissful understanding of the divine mind is attained. Each midnight, the Holy One, blessed be He. Himself appears and enters Gan Eden to delight in the sharing of His blessed wisdom with the righteous who have gained the upper Gan Eden."<sup>27</sup>

Jewish Commentary: Lurian Kabbalism (Mediaeval Mysticism)

Karen Armstrong refers to the Lurian Kabbalah tradition of the 16th century mystic Saint Teresa of Avila:

Like John of the Cross, Teresa was a modernizer and a mystic of genius, yet had she remained within Judaism <sup>28</sup> she would not have had the opportunity to develop this gift, since only men were allowed to practice the kabbalah. Yet, interestingly, her spirituality remained Jewish. In *The Interior Castle*, she charts the soul's journey through seven celestial halls until it reaches God, a scheme which bears a marked resemblance to the Throne Mysticism that flourished in the Jewish world from the first to the twelfth centuries CE. Teresa was a devout and loyal Catholic, but she still prayed like a Jew and taught her nuns to do the same.<sup>29</sup>

This tradition of a hierarchy of celestial "halls" (or mansions?) goes back even further.  
Ante-Nicene<sup>30</sup> Church Fathers: Irenaeus

Irenaeus directly contradicts McKeever and Johnson's theory of "earth/astronomical" heavens and then refers explicitly to the thirty/sixty/hundredfold imagery in terms of a hierarchy of Heaven:

If, then, the Lord observed the law of the dead, that He might become the first-begotten from the dead, and tarried until the third day "in the lower parts of the earth;" then afterwards rising in the flesh, so that He even showed the print of the nails to His disciples, He thus ascended to the Father; [if all these things occurred, I say], how must these men not be put to confusion, who allege that "the lower parts" refer to this world of ours, but that their tuner man, leaving the body here, ascends into the super-celestial place? For as the Lord "went away in the midst of the shadow of death," where the souls of the dead were, yet afterwards arose in the body, and after the resurrection was taken up [into heaven], it is manifest that the souls of His disciples

also, upon whose account the Lord underwent these things, shall go away into the invisible place allotted to them by God, and there remain until the resurrection, awaiting that event; then receiving their bodies, and rising in their entirety, that is bodily, just as the Lord arose, they shall come thus into the presence of God.<sup>31</sup>

He goes on to say about the degrees of glory:

[They {the presbyters} say, moreover], that there is this distinction between the habitation of those who produce an hundred-fold, and that of those who produce sixty-fold, and that of those who produce thirty-fold: for the first will be taken up into the heavens, the second will dwell in paradise, the last will inhabit the city; and that was on this account the Lord declared, "In My Father's house are many mansions." For all things belong to God, who supplies all with a suitable dwelling-place; even as His Word says, that a share is allotted to all by the Father, according as each person is or shall be worthy. And this is the couch on which the guests shall recline, having been invited to the wedding. The presbyters, the disciples of the apostles, affirm that this is the gradation and arrangement of those who are saved.<sup>32</sup>

Ante-Nicene Church Fathers: Clement of Alexandria

Chapter XIII.-Degrees of Glory in Heaven Corresponding with the Dignities of the Church Below.

For these taken up in the clouds, the apostle writes, will first minister [as deacons], then be classed in the presbyterate, by promotion in glory (for glory differs from glory) till they grow into "a perfect man."<sup>33</sup>

One of the chapters of the Stromata is even entitled "Degrees of Glory in Heaven." In this chapter, he writes,

Chapter XIV.-Degrees of Glory in Heaven.

Conformably, therefore, there are various abodes, according to the worth of those who have believed. To the point Solomon says, "For there shall be given to him the choice grace of faith, and a more pleasant lot in the temple of the Lord." For the comparative shows that there are lower parts in the temple of God, which is the whole Church. And the superlative remains to be conceived, where the Lord is. These chosen abodes, which are three, are indicated by the numbers in the Gospel-the thirty, the sixty, the hundred.<sup>34</sup>

Ante-Nicene Church Fathers: Origen

And some men are connected with the Father, being part of Him, and next to these, those whom our argument now brings into clearer light, those who have come to the Saviour and take their stand entirely in Him. And third are those of whom we spoke before, who reckon the sun and the moon and the stars to be gods, and take their stand by them. And in the fourth and last place those who submit to soulless and dead idols.<sup>35</sup>

Compare this with modern LDS scripture: "These are they who receive of His glory, but not of his fulness. These are they who receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fulness of the Father."<sup>36</sup>

Pseudepigrapha: 2 Enoch

Enoch is a book that was held in high regard in the early Church, being quoted by Jude, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Apocalypse of Peter, and many Church Fathers, including Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria. We don't know which, if any, of the three major textual traditions we have today is the one that Jude, for instance, would have known (Ethiopic, Slavonic and Hebrew, referred to respectively as 1 Enoch, 2 Enoch and 3 Enoch), but regardless, this pseudepigraphal work is a genuinely ancient tradition. In 2 Enoch, a first century AD work that would have been unknown to Joseph Smith, in Chapters 6 through 20, Enoch is taken on a tour of the heavens.

The First Heaven was called the "stellar order" (in LDS terminology, the "Telestial Kingdom"). In Chapter 7 he travels to the Second Heaven, where he gazes down upon those who "turned away from the Lord, who did not obey the Lord's commandments, but of their own will plotted together and turned away with their prince and with those who are under restraint in the fifth heaven." In Chapter 8 he goes to the Third Heaven where he gazed down upon Paradise, where the tree of life is located. Although the imagery is confusing, there appears to be a "northern" portion that is a frightful and dark place (is this paradise and the spirit prison?). In Chapter 11 he goes to the Fourth Heaven where the moon and the sun have their orbits, and which is filled with wondrous beasts. The emphasis isn't so much on the astronomical bodies as upon the order and the timing of the universe in which we reside. Now, this does appear to be an astronomy and horological treatise of some strange, mystical kind, but it all relates to the Earth. (Could this be a reference, then, to the Terrestrial Kingdom?)

In Chapter 18 we accompany Enoch to the Fifth Heaven, which is filled with a strange contingent of "soldiers" and princes known as the Grigori. The sense is one of disappointment, of a potential not quite achieved somehow-not much detail is given (could this be the lowest level of the Celestial Kingdom?) The next chapter brings us to the Sixth Heaven where the leaders of the angels and of celestial speech and life preside. The keys of life are in their hands (the ministering angels of the second level of the Celestial Kingdom?).

Finally, in Chapter 20 we read Enoch's vision of the Seventh and highest Heaven. Here is the throne of God Himself, surrounded by cherubim and seraphim. Enoch's Virgilian guides desert him-they may not enter, and Enoch is left by himself, terrified at the sight. He is comforted by the archangel Gabriel who tells him to present himself to the Lord.

2 Enoch exists in two recensions (families of manuscripts), the "A" or shorter recension and the "J" or longer recension. In a brief flurry of verses in Chapter 20, after mention of the Seventh Heaven, some astrological references are given and given the names of the Eighth through the Tenth Heavens are given to these, but this exists only in the "J" recension. At present it's hotly debated as to which recension is older, but it has been argued that "J" is a later expansion of "A", which might account for the brief and post-first-century AD additions of the Eighth through Tenth heavens. The point isn't to speculate as to how 2 Enoch can be made to fit into the Restored Gospel as a textual defense-that would be the Biblicist approach. Rather it is to show that there is ample precedent for LDS beliefs in the ancient world, documented in texts that would have been unavailable to Joseph Smith, and thereby refuting the claim that the Restored Gospel can't be the original Christianity. If we can show plausible precedent, then we do not have to prove authenticity, but we do disprove our critics' claims of impossibility. Possibility is not proof of existence, but it is disproof of non-existence.<sup>37</sup>

Pseudepigrapha: Testament of Levi

Listen, therefore, concerning the heavens which have been shown to you. The lowest is dark for this reason: It sees all the injustices of humankind and contains fire, snow, and ice, ready for the day determined by God's righteous judgment. In it are all the spirits of those dispatched to achieve the punishment of mankind. In the second are the armies arrayed for the day of judgment to work vengeance on the spirits of error and of Beliar. Above them are the Holy Ones. In the uppermost heaven of all dwells the Great Glory in the Holy of Holies superior to all holiness. There with him are the archangels, who serve and offer propitiatory sacrifices to the Lord in behalf of all the sins of ignorance of the righteous ones.. They present to the Lord a pleasing odour, a rational and bloodless oblation. In the heaven below them are the messengers who carry the responses to the angels of the Lord's presence.<sup>38</sup>

New Testament Pseudepigrapha: The Apocalypse of Paul

The Apocalypse of Paul, a Coptic work found in the Nag Hammadi Library<sup>39</sup>, is typical of Jewish and early Christian apocalyptic writings that feature a tour of the heavens. The earliest versions seem to have only



three; later texts, under Gnostic influence, elaborated this to seven and even ten. Here is MacRae and Murdock's introduction:

The first of the series of four apocalypses in Codex V, the Apocalypse of Paul, describes the ascent of Paul through the heavens. Though other ancient works of the same or similar name are known, the Coptic Apocalypse of Paul seems quite unique in its focus upon Paul's ascent through the fourth to the tenth heavens [as opposed to just three heavens -- MS]. The precise circumstances surrounding the composition of the document remain uncertain. Yet the polemic against the apocalyptic "old man" in the seventh heaven may indicate that the document comes from a Gnostic group with an anti-Jewish tendency. Furthermore, the portrait of Paul as one exalted above his fellow apostles resembles the portrayal of Paul in the Gnosticism, and especially the Valentinianism, of the second century C.E.

The Apocalypse of Paul opens with an epiphany scene: a little child, probably the risen Christ, encounters Paul on the mountain, provides a revelation, and guides Paul to the Jerusalem above. Clearly this scene with the heavenly child provides an interpretation of Galatians 1:11-17 and 2:1-2. Of course, the basis for the entire ascent narrative is to be found in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4. As Paul ascends through the heavens, he witnesses, in the fourth and fifth heavens, a scene of the judgment and punishment of souls, a scene which is reminiscent of similar pictures in Jewish apocalyptic literature but which also illustrates popular syncretism. Paul's heavenly journey seems to rely upon Jewish apocalyptic tradition, but the Gnostic character of the present ascent narrative is obvious. Finally Paul reaches the tenth heaven where, transformed, he greets his fellow spirits.<sup>40</sup>

Pseudepigrapha: Vision of Ezra

It seems that, in general, one reason Biblicists have such trouble accepting the clear references to different rewards after this life is that they are hampered by post-Biblical notions which came into vogue during the Reformation; especially the idea of salvation by grace alone (*sola gratia*). Latter-day Saints accept that salvation in the sense of all of us receiving some level of glory (with the exception of a presumably small number of "Sons of Perdition" who actively fight the atonement-whatever that may mean), but because Biblicists have lost the doctrine of exaltation and theosis/deification, they assume these doctrines of levels of glory are wrong. And in any case, they reject the notion of works as being a prerequisite for which level of glory one is to receive—they have lost the original doctrine, especially under the influence of fifteenth-through eighteenth-century Protestant Reformers.

But we know that not everything that Jesus taught is contained in the New Testament—it explicitly says this in two places, one of which in particular has some interesting significance in light of documents that have come to light since Joseph Smith's day.

The first passage is at the end of the Gospel of John: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen."<sup>41</sup>

That should be clear enough to Biblicism, but the second, even more significant verse is also towards the end of John: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."<sup>42</sup> In other words, John (and presumably his fellow-evangelists) wrote their books to give the basic knowledge proselytes (investigators and new members) would need to know in order to come to a belief in Christ, and excluded that which might distract from a proselyte's education. But there was more to Christian doctrine, "signs" not to be revealed publicly.

Was this something unique to John, or is it found elsewhere in early Christian thought?

We've already discussed the common theme of touring up through the heavens until one finally reaches the highest level of the Celestial Kingdom, a theme that runs through the ancient non-canonical works called the Pseudepigrapha, and Church Fathers. Latter-day Saints perform a dramatic (liturgical, or participatory and symbolic) form of this every time they go through the endowment ceremony, so temple worship fits well into ancient tradition. This isn't the place to go into the details of temple worship, but the point is that not all doctrine is to be found in the gospels and epistles of the New Testament. The canonical books of the New Testament (the books which ended up becoming part of the modern-day New Testament) suffer from two limitations: a) they happen to be what survived; we know that many other writings did not survive; and b) they were directed by and large to new members and proselytes, so they deliberately avoided deeper doctrines.

Now the concept of the necessity of works is a clear theme in the New Testament, despite the best efforts of Biblicists to ignore or rationalize it, but it so happens that some of the esoteric doctrine that seems to have been revealed in these visionary tours of the heavens was the doctrine of exaltation, wherein more than mere belief is required-the building up of the Kingdom of God (works) is also a requirement over and above universal grace in order to gain a higher degree of glory.

For instance, the second- or third-century pseudepigraphal work, "Vision of Ezra," which was traditionally considered an Old Testament pseudepigraphum, but which scholars now believe is actually of Christian provenance, has the Lord saying the following to Ezra when Ezra is finally admitted into His presence:

And after he saw this, he was lifted up into heaven, and he came to a multitude of angels, and they said to him, 'pray to the Lord for the sinners.' And they put him down within the sight of the Lord. And he said, 'Lord, have mercy on the sinners!' And the Lord said, 'Ezra, let them receive according to their works.' And Ezra said, 'Lord, you have shown more clemency to the animals, which eat the grass and have not returned you praise, than to us; they die and have no sin; however, you torture us, living and dead.' And the Lord said, 'In my image I have formed man and I have commanded that they may not sin and they sinned; therefore they are in torment. And the elect are those who go into eternal rest on account of confession, penitence, and largesse in almsgiving.' And Ezra said, 'Lord, what do the just do in order that they may not enter in judgment?' And the Lord said to him, '(Just as) the servant who performed well for his master will receive liberty, so too (will) the just in the kingdom of heaven.' Amen.<sup>43</sup>

Hell: Afterworld Versus a Place of Punishment

Leaving behind the well-attested ancient belief in a tripartite heaven, let's see if McKeever and Johnson manage to mangle the Christian view of Hell as badly as they do with the correct, authentic and original Christian view of Heaven.

They don't start off well, confusing both the New Testament concepts of Hell in the sense of "hades" or "sheol" (spirit prison) and "gehenna" (everlasting burning)-terms with completely different meanings-and using the terms interchangeably, blissfully ignorant of the distinctions LDS (and the Bible, and most other Christians) make between the two. While it is probably true that, as they say, "...many [Latter-day Saints] find the [Biblicist] view of hell (eternal punishment with no second chances) to be both unfair and offensive," what offends us even more is that such an oversimplification is not Christian doctrine. Oddly enough, they are not even representing normative Protestant doctrine when they fail to make a difference between hades/sheol and gehenna.

As Innes explains,

"Hell" in the AV normally renders one of the three words, Sheol, Hades, and Gehenna.

Sheol...is the word [that] is used in the Old Testament for the place of the dead. In general, we may say that it is the state of death pictured in visible terms....In the later Jewish literature we meet with the idea of divisions within Sheol for the wicked and the righteous<sup>44</sup> in which each experiences a foretaste of his final destiny (Enoch xxii. 1-14). This idea appears to underlie the imagery of the parable of Dives and Lazarus in the New Testament.<sup>45</sup>

"Hades" is the Greek term used to translate the Hebrew word "sheol" in the New Testament. Innes again:

In the LXX<sup>46</sup> it almost always renders sheol, and in the New Testament the Pesh.<sup>47</sup> renders it by shyul. It is used in connection with the death of Christ in Acts ii. 27, 31, which quotes Ps. xvi. 10. In Mt. xvi. 18 Christ says that the gates of Hades (cf. Is. xxxviii. 10; Pss. ix. 13, cvii. 18) shall not prevail against His Church. As the gates of a city are essential to its power, the meaning here is probably the power of death.<sup>48</sup>

With respect to Gehenna, Innes goes on to explain,

In later Jewish writings Gehenna came to have the sense of the place of punishment for sinners (Assumption of Moses x.10; 2 Esdras vii.36) The rabbinic literature contains various opinions as to who would suffer eternal punishment. The ideas were widespread that the sufferings of some would be terminated by annihilation, or that the fires of Gehenna were in some cases purgatorial. But those who held these doctrines also taught the reality of eternal punishment for certain classes of sinners...The teaching of the New Testament endorses this belief.<sup>49</sup>

In the New Testament, the Hebrew word is usually transliterated as ge'enna, but on occasion the general (i.e., non-Judaeo-Christian) Greek word Tartarus is also used. "Gehenna" comes from the imagery of a continuously smoldering garbage pit in the Valley of Hinnom in New Testament Jerusalem. Tartarus is a classical Greek word for the son of the god Chaos but came to mean that part of the afterworld where the wicked suffered for their sins. So we have two pairs of Greek/Hebrew words used in the New Testament: Sheol/Hades for the afterworld in general, and Gehenna/Tartarus for the place of eternal punishment. But as noted, Tartarus is a rarely used word in the New Testament (originally written, of course, in Greek).

Given such a fundamental and critical failure to distinguish between very clearly different concepts in the New Testament, precious little of McKeever and Johnson's commentary on the Gospel's beliefs regarding Outer Darkness, Perdition, Spirit Prison and the Telestial Kingdom makes any sense whatsoever and the critic of their work wonders where to even begin to approach it. A basic primer in Christianity (let alone its restored form) is needed by McKeever and Johnson.

Just as one example: they claim the following concerning our understanding of the Telestial Kingdom:

It is said that it "surpasses all understanding"; and that even its inhabitants, the last to be redeemed, and even then deprived of the personal presence of God and the Christ, shall nevertheless receive the ministration of angels and the Holy Ghost...is completely foreign to the Bible.<sup>50</sup>

Since McKeever and Johnson make absolutely no connection between how they interpret Biblical terms and modern LDS terminology, this claim doesn't even make sense. Their criticism could conceivably be true-if only we knew what they meant by the terms the Bible uses. Since the Bible itself so clearly teaches that Christ Himself went to minister to the souls in Hell (sheol), as referred to in 1 Peter 3:18-19 and 4:6, one can see that any serious attempt by a reviewer to take their criticisms at face value crashes upon the shoals of inconsistency and profound ignorance of the terminology used in the Bible.

Hell: The Telestial Kingdom Versus Perdition

It should come as no surprise, then, that they confuse the LDS terms of "exaltation" and "salvation," when they criticize the Terrestrial Kingdom as being a place where only a "a measure of salvation, but not the

fulness" of salvation will be given to those there. This is simply not what the Gospel teaches. We teach that all inhabitants of kingdoms of glory-let us remember that even the Telestial Kingdom is a mansion of Heaven-receive salvation by dint of the universal atonement of our Savior. The Telestial Kingdom is sometimes referred to by LDS as "hell" but only in the sense that neither Christ nor the Father will be there. Its inhabitants will have to be satisfied with the ministrations of angels sent from higher kingdoms. Needless to say, this is a point that goes right over McKeever and Johnson's head; it's not clear they even understand our position on it, let alone, of course, agree with it. The Telestial Kingdom is never confused with Perdition in LDS teachings-another point that goes over McKeever and Johnson's head, it seems.

But the Savior also gave us commandments and told us to build up his kingdom, and promised concomitant rewards to those who are more or less valiant than their peers. This is fundamental and clear New Testament doctrine that is ignored in embarrassment by Biblicists.

We draw a distinction between universal salvation and exaltation, and anyone who wishes to make a credible criticism needs to understand the distinction we draw. Whether or not they believe it themselves, their failure to understand it leads them into making silly claims such as the Terrestrial Kingdom representing only a measure of salvation. In any case, since Biblicists are Trinitarian, the difference between the ministering of Christ in that kingdom and the ministering of the Father being reserved for the Celestial Kingdom is an odd thing for them to overlook. If Christ and God the Father are two different persons within the same being-as classical Trinitarianism teaches-what difference does it make, and how does it logically follow that one divine ministration is less than another? The Terrestrial and the Celestial Kingdoms would be the same. Thus, even on their own terms this criticism fails.

It is also incorrect, as they claim, that we believe that exaltation only applies to the highest level of the Celestial Kingdom. The highest level has the distinctive characteristic that there is no barrier there to eternal progression-what ancient Christians such as Augustine called either theosis or deification. Augustine was, in fact, an eloquent expositor of this early Christian doctrine, forgotten long before the Reformation and only restored through Joseph Smith. See for instance, Benz, whose words stand as a non-LDS rebuke to McKeever and Johnson's comments about Restored Christianity's concept of exaltation being "egotistical." We'll come to this again, but Benz shows that the kind of opinion held by McKeever and Johnson is pure mischief:

Hence, the concept of Imago Dei [literally, the image of God, but in effect divinity] does not lead toward self-aggrandizement but toward charity as the true and actual form of God's love, for the simple reason that in one's neighbour the image of God, the Lord himself, confronts us, and that the love of God should be fulfilled in the love towards him in whom God himself is mirrored, that is, in one's neighbour. Thus, in the last analysis the concept of Imago Dei is the key to the fundamental law of the gospel, 'Thou shalt love God and thy neighbour as thyself,' since thou shouldst view thy neighbour with an eye to the image which God has engraven upon him and to the promise that he has given about him.'<sup>51</sup>

They even contradict themselves by making this claim, that there is no difference between salvation and exaltation first, and then quoting Joseph Fielding Smith as referring to the Celestial Kingdom as the place where those who gain exaltation shall dwell.

#### Hell: The Role of Angels in the Telestial Kingdom

McKeever and Johnson likewise tread on the quicksand of ignorance when they venture into modern nangelology, claiming that angels are a special creation of God and that humans can never become angels. They make the critic's job too easy by quoting Psalm 148:2 and 5: "Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts...Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created." It's all too easy to be tempted to look this up and see what's in the intervening verses. And in fact when one actually opens up one's Bible, rather than just throwing it upon the rostrum and thumping it for emphasis,<sup>52</sup> one

learns that verses 3 and 4 include the exhortation to praise God to the sun and the moon and the stars of light, the heavens of heavens,<sup>53</sup> and the waters that are above the heavens. God created everything, including us, and including angels and including the physical universe. There is no one-to-one relationship here that suggests that angels are not human species, merely humans at a different stage of development or playing a different role. That many today believe angels to be a different species of some kind is not an original Christian doctrine, nor is it an original Jewish doctrine.

Dahood explains that in the OT, "his ministers' [is] another expression for the angels, described as ministerial servants ready to execute the sovereign will."<sup>54</sup> Angels were messengers sent with a divine mission, and the parallelistic pair-structures of Psalms 148:2 indicate that in this case the angels in question were soldiers. McKeever and Johnson, as is typical of much of the modern North American Biblicist tradition that has arisen in the past century, anti-intellectual, anti-scholarly and deliberately cut off from exposure to centuries of European biblical scholarship, are confusing a general term with a specific, a title with the titleholder, so to speak.

Both the Greek *angelos* and its Hebrew counterpart, *malak*, simply mean "messenger." Ancient Jewish custom did borrow some rather bizarre imagery from Assyrian sources for some of its demi-divine beings such as cherubim, but cherubim-which are artistic conventions common to temple worship throughout the ages, and therefore symbolic and abstract-aren't angels, who are "real" beings. In any case, it is difficult to see how a scripture such as Psalms 148:2 would somehow limit God's capability to create angels at will, and however He will. But Biblicists have never let their belief in a naive omnipotence stop them from contradicting themselves when simple common sense would lead them to obviously inconsistent interpretations (because their interpretations are based on inconsistent assumptions).

Hickenbotham<sup>55</sup> demonstrates how the LDS concept of angelology is more Biblical, ironically, than is the Biblicist view:

The scriptures often identify angels with ministering spirits. Psalms 104:4 rhetorically asks, "Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire...?" (see also Heb. 1:7) and Hebrews 1:13-14 reads, "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits; sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation?" As has already been shown previously, we all existed as spirits before birth (see Matt. 18:10; note angels in this verse should be spirits). And men like angels often act as messengers of God (Hag. 1:13; Mal. 2:7; 3:1; Matt. 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:27). That angels are in appearance as men and were actually called men by inspired writers is also attested to in scripture (Gen. 18:1-2; 19:1, 15; Ezek. 40:1-4; Matt. 28:2-6; Mark 16:5; Luke 24:3-4; John 20:1-12; Acts 1:10; Heb. 13:2; Rev. 21:17). We are likewise instructed that we are not to worship angels (Col. 2:18; Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9; see also Jud. 13:15-16). It is only when we read the account of an angel's appearance to John the Revelator that this injunction is explained. John records, "And when... I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel... Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets..." (Rev. 22:8-9). The angel thus identifies himself as a righteous man who had returned as an angelic messenger even as Moses, Elias, and others have done (Matt. 17:2; Mark 9:4; Lk. 9:30). He was not just man's equal but a spirit brother (Rev. 19:10) and a son of God as man is (Num. 16:22; 27:16; Acts 17:22-24; Eph. 4:6; Heb. 12:9). Some Christians mistakenly conclude that angels are "sexless" because Matthew 22:30 seems to support this belief. This scripture implies nothing about the ability of angels to procreate but only states that they are unmarried (single). Since marriage and procreation are only part of mortal life and exaltation, it seems clear that unexalted angels, whether pre-existent spirits or resurrected beings will necessarily be single (See D&C 132:15-17).<sup>56</sup>

McKeever and Johnson's characterization of theosis (deification, eternal progression), either in its early Christian or latter-day Christian form, as being self-centered ("more focused on personal power, gain, and sex" as they put it) is nothing more than a cheap shot. They unwittingly echo a common criticism by atheists of religion as a whole being self-centered. They contrast what they see in LDS doctrine with the image of

worshipping God in Revelation, forgetting that Revelation is a canonical book for Latter-day Saints, too. They not only do not explain this contradiction, I seriously doubts it even occurred to them. In any case, for the record, all the speculations of nineteenth-century brethren aside (which, like the circular arguers that McKeever and Johnson are, they assume we lend all written material equal doctrinal weight-which we clearly do not) they assume all LDS writings are as indicative of LDS doctrine as are our canonical scriptures. This is circular because it argues a point of our doctrine based on one of their assumptions-that the written word is the Word of God, not a record of the Word of God. And in any case, uniquely LDS scripture happens both to echo the apocalyptic worshipping of God as in Revelation, along with the primacy of God in LDS soteriology (doctrines regarding salvation) and eschatology (doctrines concerning the latter days):

And he hath brought to pass the redemption of the world, whereby he that is found guiltless before him at the judgment day hath it given unto him to dwell in the presence of God in his kingdom, to sing ceaseless praises with the choirs above, unto the Father, and unto the Son, and unto the Holy Ghost, which are one God, in a state of happiness which hath no end.<sup>57</sup>

...for God said unto me: Worship God, for him only shalt thou serve.<sup>58</sup>

Conclusion

Not content to treat the LDS as Biblicists by giving every speculative personal LDS commentary the same weight as scripture, McKeever and Johnson go on to draw their own conclusions and present this as if it were LDS doctrine: "Every Mormon couple who obtains exaltation has no choice but to look forward to the day when one of their own children will serve as a tempter and cause one-third of the other family members to rebel and fall into sin." As if this non sequitur weren't vivid enough, they bring in the names of Auschwitz, Rwanda, Tiananmen Square and Kosovo in a melodramatic attempt to paint a horrible vision of "Mormon eternity."

I can end with no better condemnation of this kind of overheated prose than to quote McKeever and Johnson's own words against them: "Perhaps with our sin-tainted minds, such a wondrous concept would be difficult to grasp." Indeed. But the way to at least begin to grasp it is to ask the LDS what we believe, not presume to tell us what we believe.

Endnotes

1 In apologetic terms, a proof text is typically a scripture, often pulled out of context, used to prove a doctrinal point.

2 This is an excellent summary of the LDS view of exaltation versus salvation in lesser kingdoms, incidentally.

3 William F. Orr and James Arthur Walther, I Corinthians. Anchor Bible, Vol. 32 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1976), 346.

4 Anthony C. Thiselton, The New International Greek Testament Commentary: The First Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids, Michigan and Carlisle, United Kingdom: Eerdmans / Paternoster, 2000), 1267-1268.

5 Thiselton, New International Greek Testament Commentary, 1268.

6 Thiselton, New International Greek Testament Commentary, 1279-1280.

7 Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson, Mormonism 101 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2001), 172.

8 Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary of the Whole Bible* (McLean, Virginia: MacDonald Publishing Co., 1706), 6:641.

9 A conservative Protestant denomination, and no friend to Latter-day Saints: see <http://reslight.addr.com/>

10 <http://reslight.addr.com/thirdheaven.html>

11 <http://www.rockinauburn.com/columns/thirdheaven.htm>

12 Thomas Francis Glasson, "Heaven," *Oxford Companion to the Bible*, edited by Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), 271.

13 Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians*. Anchor Bible, Vol. 32A, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1984), 525.

14 Eugene Seiach, *Ancient Texts and Mormonism: Discovering the Roots of the Eternal Gospel in Ancient Israel and the Primitive Church*, Second Edition (Salt Lake City: Eugene Seiach, 1995), 572.

15 Jean Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1964), 174, quoted in Seiach, *Ancient Texts and Mormonism*, 571.

16 In Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Vol. 3:4.

17 *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, I:154, fn.

18 Quoted by Eusebius, "Preface to Papias," *Historia Ecclesia*, III.39:3-4. See also "Fragments of Papias" V at [http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-43.htm#P3497\\_597426](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-43.htm#P3497_597426)

19 Emma Disley, "Degrees of Glory: Protestant Doctrine and the Concept of Rewards Hereafter," *Journal of Theological Studies* 42 (1991), 77-105. I am thankful to Ted Jones for this citation.

20 Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church. A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). I am thankful to Ted Jones for this citation.

21 Marta Ryk, "The Holy Spirit's Role in the Deification of Man According to Contemporary Orthodox Theology," *Diakonia* 10 (Fordham University, 1975), 122. I am thankful to Ted Jones for this citation.

22 [http://www.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/Shokel/891103\\_7th\\_Heaven.html](http://www.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/Shokel/891103_7th_Heaven.html)

23 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; somewhat similar to National Public Radio in the United States. See also <http://www.calgary.cbc.ca/>

24 Olam Ha-Ba (oh-LAHM hah-BAH): literally "the world to come." 1) The messianic age; 2) the spiritual world that souls go to after death.

25 "G-d" [sic]; many observant Jews try to avoid spelling "God" out in full in English just as they substitute the word "Adonai" ("Lord") for the "Tetragrammaton" (YHWH, "Yahweh," or "Jehovah.")

26 Tracey Richards, "Judaism 101," an Orthodox Jewish FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) Website: <http://www.jewfaq.org>. See specifically: <http://www.jewfaq.org/olamhaba.htm>. My thanks to René Krywult for this citation.

27 Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi is Professor Emeritus, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA; 1987 through the present; see <http://www.elevated.fsnet.co.uk/index-page13.html>; my thanks to René Krywult for this citation.

28 Teresa was a 'conversa' or forced convert to Christianity from Judaism.

29 Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God* (New York: Ballantine, 2000), 14.

30 Ante-Nicene refers to Church Fathers who lived and wrote before the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D.

31 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Vol. 31:2; see also [http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-63.htm#P8900\\_2545577](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-63.htm#P8900_2545577), emphasis added.

32 *Ibid.*, Vol. 36:2; see also [http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-63.htm#P8900\\_2545577](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-63.htm#P8900_2545577)

33 Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* (Miscellanies): XIII.13; see also [http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-02/anf02-67.htm#P8215\\_2366146](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-02/anf02-67.htm#P8215_2366146)

34 *Ibid.*, XIV 1; see also [http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-02/anf02-67.htm#P8215\\_2366146](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-02/anf02-67.htm#P8215_2366146)

35 Origen, *Commentary on John*, II.3; see also <http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-10/anf10-38.htm#TopOfPage>. My thanks to Kevin Grahm for this citation and for drawing my attention to the comparison with the D&C.

36 D&C 76: 76-77.

37 For the complete text of 2 Enoch, see "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* Vol. 1, edited by James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, New York: Doubleday; 1983), 102-213.

38 Testament of Levi 3:1-8, in H.C. Kee, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Vol. 1, edited by James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983), 788-789. My thanks to Michael R. Ash for this citation.

39 The Nag Hammadi library was found by an Egyptian farmer in Upper Egypt in December, 1945. It contains the library of an early Christian (Gnostic) monastery.

40 George W. MacRae and William R. Murdock, "The Apocalypse of Paul (V,2)," *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, directed by James M. Robinson (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977), 239. For an online text, see also <http://apoc.port5.com/apoc/fgapcpl.htm>.

41 John 21:25.

42 John 20: 30-31.

43 J.R. Mueller and G.A. Robins, "Vision of Ezra," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1, edited by James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983), 590.

44 Exactly as the Restored Gospel teaches.

45 D.K. Innes, "Hell," *The New Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans, 1962), 518.



46 LXX is the commonly used abbreviation for the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament written in Alexandria, Egypt, several centuries before Christ. It's the tradition of the Old Testament Christ and the Apostles (as well as the Jews of the day) used; at the end of the first century A.D. Jewish scholars rejected the LXX tradition and developed a new one, one that took over half a millennium to compile-this new one is known as the MT, or Masoretic Text, and is the one most modern Christian Old Testaments, including that in the King James Version, are based on.

47 Pesh. is, like LXX, an abbreviation for a version of the ancient Bible. In this case it stands for "Peshitta," the Old Syriac version still used today by Lebanese Maronite Christians and Palestinian Christians.

48 Ibid., 518.

49 Ibid., 518.

50 McKeever and Johnson, *Mormonism* 101, 174-175.

51 Ernst W. Benz, "Imago Dei: Man in the Image of God," *Reflections on Mormonism: Judaeo-Christian Parallels*, edited by Truman G. Madsen (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1978), 218-219.

52 Although this is couched in stronger language than the author would use himself, and it talks only about Southern Baptists, this tendency to use the Bible almost as a magic talisman brings to mind a quote by the modern Renaissance scholar, Harold Bloom, in his famous book *The American Religion* (New York: Touchstone, 1992), 222:

Even as Fundamentalists insist upon the inerrancy of the Bible, they give up all actual reading of the Bible, since in fact its language is too remote and difficult for them to begin to understand. What is left is the Bible as physical object, limp and leather, a final icon or magical talisman. To read Criswell [an anti-intellectual leader of the Fundamentalist faction of the Southern Baptist Convention] or any other Fundamentalist clergyman on the Bible is almost a literal impossibility, at least for me, because they are not writing about the text, in any sense whatsoever of text, or of that text. They write about their own dogmatic social, political, cultural, moral, and even economic convictions, and biblical texts simply are quoted, with frenetic abandon, whether or not they in any way illustrate or even approach the areas where the convictions center. They are quoted also as though they interpreted themselves and were perfectly transparent in their meanings.

53 I think I can understand why McKeever and Johnson decided to delicately ignore a Bible passage referencing multiple heavens.

54 Mitchell Dahood, S.J., *Psalms III: 101-150*. Anchor Bible, Vol. 1970 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970), 13.

55 Incidentally, an evangelical Christian who goes under the pseudonym J.P. Holding, gave *Mormonism 101* a less than sterling rating, even though one would assume they're all on the same side. One of the reasons was McKeever and Johnson's failure to come to grips with the new generation of amateur (that is, non-BYU professors, nor General Authorities) LDS apologists that has cropped up: [[http://www.tektonics.org/BM.M101\\_0801063353.html#Review](http://www.tektonics.org/BM.M101_0801063353.html#Review)]

That said, I was very disappointed that there was not greater interaction with modern Mormon apologetic efforts. Names like [Richard] Hopkins and [BYU Professor of Arabic, and FARMS executive director Daniel] Peterson are barely discovered. I will grant that this was obviously intended as an introductory book....We recommend *Mormonism 101* for all who are taking their initial steps into this field-but be aware of its limitations.

56 Michael W. Hickenbotham, *Answering Challenging Mormon Questions: Replies to 130 Queries by Friends and Critics of the LDS Church* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 1995), #54.

57 Mormon 7:7.

58 Moses 1:15.

**2007**

**L.G., Blogger, Biola University Student**

**Rewards and Punishment**

**Biola University Blog**

**Rewards and Punishments (Thursday, May 10, 2007)**

### **Introduction**

Our paper will introduce the terms: reward and punishment. We will outline how Scripture exemplifies these in a literal and figurative manner. Then the paper will discuss the degrees of rewards and punishments, as well as the recipients.

How can you read this paper in a personal and practical manner? As you read, keep in mind that rewards are promised less as incentives to godly living for the sake of earthly prosperity. Rather, more as motivation to endure in the faith during trying times. The unseen heavenly reward for us Christians is offered as a consolation and sustaining hope—an encouragement not to lose heart. Remember that the final judgment of God does involve a punishment to the evildoers. Justice is one of the most outstanding attributes of God in Scripture as time and again God is depicted as the herald of justice. The necessary context for observing the Revelation’s context of punishment is the Bible’s persistent affirmation of God as the perfect judge.

### **Reward**

A reward is a payment made in return for a service rendered or an act performed to strengthen an approved behavior. The concept of ‘rewards’ is woven throughout the Bible as individuals receive rewards because their actions exhibit good things required by God. These can be seen in the Old Testament in the lives of Abraham and Sarah as their life of faith and believe in God’s covenant is rewarded by the birth of a promised son (Genesis 21) and exemplified in his continual looking forward to God’s promise to be fulfilled as seen in Hebrews 11:8-10. Joseph is rewarded with political authority within Egypt, and David’s refusal to end the life of Saul is also rewarded in a similar manner of earthly gain (Genesis 39, 1 Samuel 24). Within the Old Testament many examples are evidenced in the reception of literal rewards of riches, honor, rain, crops, harvest, honor, prosperity, success (Ps. 18:20, Deut. 28:1-14, Prov. 22:4). Within the New Testament the idea of rewards shifts from the physical and temporal rewards to an increasing emphasis on spiritual and eternal (currently unseen) rewards.

When will rewards be given?

In order to receive due recompense for actions completed in the body, Paul depicts in 2 Corinthians 5:10 that every believer will stand before Christ at what is called, ‘the judgment seat of Christ,’ or the bema (Greek). It is at the bema that the good will be commended and a reward given for imperishable deeds.<sup>1</sup> While the scope of this paper does not cover specific judgments, it is necessary to make note that the eternal rewards referred to within this paper are the ones to be received on the ‘day of judgment’ or the bema. A distinction is made between belief and actions where a persons belief on earth determines their eternal location (heaven or hell), while their actions or deeds on earth determine their reward or punishment.<sup>2</sup> While John assures the believer they will not come under God’s judgment in John 5:24, he is referring to one’s eternal destiny and not how faithful one lives his/her Christian life.<sup>3</sup>

Jesus spoke frequently concerning future rewards: “He will reward each according to his works (Matthew 16:27), “You will have treasure in heaven (Matthew 19:21), “You will be blessed...for you shall be repaid at the resurrection” (Luke 14:14). The return of Jesus is imminent as stated in Revelation 22:12: “Look! I am coming soon, and my reward is with me to pay each one according to what he has done!” As Believers we need to be ready and thus the ideas of rewards is an important subject to study and understand.

### Rewards in Scripture

Within the New Testament two different Greek words are used to describe, “rewards.” “Misthos,” implies the idea of payment or honor for a specific job (Mt 20:8, Luke 6:23)<sup>4</sup>, while apodidomai is the combination of two Greek words which means to give back in return or to repay.<sup>5</sup> A main passage concerning rewards is found in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15:

For no one can lay any foundation other than what is being laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, 13 each builder’s work will be plainly seen, for the Day will make it clear, because it will be revealed by fire. And the fire will test what kind of work each has done. 14 If what someone has built survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If someone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss. He himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

Within the process of the bema, deeds done in the flesh (depicted here by wood, hay or straw) are consumed with fire and thus unworthy of reward. These are deeds done for man’s personal gain or honor without regard to bringing God glory. Even ‘good deeds’ such as prayer, giving, or fasting could be consumed by fire at the bema if done with the wrong motive.<sup>6</sup> On the contrary, that which remains after the fire (gold, silver, precious stones) represents imperishable deeds which will receive reward. These are deeds done for the glory of God and completed without regard to man’s praise (as depicted in the parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee in Luke 18). It’s not the actual deed which is judged, but it’s the motives of men’s hearts as Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 4:4-5. At the bema the motive of the heart is revealed and deeds are rewarded.

### Actual Rewards

The concept of treasures in heaven is taught in Matthew 6:19-20, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.” This verse comes during Jesus’ teaching of the Sermon on the Mount upon how one should live their lives in light of God’s commandments. A heavy emphasis is given upon deeds done on earth, but it’s important to remember the consideration of the heart’s motive as discussed above (1 Corinthians 4:4-5). It is unclear from scripture the exact nature of the rewards at the bema, but whatever is received will be real and have eternal value (1 Corinthians 9:25).

The promise of a future inheritance or an admonition to hope for what is to come often precedes discussion concerning rewards in heaven. This teaching is scattered throughout the Bible as depicted in Colossians 3:23-25 when Paul reminds the Believers concerning the future reward: “Whatever you are doing, work at it with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not for people, because you know that you will receive your inheritance from the Lord as the reward. Serve the Lord Christ. For the one who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there are no exceptions.” The inheritance is often understood as the inheritance of the ‘kingdom of God’ whom all believers are heirs (1 Peter 1:3-4). All believers will inherit an eternal home in heaven, given glorified bodies, and enjoy an eternal relationship with God, but those who excel in their perseverance and faithfulness to what God has given them will enjoy the fullness of inheritance.<sup>7</sup> And Paul teaches that those who are fornicators, idolater, adulterers, homosexuals, etc will not inherit the kingdom of God.

A popular interpretation of this passage is that this list describes the unbeliever. However, Joe Wall in his book, Reward and Loss at the Judgment of Believers, asserts Paul is using the phrase ‘inherit the kingdom of God’ as one whom already has a share in the eternal kingdom (a Believer). “[Paul] is not saying that the one

described will be eliminated from living eternally in heaven but that he will come up empty-handed in the messianic kingdom” (Wall, pg 83).

#### Crowns as Rewards

The question concerning rewards remains centered around the discussion between a literal or figurative interpretation of scripture. Most scholars determine five different types of crowns from scripture which represent five different types of deeds. Millard Erickson states, “The term crown is also used to symbolize the rewards Christians receive,” (Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology, 45). The Apostles mention five crowns as rewards for service in the epistles.

#### **Runner’s crown – Incorruptible Crown**

And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath (crown), but we an imperishable (I Cor 9:25).

#### **Soul-winner’s crown – Crown of Rejoicing**

For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming (I Thes 2:19).

#### **Lover’s crown - Crown of Righteousness**

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing (II Tim 4:7-8).

#### **Shepherd’s or Pastor’s crown – Crown of Glory**

Shepherd the flock of God among you, not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God...And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory (I Pet 5:2-4).

#### **Martyr’s crown – Crown of Life**

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him (Jam 1:12),  
Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life (Rev 2:10).

The question remains if these crowns are literal or symbolic. Some scholars veer towards the side of literal interpretation of five different actual incorruptible crowns which will last for all of eternity and remain as a special mark given by the Lord to honor those who served him faithfully in this life.<sup>8</sup> While others would claim that these crowns are merely a symbol of honor to be received by individuals and also symbolic of deeds which will be rewarded. The crowns could also represent an authority structure of some sort, as scriptures describe Believers as participating in a world government, and enjoying special privileges of service (Matt. 25:34, Col 3:23-24, Rev. 2:27; 3:21) in addition to positions as mayors, governors, and rulers.<sup>9</sup> The evidence is simply inconclusive concerning the actual future events to unfold at the bema.

Even if the actual identity of the reward remains unknown, what is certain is the occurrence of the bema and the fact all Christ followers will be rewarded on account of their faithfulness. This has been shown through strong scriptural support in this paper. This alone should affect the way life is lived today for what is done on earth echoes in eternity. Those suffering today should be encouraged by these words to persevere for their deeds will not go unnoticed. They will be rewarded. A focus upon eternal things helps remind one of the temporary state of the life in which we live. However, the way we live this life is of great importance because it gives weight into how one will experience the rest of eternity. All Believers will inherit the

Kingdom because of their faith in Christ, however not all inheritances will be equal because not all are equally faithful. Individuals should be motivated to please God and receive their full reward.

**Pun-ish-ment<sup>10</sup>**

Function: noun

1: the act of punishing

2: a) suffering, pain, or loss that serves as retribution b) a penalty inflicted on an offender through judicial procedure

3: severe, rough, or disastrous treatment

4: As defined in Hollomon: Negative consequences or sanctions that result from a finding of guilt of condemnation. Human punishment frequently aims at upholding the integrity of the rules that have been broken or restraining future law-breaking.<sup>11</sup>

Literal

To better understand ‘punishment’, we must agree that most times it follows this simple format: the antecedent (what led up to it), the occurrence (how it was done), and the consequence (what followed as a result of it). Punishment, in this manner, is a deserved result or a crime or wrongful act, and the logical understanding is: what people sow, they reap. However, more than simply being punished for a civil crime, punishment in the Bible is simply a violation of God’s moral law. Because of the impeccable nature of God, punishment is a character placed on Christ, who was wrongly punished by people but suffered justly in God’s judicial plan<sup>12</sup>. The ‘story of the Fall’ is one example of the literal accomplishment of punishment.

Prototypical Example of Punishment: Adam and Eve			
1. Crime	2. Antecedent	3. Occurrence	4. Consequence
Eating the fruit that God had forbidden	Subtle temptation of Eve by the Serpent	Falling into the temptation and eating the fruit	God expels Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, and then ultimately, the curse of sin

We are rarely allowed to forget the idea of punishment as we read the Bible. The Old Testament reveals literal punishments on numerous accounts. In order to stay focused on the eschatological view of punishment, please briefly review some of the Old Testament examples:

- Wickedness of human race, punished by the flood
- Lot & family punished for an ill-advised move to Sodom
- Abraham & Sarah punished for their expedient act of having a child by Hagar
- Jacob punished for his self-seeking behavior toward Esau
- Joseph’s brothers punished for their crime

Punishment by God’s supernatural intervention into earthly affairs:

- Pharaoh’s hard heart punished by 10 plagues (eventually death)
- Egyptian army’s pursuit of Israelites, punished by Red Sea
- Miriam’s rejection of Moses’ authority, punished by leprosy
- Israelites testing of God, punished by 40-year wandering in the wilderness
- ...and more

Although the New Testament is not as rich in examples and images, there is definitely an articulation of the eternal and eschatological ideas of punishment. Jesus’ discourses and parables yield the most vivid images:

It is better to enter into eternal life blind and without one’s limbs than to have one’s “whole body be thrown into hell” (Mt 5:27-30)

- The foolish mistake of building a house (life) on sand results in a great fall (Mt 7:24-27)
- The five unprepared virgins are permanently barred from the wedding feast (Mt 25:1-13)
- The wicked and slothful servant is cast “into the outer darkness” (Mt 25:15-30)
- The goats will be separated from the sheep to “go away into eternal punishment” at the final judgment (Mt 25:31-46)
- Those who place everyday concerns above the messianic banquet will be permanently excluded from salvation (Lk 14:15-24)
- The rich man is punished in the afterlife for the lack of compassion in the present life (Lk 16:19-31)<sup>13</sup>

...and more

Literal or Figurative

This leads us into the discussion of the future and eternal punishments and whether they are literal or figurative. The analogy of crime and punishment can also be used in an eschatological context. The crime consists of the demonic and human worlds’ rejection of Christ and pursuit of evil. The dominant images of punishment in Revelation are images of physical torment on either a cosmic scale (earthquakes, hail, fire, water turned to blood, darkness, locusts), an international scale (warfare and famine), and a personal scale (sores on people, scorching from the sun, people gnawing their tongues in anguish).<sup>14</sup> And lastly, the constant reminder is given in scripture of the eternal punishment: hell. Here are some examples where scripture uses literal concepts to evoke figurative perspectives. (The issue of “hell” will not be discussed in this paper; refer to Final State-Hell research paper)

Scripture	Literal	Figurative
“gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 8:12, 22:13, 24:51, 25:30, 13:28)	Grinding of the teeth	-Teeth are primarily used as symbols of the attempted consumption of ill-gotten gain, taken by force from the powerless <sup>15</sup> -Description of hell, the place of judgment reserved for those who do not enter the kingdom. OT and NT pictures merge: the wicked, who have gnashed their teeth in anger all their lives, will continue to do so, in hell.
“The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.” (Rev 6:12-14)	-Scene of final dissolution of the cosmos. Often times this leads many to believe that the breakup of the earth as part of a long-drawn-out tribulation period. -“The first heaven and the first earth pass away” (Rev 21:2) could suggest that this passage is literal.	-Denotes temporal judgment or the last judgment. Through OT examples of the defeat of Babylon (Isa. 13:10-13, Edom (Isa. 34:4), Egypt (Ezek. 32:6-8), Israel’s enemies (Hab. 3:6-11), and Israel itself (Joel 2:10, 30-31), refer to the historical end of a sinful nation’s existence through divine judgment, where God conducts holy war. -Reference to “stars”, “mountains”, and “islands” as symbols of human or divine powers in the LXX, Jewish writings, and the Apocalypse itself.
“The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth	Literal fire, literal burning	-The word “fire” is a metaphorical portrayal of a judgment by famine. Fire is also used figuratively in 4:5, 1:14, 2:18, 10:1, 19:12). The parts of the

<p>was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up. (Rev. 8:7) “Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her” (Rev 18:8)</p>		<p>earth affected are associated with food supplies, which is clear in Exod. 9:25, 31-32. Similar reference in Rev. 6:6. Ezekial 5 concludes the prediction of coming judgment with an emphasis on famine.</p>
<p>“The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea.” (Rev. 8:8)</p>	<p>A volcano eruption or some other natural phenomenon occurring in the first century or predicted for later.</p>	<p>-Catastrophes inspired by OT literary models that provide figurative perspective. -OT reference to Jeremiah 51: the burning mountain is the object of God’s judgment of a wicked kingdom.</p>
<p>“The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water—the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.” (Rev. 8:10-11)</p>	<p>-Rivers and springs of water were affected similarly to Exodus 7:9 and Psalm 78:44. -“Wormwood” is a bitter herb, and water contaminated by it can be poisonous if drunk over a long period.</p>	<p>-Continual theme of fire as a famine. -Biblical theme of “stars” representing angelic beings can lead us to believe this star is Babylon’s representative angel alluding to Isaiah 14:12-15. -The word “wormwood” is used in Jeremiah as metaphors for the bitterness of suffering resulting from judgment.</p>
<p>“The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. Their hair was like women’s hair, and their teeth were like lions’ teeth. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. They had tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months. They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon” (Rev. 9:7-11)</p>	<p>-Insect species of the order Orthoptera, family Acrididae. In the Middle East the locust periodically multiplies to astronomical numbers. As the swarm moves across the land, it devours all vegetation, high and low.<sup>16</sup>  -Similar to the plague in Exodus 10:12 against Egypt.</p>	<p>“Hair”: antenna -“Teeth”(Joel 1:6): destructive effect of their mouths “breastplates of iron” (Job 39:19-20): scales on thorax -Comparison of locusts’ face to those of humans with crowns on their heads evokes their demonic nature.</p>

17

God’s unending punishment of sinners beyond this life is known as eternal punishment. The bible teaches us that unrepentant, unforgiven sinners will be punished (Dan. 12:2; Matt. 10:15; John 5:28-29; Rom. 5:12-21)<sup>18</sup>. Punishment, as discussed above, is the consequence of a crime or wrong-doing. The punishment here in Revelation is God’s justice to a nation that has rejected Him. However, the punishments revealed in Revelation have somewhat of a redemption purpose. It is not to accomplish actual repentance among the

majority. Rather, the theological purpose is that God, by providing sufficient opportunities for spiritual reform, should demonstrate his sufficient opportunities for spiritual reform, should demonstrate his sovereignty and especially his justice in finally judging the entire host of “unsealed” people at the seventh trumpet.<sup>19</sup>

### **Degrees**

Everyone who receives salvation by God’s grace, through faith, based on Christ’s redemptive work (Holloman, 477) also receives an eternal life as a gift. However, Alden Bass writes, “It is equally important to realize that every saint will be rewarded according to his deeds.” Matthew wrote in 16:27: “For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds.”

In regards to degrees of punishments, Paul wrote in Romans 2:5-6: “But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds.” The key phrase in both passages is “according to his deeds.” Here lies the sense of one’s own responsibilities for the outcome, whether rewards or punishments.

In order to discuss degrees of rewards and punishments any further, we need to define the term “degrees”. Here is a definition by Laverne Wesley Hofer: “The term degree as relating to reward and punishment does not have reference to the length or time of duration, but rather to the intensity of the individual’s experience.” (Hofer, 2) The intensity of eschatological rewards and punishments differ according to individual’s deeds.

### **Rewards and Responsibilities**

Degrees of rewards are closely related to responsibilities. Bass points to the parable of pounds in Luke 19:11-27 to explain their relationship.

A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called ten servants of his, and gave them each ten pounds, and said unto them, “Trade ye herewith till I come.” But his citizens hated him, and sent an ambassage after him, saying, “We will not that this man reign over us.” And it came to pass, when he was come back again, having received the kingdom, that he commanded these servants, unto whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by trading. And the first came before him, saying, “Lord, thy pound hath made ten pounds more.” And he said unto him, “Well done, thou good servant: because thou wast found faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.” And the second came, saying, “Thy pound, Lord, hath made five pounds.” And he said unto him also, “Be thou also over five cities.” And another came, saying, “Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I kept laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that which thou layedst not down, and reapest that which thou didst not sow.” He saith unto him, “Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I am an austere man, taking up that which I laid not down, and reaping that which I did not sow; then wherefore gavest thou not my money into the bank, and I at my coming should have required it with interest?” And he said unto them that stood by, “Take from him the pound, and give it unto him that hath the ten pounds.” And they said unto him, “Lord, he hath ten pounds.” I say unto you, that unto every one that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him.

All ten servants had been given a responsibility, to do business with the given pound. Some were faithful to the given responsibility, and their works produced fruit according to time and effort invested, or according to their deeds. Interestingly, the servants were rewarded based on the fruit of their labor and not on their efforts. In other words, those who worked harder and more received a larger reward, because they had produced more fruit. On the other hand, one servant had not produced any fruit, because he did not work at all. This servant did not receive any reward, and what he already had was taken away from him. Bible clearly teaches us that believers cannot earn salvation. However, Jesus gave us a command: “We must work the works of



Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work.” (John 9:4) He has given us the responsibility to work, and He promises to reward those who are faithful to His command according to their deeds.

### Responsibilities and Abilities

Responsibilities are also closely related to individuals’ abilities and gifts. Therefore rewards are closely related to abilities and gifts. The parable of talents found Matthew 25:14-29, one that is similar to the parable of the pounds, illustrates the point.

“For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. “But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. “The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. ‘And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.’ “But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. ‘Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. ‘Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’ For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.

From this parable, it is clear to see that degrees of responsibilities exist among believers, according to their spiritual gifts and abilities. Because rewards depend on the fruit of the labor, rewards ultimately depend on individuals’ gifts and abilities. For example, some believers are entrusted with more on earth because they are better stewards than others. Some pastors are entrusted with more sheep because they have greater spiritual gift of pasturing. These spiritual gifts are God-given, which means God entrusts some with more responsibilities than He does with others, according to the spiritual gifts that He had given. People with greater responsibilities receive greater rewards upon their completion of the given task.

One may argue against God’s partiality in His judgment of rewards. How can a God of justice show partiality among believers, and how can God judge, based on His own partiality? One must remember that God’s justice does not equate impartiality. There is justice in God’s choosing of Abraham. There is justice in God’s choosing of Israel. God favored Jacob over Esau before their birth. God’s justice is defined in His divine and absolute authority over all things; He does everything according to His own pleasure, and that is the justice. If one is concerned about jealousy created by differentiated rewards in heaven, he/she can always recall Professor Kirk’s illustration of a Thanksgiving dinner. You will be wholly satisfied that you would not mind skipping out on another slice of that pumpkin pie!

### Degrees of Punishments

According to Holloman, Scripture teaches degrees of punishment for unbelievers (Mt 10:14-115; 11:20-24; Lk 12:47-49; Jn 19:11) (Holloman, 435). Just as rewards depend on degrees of fruit of works, punishments depend on the degrees of sin. Bass writes, “when speaking of eternal torment, the Bible mentions those who

will suffer to a lesser or greater degree. And each time such a reference occurs, the punishment is proportionate to the opportunities missed.” (Bass, 92) In other words, those reject the gospel despite numerous opportunities to believe it will be punished more severely than those who had fewer or no opportunities to hear the gospel. Jesus’ rebuke on the cities of Bethsaida, Chroazin, and Capernaum on the account of disbelief even after Jesus’ teachings and miracles supports the idea.

Bass also points to the parable from Luke 12:42-48 to support the degrees of punishments.

And the Lord said, “Who, then, is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath. But if that servant shall say in his heart, ‘My lord delayeth his coming,’ and shall begin to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the unfaithful. And that servant, who knew his lord’s will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more”

The punishments of the two servants are clearly differentiated in this parable; one received many stripes while the other received fewer. The first received more stripes because he disobeyed the Lord’s will which he knew, and the second received fewer stripes because he disobeyed on an account that he did not know the Lord’s will. The scripture teaches us that punishments, like rewards, have degrees according to the deeds of individuals.

## **Recipients**

The recipients of rewards and punishments are evaluated at two different judgments, the Judgment Seat of Christ and the Great White Throne Judgment, respectively. For Christians, their rewards will be based on the way they have lived their lives and the service they’ve rendered to the Lord, since becoming Christians. (Herman A. Hoyt, *The End Times*, 218). The apostle Paul says, “The Lord will disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God” (I Cor 4:5).

Characteristics of the Recipient

**Faithful.** Two characteristics that mark those who will receive rewards are faithfulness and generosity. Faithfulness is demonstrated by following Jesus, no matter the cost. Jesus said his disciples would be hated and ostracized, but they would have a great reward for persevering (Lk. 6: 22-23). He reminded Peter that although he was leaving everything and following Christ, he would be rewarded (Matt. 19:27-28). Also, encouragement is given to those fulfilling leadership roles in the church. They are God’s under shepherds, maintaining a good example and eagerly serving according to God’s will in faithful service. They will be rewarded for their faithfulness (I Pet. 5:2-4)

**Generous.** Generosity was modeled by Christ at the cross.” Christ’s impoverishment for the riches of His people and His continual liberality in the supply of all needs are Jesus’ example and incentive for the measure of Christian giving” (Robert Saucy, *The Church in God’s Program*, 189). Christ’s giving was motivated by love. Our response is likewise motivated by love. As Paul says, “For the love of Christ compels us” to serve the Lord (II Cor 5:14). When recipients of our generosity glorify God, we see immediate rewards, but there are also future rewards, “profit which increases to your account” (Phil 4:17).

The recipient of rewards views himself as a steward or trustee. All he has - whether it is intellectual capacity, natural gifts, physical health, spiritual gifts or wealth – is a gift of God to him (Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Major Bible Themes*, 283). They are generous because all of life is viewed as a gift from God which is to be shared with others. The goal of their lives increasingly becomes all to God’s glory and all done in His power.

Such a high goal raises the question of how a believer can develop the above character. Galatians 3:20 speaks of being crucified with Christ and living our life in the flesh by faith in the Son of God. This same idea is set forth in John 15 as the “abiding life,” where Christ produces His fruit in us as we remain closely related to Him. Our righteous works must be the outworking of the Spirit having control in our lives. Because of the cross, Christians have the freedom “to walk in the Spirit and not according to the flesh” (Rom 8:5).

Christians will not be recipients of punishment because “There is, therefore, now no condemnation (punishment) for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Rom 8:1). However, those who have refused God’s gift of salvation will receive punishment according to their works. “The books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their deeds” (Rev. 20:11-18). Those who do not accept Christ’s payment for their sin go “into the unquenchable fire...where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched” (Mk 9:48). Jesus spoke of unbelievers as those that will “be cast into the eternal fire” (Mt 18:8). Ultimate punishment of the unrighteous is described as “eternal destruction” (II Thes 1:9). Their final complete separation from God is called “the second death” (Rev 20:6). God will execute eternal punishment on unbelievers and Satan and his demons (Holloman, 435).

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**2008**

**J. B. Haws, Latter-day Saint Scholar and Seminary Teacher**

**Joseph Smith, Emanuel Swedenborg, and Section 76: Importance of the Bible in Latter-day Revelation**

**Doctrine and Covenants: Revelations in Context, 2008**

J. B. Haws, "Joseph Smith, Emanuel Swedenborg, and Section 76: Importance of the Bible in Latter-day Revelation," in *The Doctrine and Covenants, Revelations in Context: The 37th Annual Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry, eds. Andrew H. Hedges, J. Spencer Fluhman, and Alonzo L. Gaskill (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, Religious Studies Center, 2008), 142-167.*

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Influence is a slippery word in the history of ideas. Even when a researcher performs the Herculean task of reading everything that some great thinker read and wrote, contemporary context and conversation are elusive variables complicating every "influence" equation. With that said, this paper might seem inadvisable from the start, because it begins with one of those difficult "influence" puzzles: Was Emanuel Swedenborg the source of Joseph Smith's conception of a three-tiered heaven? Questions like this almost never lend themselves to a clear-cut yes or no; yet some recent observers have firmly pushed in just such a definitive direction in their evaluation of parallels in the writings of the eighteenth-century Swedish visionary and the Prophet Joseph Smith. In contrast to those strong assertions, this paper will argue for caution and tentativeness because the differences between the two revolutionary thinkers are as telling as the possible ties. Though certain similarities are intriguing, they do not necessarily require a direct connection between Swedenborg's writings and Joseph Smith's revelation. Instead, it might be more reasonable to suggest that both men drew from a common well, the Bible.

Latter-day Saints are generally accustomed to regarding their beliefs about heaven as unique from those of other Christians-and rightly so, many outside observers would say. Craig Blomberg, professor at the Denver Seminary, well represents the feelings of many outside Mormonism when he comments that "Doctrine and Covenants 76 hits [evangelical Christians] like a bolt out of the blue with its elaboration of four possible destinies of humanity."<sup>[1]</sup> But Brigham John Bowen has recently suggested that "the notion of degrees of glory," which today is "often thought of as ... uniquely Mormon," was "not so in the nineteenth century."<sup>[2]</sup>

Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang, authors of *Heaven: A History*, agree. They detect in the early 1800s a change of religious climate of sorts which drew many thinkers toward a "modern perspective on heaven," one that "[emphasized] the nearness and similarity of the other world to our own and [argued] for the eternal nature of love, family, progress, and work."<sup>[3]</sup> As part of that theological trend, many religionists posited a multiple-degrees-of-glory conception of the afterlife and speculated about individual and personal differences in intellectual attainment or eternal felicity, based often on the Savior's comment about "many mansions" in His "Father's house" (John 14:2).<sup>[4]</sup> Bowen, in his review of nineteenth-century religious tracts and treatises, points out that prominent theologians such as Isaac Watts and Thomas Dick (who was a contemporary of Joseph Smith) suggested that heaven consisted of multiple levels and gradations-indeed, "the general consensus" of "numerous ... visions, sermons, speculative treatises" was "that in some form,

different degrees of glory do exist in the heavenly realm."<sup>[5]</sup> According to McDannell and Lang, "the understanding of life after death in the LDS Church is the clearest example of the continuation of the modern heaven into the twentieth century" because of Latter-day Saint adherence to a theology of heaven that comprises beliefs that once were more widely held- or at least more widely considered- by others.<sup>[6]</sup> That strain of Christianity seems now mostly forgotten, such that Latter- day Saints today might be surprised to learn that a Swedish nobleman and scientist named Emanuel Swedenborg, writing in the eighteenth century, recorded his visions of a heaven consisting of three regions.<sup>[7]</sup>

At this point, one might ask, if the notion of heavenly "degrees of glory" was not uncommon in Joseph Smith's day, why focus so much on the question of Swedenborg's influence?<sup>[8]</sup> Two responses seem relevant. First, the Prophet apparently mentioned Swedenborg by name during an 1839 conversation with Edward Hunter, a student of Swedenborgianism who later became a Latter-day Saint. Hunter had established a seminary dedicated to the free exchange of religious ideas, and when Joseph Smith stopped at this Nantmeal Seminary in Pennsylvania during a return trip from Washington DC, Hunter reported this exchange: "I asked him if he was acquainted with the Sweadenburgers. His answer I verially believe. 'Emanuel Sweadenburg had a view of the world to come but for daily food he perished.'"<sup>[9]</sup> If accurately remembered, this remark generates a whole range of questions.

Second, because both men described a heaven that consisted of specific and separate realms, there seems to be a greater qualitative correspondence in their respective views than in the more nebulous "many mansions"-type descriptions of heaven found in the writings of other contemporary theologians. McDannell and Lang "trace the roots of the modern heaven, at least in part, to Swedenborg" and see echoes of that "modern heaven" in Mormonism.<sup>[10]</sup> That correspondence has also been noted by Mary Ann Meyers, Craig Miller, and D. Michael Quinn.<sup>[11]</sup>

One might then ask, would Latter-day Saints even be troubled if it could be determined that Swedenborgian ideas did influence Joseph Smith? In Mormon thought, revelation is often seen as resulting from specific questions. For example, early revelations addressed the teachings of Ann Lee and the Shakers (see D&C 49) offered correctives to abortive attempts at New Testament-type communal living (D&C 42) and clarified sectarian quandaries over the nature of the Godhead (see D&C 130). Hence, a revelation sparked by questions derived from considering another tradition's doctrinal system would not seem unprecedented to Latter- day Saint observers. Joseph Smith himself said, "We should gather all the good and true principles in the world and treasure them up."<sup>[12]</sup> If, therefore, it could be determined that Swedenborgian ideas did inspire Joseph Smith's inquiries into the nature of heaven, Latter-day Saints likely would not view that as a threat to their understanding of the development of Mormonism. As Meyers aptly notes, "To stress the parallels between Swedenborgian and Mormon beliefs is neither to deny Smith's vision experiences nor to confirm those of the Swedish baron."<sup>[13]</sup>

At the same time, however, some who are critical of Joseph Smith skeptically look for the presumed "naturalistic origins" behind his writings to explain away his prophetic work.<sup>[14]</sup> Therefore, if a proposed connection to Swedenborg is intended to discredit the Prophet Joseph Smith-that is, intended to insinuate that an important doctrinal revelation was instead the wholesale and unacknowledged copy of another's writings-the question of influence bears more weight. The question of influence then gets at issues related to the very historical and religious roots of Mormonism.

What must be conceded is that most of the historical connections to be explored here-that is, those moments of opportunity when Joseph Smith might have been introduced to Swedenborgian tenets-are only speculative. The difficulty comes in determining the extent of Swedenborg's influence (if any) on Joseph Smith by the time of his 1839 comment to Edward Hunter (assuming the comment represents an accurate recollection). The religious connections that will be discussed afterward-that is, the scriptural ties and doctrinal implications of their respective afterlife theologies-are more substantive because they say important things about the significance of the Bible in understanding Joseph Smith's revelatory work.

### **Joseph Smith's Possible Encounters With Swedenborgianism**

If indeed Joseph Smith was impressed and ultimately influenced by the teachings of Swedenborg, he would have found himself in good company. Swedenborg is not exactly a household name in contemporary American society, but Ralph Waldo Emerson read Swedenborg extensively and devoted one of his "representative men" lectures to him.[15] Henry James Sr. was a convert to Swedenborgianism, as was Helen Keller.[16] John Chapman-the famous "Johnny Appleseed"-was a Swedenborgian missionary.[17] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Blake, Thomas Carlyle, and Charles Peirce, among others, were also openly appreciative of Swedenborg's poetic descriptions of his visionary discoveries in the fields of both science and religion.[18]

Swedenborg was born the son of a Swedish bishop but initially pursued an academic career in mathematics and metallurgy. Scientific inquiries basically dominated the first half of his intellectual career, from 1710 to 1744, but recording his spiritual visions occupied the second half of his career, from 1745 to 1772, the year of his death. Over the pages of forty- plus volumes, he touched on subjects as diverse as chemistry, biology, philosophy, mineralogy, marriage, the afterlife, and the nature of God.[19] Considering both the variety and the volume, it is not difficult to see why a century of thinkers would have been drawn to consider Swedenborg's often revolutionary revelations.[20]

After "a spirit ... spoke with him" in 1745, he "came to believe that God had called him to bring a new revelation to the world," such that he "claimed to have been constantly in touch with the spiritual world for more than a quarter of a century." [21] Based on his understanding of what he witnessed during these interchanges, Swedenborg described heaven as consisting of three divisions. Joseph Smith reported that on February 16, 1832, he and Sidney Rigdon likewise observed in vision that heaven consists of three divisions or kingdoms of glory-a revelation so fundamental to Mormonism that it is often referred to simply as "the Vision." [22]

Joseph Smith's brief but generally complimentary assessment of Swedenborg's visions begs some crucial questions: If Joseph Smith made this comment in 1839, when did he become acquainted with Swedenborg's writings? What was his source of information? Miller raises an intriguing possibility. A Mormon convert, Sarah Cleveland, and her Swedenborgian husband, John Cleveland, moved to Quincy, Illinois, in the mid-1830s, while most Latter- day Saints (including Joseph Smith) were gathering to Kirtland, Ohio, or western Missouri. But in early 1839, the Quincy area became the new gathering place for the exiled Mormons, and the Clevelands became closely associated with the Smith family when "Emma Smith and her children lived with the Clevelands for a short time in 1839 while Joseph was in jail." [23] Significantly, Joseph Smith was released from jail in Missouri in April 1839 and immediately traveled to the Quincy area, where he began to establish Nauvoo in the spring and summer of 1839. He would certainly have become acquainted with the Clevelands during those months he spent in Illinois before his November 1839 trip to Washington DC. It was during his return from Washington that he met Edward Hunter and reportedly made the remark about Swedenborg's visions. [24]

While the Clevelands thus seem to be a potentially solid, logical source for information on Swedenborg, their informative role could only have been a relatively late one, coming seven years after the publication of Joseph Smith's vision of the degrees of glory. If the Clevelands were his earliest source for Swedenborgian doctrine, the question of influence would be moot, and the puzzle of Joseph Smith's conversation with Edward Hunter would be resolved. Yet this question remains: had Joseph Smith been exposed to information on Swedenborg before he and Sidney Rigdon experienced "the Vision"?

Quinn has suggested-and his suggestion has proven very influential-that Joseph Smith could have become acquainted with Swedenborgian ideas through the occasional advertising and sale of Swedenborg's religious tracts in the environs around Joseph Smith's Palmyra home. [25] One author, citing Quinn's work, went so far as to declare that "Mormonism and Spiritualism share a common ancestor in Swedenborgism." [26] Yet there

are some problems with this sweeping conclusion, considering both the spottiness of the dates of the newspaper advertisements and the distances between Joseph Smith's home and the places of publication.<sup>[27]</sup> As Miller also points out, an argument for the likelihood that Joseph Smith gained any type of thorough fluency with Swedenborgian theology through his personal study of those Swedenborgian writings that might have been available for perusal would also mean the discounting of this telling observation made by Joseph Smith's mother: "Joseph was less inclined to the study of books than any child we had, but much more given to reflection and deep study," such that when he was "eighteen years of age" he "had never read the Bible through by course in his life."<sup>[28]</sup> Still, it is possible that local publications made Joseph Smith at least aware of Swedenborg's name and reputation.<sup>[29]</sup>

Meyers presents another possible source for Joseph Smith's introduction to Swedenborgian ideas, and her suggestion seems worthy of additional exploration. Recognizing the importance of Sidney Rigdon in the history of early Mormonism, Meyers notes that Swedenborgian evangelists were active in Rigdon's Pittsburgh as early as 1790.<sup>[30]</sup> Because Sidney Rigdon participated with Joseph Smith in "the Vision," Meyers's recognition of Rigdon's possible role in transmitting Swedenborgian ideas is intriguing. Such a connection relies on another somewhat tenuous contingency: that Sidney Rigdon was actually exposed to those evangelists and that he engaged them long enough to absorb some of their doctrines about life after death. This circumstantial connection is not without merit, because Rigdon was an avid student of religious ideas. However, an even stronger reason to believe that Sidney Rigdon was at the very least exposed to Swedenborg's ideas comes from the writings of Alexander Campbell.

By 1830, Sidney Rigdon had been a close associate of Campbell's for more than a decade. He had been persuaded by Campbell's preaching in favor of the restoration of Christian primitivism, and he had allied himself with Campbell's movement (now referred to as the "Disciples of Christ" or "Churches of Christ").<sup>[31]</sup> Rigdon was an active preacher, leading a congregation in Mentor, Ohio. However, in the fall of 1830, his ties with Campbell were strained to the breaking point. Campbell expressed sharp disdain for Rigdon's group's attempts at establishing a type of "New Testament communitarianism," such that the "differences between Rigdon and Campbell boiled over."<sup>[32]</sup> By late October 1830, Rigdon had been introduced to the newly published Book of Mormon and was soon thereafter baptized a Latter-day Saint. A little over a year later, Sidney Rigdon was with Joseph Smith when "the eyes of [their] understandings ... were opened" (D&C 76:19), and they saw the vision of the three degrees of glory.<sup>[33]</sup>

Therefore, considering Rigdon's long association with Alexander Campbell before joining with the Mormons, the discovery that Campbell made several references to Swedenborg in the two periodicals that he edited and published seems significant.<sup>[34]</sup> In fact, in at least two instances, Swedenborg and Rigdon are both mentioned in the same issue of the periodical—once even in the same article. In the October 4, 1830, issue of the *Millennial Harbinger*, an article entitled "Traveller's Reply-Excerpts from the Traveller's Journal" contains this interesting entry: "June 21st. Read two hours in the visions of Swedenborg on Heaven and Hell; and a sketch of his life." Then, after providing a journal entry for June 22, the "traveller," who signs the article "Francis," wrote a summary of his experiences: "I had the privilege of spending several days at [Alexander Campbell's] house, of forming a very pleasing personal acquaintance with him... . I was introduced also to Walter Scott, to Sidney Rigdon, to Adamson Bentley; which three ministers have immersed, within three years, at least three thousand persons."<sup>[35]</sup> While it is impossible to determine the chronological order of the "traveller's" June 21 reading of Swedenborg and his undated introduction to Sidney Rigdon, at least this passage establishes that someone familiar with a specific Swedenborgian text also knew Sidney Rigdon. Because Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* is mentioned—a text which discusses the three-tiered heaven—and because of Rigdon's own intellectual curiosity, it seems reasonable to infer that Rigdon could have possessed a basic familiarity with Swedenborg's view of the afterlife before he began his association with Joseph Smith.

Recognizing that any further conclusion beyond this suggestive Swedenborg-Rigdon connection will be speculative, it at least seems appropriate to say something about Rigdon's participation in the vision of the

degrees of glory.[36] He had become the principal scribe for Joseph Smith's work on a translation or revision of the Bible. When they came to John 5:29 in the translation work, Joseph Smith records that the verse "caused [them] to marvel," and it was while they "meditated upon these things" that the vision opened (D&C 76:18-19). Could it be possible, then, that in reflecting on the nature of the Resurrection, Sidney Rigdon brought up something he had learned from Swedenborg's idea of a three-tiered heaven or that Joseph Smith may have remembered hearing something of the same? There are other connected possibilities.

Joseph Smith worked extensively on his Bible revision and translation for the first three years after the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, from 1830 to 1833. Several of his recorded revelations are directly tied to questions that arose during that translation work. It is interesting to note that there is evidence that the translation did not proceed sequentially in all cases. For example, Joseph Smith translated John 5:29, which preceded receiving the revelation now contained in Doctrine and Covenants 76, on February 16, 1832. A month previously Joseph Smith recorded what is now Doctrine and Covenants 74-a revelation directly commenting on 1 Corinthians 7:14.[37] Receipt of Doctrine and Covenants 74 suggests that Joseph Smith had been involved, in January 1832, with a study of at least 1 Corinthians 7. Interestingly, the biblical passage most directly connected to the vision of the three degrees is found in 1 Corinthians 15:40-42. Could it be that Joseph Smith was intrigued by the notion of three glories implied in these verses-perhaps even in part because of Swedenborgian doctrine-such that the traditional understanding of John 5:29, which he read a few weeks later, and its resurrection dichotomy seemed incomplete?[38]

As inconclusive as the investigation into the Joseph Smith-Emanuel Swedenborg points of contact seem to be, these questions remain open. Additionally, an examination of the similarities and dissimilarities in the visionary texts speaks even more directly to reasonable limits on the suggested extent of Swedenborg's influence on Joseph Smith, because careful readers of Doctrine and Covenants 76 will notice that Joseph Smith's revelation is built on a framework of direct quotations of biblical passages.

### **The Visions of Heaven and Their Biblical Ties**

There is a sense that the Prophet Joseph Smith's vision is a conscious and careful expansion of pertinent scriptural texts. To be sure, the revelation certainly gives to those texts a significance and meaning that they do not have in traditional Christian understanding, yet the revelation repeatedly grounds itself in the language of the Bible. This point can hardly be overstated, and because it bears on the question of the degree of Swedenborg's influence, it demands a more extensive treatment.

The central New Testament passage that weaves itself throughout Joseph Smith's vision is 1 Corinthians 15:40-42. The Apostle Paul wrote, "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption." Readers familiar with Mormonism's conception of a three-tiered heaven will recognize the points of contact between this passage and the Latter-day Saint description of that heaven. Allusions to this passage from 1 Corinthians 15 abound in Doctrine and Covenants 76: inhabitants of the highest kingdom of glory are "they whose bodies are celestial" (v. 70); the glory of the celestial kingdom is such that "the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical" (v. 70); the difference between the celestial kingdom and the terrestrial kingdom is analogous to the way that "the moon differs from the sun in the firmament" (v. 71); the summary description of the three kingdoms of glory follows-and even adopts-Paul's language: "And the glory of the celestial is one, even as the glory of the sun is one. And the glory of the terrestrial is one, even as the glory of the moon is one. And the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one; for as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one from another in the glory in the telestial world" (vv. 96-98). It seems evident that Joseph Smith understood his visionary experience to be related directly to Paul's description of the Resurrection and thus chose to present his vision as an expansion of that description.

It is therefore surprising to note that Emanuel Swedenborg apparently never quoted from, nor even referred



to, 1 Corinthians 15:40-42 in any of his voluminous writings.[39] Swedenborg did call the highest level of heaven the "celestial kingdom," yet because this was a common synonym for heaven in the Christian vernacular, it would seem a serious stretch to see in this shared vocabulary a direct borrowing of Swedenborgian thought in Joseph Smith's writings.[40] Joseph Smith, based on his interpretation of the Pauline passage, called the second kingdom or heavenly level "terrestrial," while Swedenborg called that level "spiritual." The phrase "terrestrial bodies" and the single word terrestrial do appear in Swedenborg's translated writings, but never do they describe or even refer to the inhabitants of the second or "spiritual" heaven.[41] The word telestial, which Joseph Smith used to describe the lowest degree of heaven, never appears in Swedenborg's works-and indeed seems to be an invented word unique to Joseph Smith.[42]

Quinn, in his review of similarities between Swedenborgianism and Doctrine and Covenants 76, candidly admits that of "the names of the three glories (Celestial, Terrestrial, and Telestial) in Joseph Smith's 1832 vision, ... only the Celestial corresponded to Swedenborg's theology of three heavens," yet asserts that Swedenborg "stated that the inhabitants of the three heavens corresponded to the sun, moon, and stars." [43] Such an assertion, if true, would seem to imply another Swedenborgian parallel in Joseph Smith's use of 1 Corinthians 15:40-42. However, a review of Swedenborg's writings reveals that Quinn misappropriated or at least overstated the sun- moon- star description in Swedenborg's work, and subsequent writers may have too readily accepted Quinn's conclusions, thus exaggerating the perception of similarity.[44]

The passage that Quinn quotes in support of Swedenborg's sun-moon-star description is from Arcana Coelestia. Like so much of Swedenborg's poetic and symbolic writings, the passage is complex and not easily deciphered. However, what seems most clear is that Swedenborg used the sun-moon metaphor to describe the Lord rather than the three- tiered heaven (note that the celestial, spiritual, and natural kingdoms or heavens are not even mentioned in this passage). He wrote:

The sun has a correspondence, and so does the moon; for in heaven the Lord is the Sun, and the Moon too. The fire and heat of the sun, as well as its light, have a correspondence, for it is the Lord's love towards the whole human race that its fire and heat correspond to, and His Divine truth that its light corresponds to. The stars too have a correspondence, the communities of heaven and their dwelling- places being what the stars correspond to. Not that the heavenly communities dwell in the stars, but that they have been set in order in the same kind of way as the stars.[45]

Rather than associating stars with only the third heaven, Swedenborg apparently used the stars as a representative metaphor for all the "communities of heaven and their dwelling- places." That analogy could be understood as implying gradations of glory, and Swedenborg does close this passage by noting that "the specific nature of each person's correspondence therefore determines what he looks like in the next life in the light of heaven. This explains why angels have an indescribably bright and beautiful appearance, whereas those in hell have an unspeakably dark and ugly one." [46] Yet nowhere in this passage is there the threefold division of heaven, nor any association with the glory of the sun, moon, and stars.

An interesting line in Swedenborg's Heaven and Hell describes the Lord as both sun and moon: "The Lord is seen as a sun by those who are in His celestial kingdom, where love to Him reigns, and as a moon by those who are in His spiritual kingdom, where charity to the neighbor and faith reign." [47] Again, for Swedenborg there is certainly a qualitative difference between those in the highest and second (and, though not mentioned in this passage, the third) heavenly kingdoms, and again he used the sun and moon as metaphors for the Lord, but this is not the explicit "sun/moon/stars" triad that Joseph Smith used as an analogy for the glory of the inhabitants of the respective kingdoms, "whose bodies are celestial" or terrestrial or telestial, "whose glory is that of the sun" or moon or stars (D&C 76:70; emphasis added). The strength of this distinction seems to be highlighted by another allusion to the celestial, terrestrial, and telestial glories in a revelation Joseph Smith recorded ten months after section 76. Doctrine and Covenants 88:19-32 makes clear that the kingdoms of glory correspond to the degrees of glory which will "quicken" those resurrected souls who

inherit the various kingdoms. On the other hand, the phrases the "glory of the moon" and the "glory of the stars"-Paul's phrases from 1 Corinthians 15:40-42-never appear in Swedenborg's translated writings.

Instead of the sun-moon-star association, it seems that a student of Swedenborg would be naturally led to choose a different analogy for heaven that is more readily apparent in his writings: the divisions among bodily organs. In three of the four passages that Quinn cites in support of the three-tiered heaven, Swedenborg mentions parts of the body in conjunction with heaven, specifically stating that "inhabitants of the Lord's celestial kingdom all belong to the province of the heart, and those of His spiritual kingdom all belong to the province of the lungs. The influx from the celestial kingdom into the spiritual kingdom is similar to the influx of the heart into the lungs, and also to the influx of all things belonging to the heart into those belonging to the lungs."<sup>[48]</sup> Swedenborg's heart and lung analogy for the two kingdoms of heaven never appears in Joseph Smith's vision. Interestingly, earlier in this same passage Swedenborg writes that "in heaven or the Grand Man there are two kingdoms, one called celestial, the other spiritual."<sup>[49]</sup> This is not to say that he was denying the existence of the third tier, but it perhaps suggests that Swedenborg's view of heaven was not always precisely and consistently described, so that his writings could lead to alternately a three- or two-tiered heaven, depending on which works were consulted.

No evidence therefore suggests that 1 Corinthians 15:40-42 informed Swedenborg's vision of heaven, but this passage directly influenced Joseph Smith. Indeed, the ties to biblical passages in Doctrine and Covenants 76 extend beyond these explicit references to 1 Corinthians 15:40-42.<sup>[50]</sup> Several chief theological concepts in the revelation are explained with direct scriptural citations. For example, those who inherit hell after final judgment in Latter-day Saint theology are called "sons of perdition," and in describing them in Doctrine and Covenants 76, Joseph Smith used Jesus Christ's description of Judas Iscariot: "It had been better for them never to have been born" (v. 32; compare Matthew 26:24). Their sin, according to Doctrine and Covenants 76:35, is that after "having received [the Holy Spirit]," they have "crucified [the Only Begotten Son of the Father] unto themselves and put him to an open shame," another direct quotation from the New Testament (compare Hebrews 6:6). Swedenborg never referred to Matthew 26:24 or Hebrews 6:6, nor did he ever use the phrase "sons of perdition," verses and terminology that were integral to Joseph Smith's understanding of the inhabitants of hell.

In defining the parameters of the telestial kingdom, and specifically the type of people whose choices would lead to an inheritance in that third kingdom of glory, Joseph Smith again turned to biblical passages, quoting Revelation 22:15 (compare D&C 76:103) and 1 Corinthians 3:22 (compare D&C 76:99). However, those verses are never cited by Swedenborg.

Finally, and perhaps most theologically important for Latter-day Saints, Joseph Smith wrote in Doctrine and Covenants 76:58-59 that those who inherited the celestial kingdom would become "gods, even the sons of God- wherefore, all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's." The language Joseph Smith used to explain this celestial inheritance comes again directly from Paul-1 Corinthians 3:22-23. Neither 1 Corinthians 3 nor the central phrase from Hebrews 12:23, "church of the Firstborn," appear in Swedenborg's works.<sup>[51]</sup>

To be sure, Swedenborg did quote extensively from the Bible and was a devoted student of the Bible, even in its original languages.<sup>[52]</sup> What seems telling is that Swedenborg associated his three-tiered heaven with 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, in which Paul reported that he "knew a man in Christ ... (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."<sup>[53]</sup> Swedenborg referred to this verse in at least two interconnected ways: first, to describe his own visionary experience of being "caught up" and hearing "unspeakable words";<sup>[54]</sup> and second, in the context of a specific discussion of the three divisions- celestial, spiritual, and natural.<sup>[55]</sup>

This extensive list of the real, substantive differences that lie beneath the initial veneer of similarity between the respective Swedenborgian and Latter-day Saint understandings of heaven prompts several observations. First, those writers who have seemed anxious to explain away Joseph Smith's vision as dependent on, or even a wholesale appropriation of, Swedenborgian thought might reconsider the complexity of both revelations. In reality, Meyers's cautious proposal seems wise. She wrote of "the possibility that Joseph Smith's picture of the realms of glory is derived indirectly from Emanuel Swedenborg's Heaven and Hell," but the truly distinctive explanations of the two systems underscore the words possibility and indirectly.[56]

Second, two disaffected, nineteenth-century Mormon writers familiar with both Emanuel Swedenborg and Joseph Smith never hinted at any similarity in their respective conceptions of heaven. At the very least, John Hyde's and William Godbe's conspicuous silence on the Emanuel Swedenborg-Joseph Smith connection recommends caution before making conclusions, perhaps raising the same challenge suggested by the textual comparison of the two descriptions of heaven: the initial similarities seem more superficial after a thorough investigation into the substance of the doctrines.[57]

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, there are parallels, and both Quinn and Miller have noted the uniqueness of the three-tiered heaven when compared with traditional Christian eschatology. How does one account, then, for the similarities found in Joseph Smith's and Emanuel Swedenborg's respective descriptions of the afterlife? Believing Latter-day Saints might answer that question with an explanation that parallels Joseph Smith's reported statement to Edward Hunter: it is possible that Swedenborg saw the heavens. Latter-day Saints readily accept that individuals outside their tradition have been given special, revealed insight into heavenly truths, and thus the points of convergence in Swedenborgianism and Mormonism could reflect accurate, though independent, descriptions of true Christian eschatology. Latter-day Saints could accept that, to a remarkable degree, Emanuel Swedenborg and Joseph Smith both experienced actual visions of the afterlife reality.[58]

Observers outside the Latter-day Saint tradition would obviously not be satisfied with this type of shared-vision explanation. Even so, there is another reasonable explanation that can account for the similarities in the two theological systems: both men studied the Bible intensively.

Swedenborg experienced a midlife change following the visionary experience in 1745 that he interpreted as a call "to bring a new revelation to the world," and Sig Synnestvedt notes that "he spent the two years immediately following his 'call' in further close study of the Bible... . He perfected his knowledge of Hebrew and Greek in order to study the Bible in the original texts, and, in effect, made a new translation of many of the books of both the Old and New Testaments. In 1747 he began publication of his most extended theological work, *Arcana Coelestia*- Heavenly Secrets. This study of the books of Genesis and Exodus runs to more than 7,000 pages or about three million words." [59] It is significant that while Swedenborg's work is most often described today as mystic or even hermetic, he saw himself as unlocking the Bible.[60] His massive *Arcana Coelestia* commentary represents his immersion into the Bible, and, importantly, it is in this *Arcana Coelestia* that readers find many of the descriptions of the three levels of heaven.

In a similar way, Joseph Smith's most prolific period for recorded revelations corresponded exactly with his translation or revision of the Bible.[61] Like Swedenborg, Joseph Smith systematically worked his way through the Bible, noting changes and doctrinal corrections or clarifications. His vision of the three degrees of glory was reported as a direct outgrowth of that translation endeavor.

Quinn and John Brooke refer to "the seven heavens of Jewish mysticism," "angelology," "magic books," "a wide range of occult influences" as the possible seedbeds for Emanuel Swedenborg's and Joseph Smith's descriptions of heaven.[62] Perhaps their extensive and impressive sifting through this type of esoteric source material is more complicated than it needs to be. Swedenborg could have been prompted to consider a three-

tiered heaven simply through reading Paul's intriguing mention of "a third heaven" in 2 Corinthians 12:1-4, verses Swedenborg quoted (and personalized) on several occasions. Joseph Smith could have derived his description of three glories from Paul's description in 1 Corinthians 15:40-42, the very verses that he employed to explain his vision. In fact, the Bible became the source by which Joseph Smith verbalized his revelation.

In the end, then, it seems difficult to describe Joseph Smith's recorded vision of heaven as a magical or occult exposition on life after death, if "magical" and "occult" are taken to mean extrabiblical or non-Christian. Instead, Joseph Smith's revelation is thoroughly connected to the Bible, even if his extrapolations from those biblical passages are admittedly unique. And while Swedenborg's writings on heaven have an undeniably distinct feel from Doctrine and Covenants 76, in that Swedenborg rarely adopts direct biblical phraseology, and the poetic freedom of his writing often feels disconnected, it still can be argued that his idea of three heavens could be primarily an expansive interpretation that begins at a biblical starting point.

Therefore, this exercise can lead us finally to consider generally the Bible and the idea of influence as it relates to early Mormonism. Jan Shippo, Richard Bushman, and Philip Barlow, in reviewing Brooke's *The Refiner's Fire*, all settled on a similar observation about his thesis of hermetic influences on Joseph Smith. In the words of Jan Shippo, "Although [Bushman and Barlow] apparently did not compare notes about what they would write, both ... pointed to Brooke's failure to recognize how much of what he described as hermetic or occult came directly from the New Testament."<sup>[63]</sup> Shippo then adds, "Brooke concentrates too much on the recondite and radical aspects of this new faith. At no point does he acknowledge that the religious and cultural situation into which Mormonism made its way was one in which ... authority continued to rest in the Bible- the Bible alone, sola scriptura."<sup>[64]</sup> The suggestion that Swedenborg appealed to Joseph Smith because of a transmitted hermeticism thus neglects a crucial aspect of Doctrine and Covenants 76: that revelation is more than anything else a blending of literal readings of the Bible into a revolutionary view of heaven. And in that quality of being revolutionary perhaps more than in anything else, Emanuel Swedenborg and Joseph Smith were alike.

## Notes

1. Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide? A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 177.
2. Brigham John Bowen, "Present in the World of Glory: Joseph Smith and Early Nineteenth-Century Views of Heaven," in Richard Lyman Bushman, ed., *Archive of Restoration Culture: Summer Fellows' Papers, 2000-2002* (Provo, UT: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History, Brigham Young University, 2005), 102.
3. Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang, *Heaven: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 313. See McDannell and Lang, *Heaven*, 183, for a fuller description of what they mean by "modern heaven." See Bowen, "Present in the World of Glory," 99-100, for a thoughtful summary of this portion of McDannell and Lang's work.
4. Bowen, "Present in the World of Glory," 103.
5. Bowen, "Present in the World of Glory," 103.
6. McDannell and Lang, *Heaven*, 320.
7. For a summary of Emmanuel Swedenborg's life and influence, as well as an up-to-date report on the activities and organization of one branch of his followers who comprise the New Church denomination of the General Church of the New Jerusalem, see [www.newchurch.org](http://www.newchurch.org). This Web site also has links to the church's "affiliate organizations," including the General Church's Bryn Athyn College in Philadelphia. The General Church of the New Jerusalem split from another New Church organization, the Swedenborgian Church of North America. See their Web site at [www.swedenborg.org](http://www.swedenborg.org). Swedenborg himself never organized a church, but the New Church movement was initiated soon after his death by those who were impressed by his writings.
8. It should be noted that Fawn Brodie proposed that Joseph Smith's vision of heaven drew on one of the aforementioned theologians, Thomas Dick (see Bowen, "Present in the World of Glory," 105n11,

- where he cites both Brodie's *No Man Knows My History* [New York: Vintage Books, 1995], 172-73, as well as Edward T. Jones, "The Theology of Thomas Dick and Its Possible Relationship to That of Joseph Smith" [master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1969], "for a thorough discussion and refutation of Brodie's claims"; see also Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005], 458, 648n81).
9. William E. Hunter, *Edward Hunter: Faithful Steward* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1970), 316; original spelling retained. The quote comes from the typescript of the "Autobiography of Edward Hunter" included in the final chapter of the book.
  10. Bowen, "Present in the World of Glory," 105n2. Chapter 7 of McDannell and Lang's *Heaven* is entitled "Swedenborg and the Emergence of a Modern Heaven."
  11. Mary Ann Meyers, "Death in Swedenborgian and Mormon Eschatology," *Dialogue* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 58-64; D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, revised and enlarged edition (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 217-19; Craig W. Miller, "Did Emanuel Swedenborg Influence LDS Doctrine?" unpublished paper. Miller has posted his paper at [craigwmiller.tripod.com](http://craigwmiller.tripod.com) with a note that the page was last updated on June 4, 2000. Miller also gave presentations on Mormon-Swedenborg parallels at the 1998 and 2002 Sunstone symposia in Salt Lake City. His approach is the most extensive and comprehensive, and he deals with remarkable parallels that extend beyond the three-tiered heaven doctrine considered here. His analysis and attention to detail are impressive. I would argue that many of the parallels he discusses (marriage, for example) could be treated in a manner analogous to the treatment of the three heaven parallels we receive here: Emanuel Swedenborg and Joseph Smith both had the Bible as their theological starting point, and their revelations represent expansions of biblical passages.
  12. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 316.
  13. Meyers, "Death in Swedenborgian and Mormon Eschatology," 59.
  14. Robert D. Anderson, Review of Wayne L. Cowdery, Howard A. Davis, and Arthur Vanick, "Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Mormon History* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 244. Though Anderson's comments apply to "the valid quest" for the "skeptic" to seek the "naturalistic origins" of the Book of Mormon, his assertions seem to characterize more general criticism of the Prophet Joseph Smith.
  15. Sig Synnестvedt, *The Essential Swedenborg: Basic Teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg, Scientist, Philosopher, and Theologian* (The Swedenborg Foundation and Twayne Publishers, 1970), 5-6; Colin Wilson, "Introduction," in *Emanuel Swedenborg, Heaven and Hell*, trans. George F. Dole (West Chester, PA: The Swedenborg Foundation, 1979), 10; see also Robert D. Richardson Jr., *Emerson: The Mind on Fire* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 667, 670, where the number of references to Swedenborg in the book's index exceeds the number of references to Plato by one.
  16. Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001), 82; Wilson, "Introduction," 21; Synnестvedt, *The Essential Swedenborg*, 7.
  17. N. J. Paterson, *Johnny Appleseed: A Voice in the Wilderness: The Story of the Pioneer John Chapman* (The Swedenborg Press, 1947).
  18. Synnестvedt, *The Essential Swedenborg*, 6; Menand, *The Metaphysical Club*, 275.
  19. See Synnестvedt, *The Essential Swedenborg*, 16-35, for both a succinct chronology and biographical sketch of Swedenborg's life.
  20. Mary Ann Meyers makes an argument for Swedenborg's appeal to readers who were well educated—especially in the sciences—and affluent, suggesting that Swedenborg's background and career, the complexities of his doctrine, as well as his emphasis on education, contribute to his appeal (Mary Ann Meyers, *A New World Jerusalem: The Swedenborgian Experience in Community Construction* [Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983], 15-16).
  21. Synnестvedt, *The Essential Swedenborg*, 25; Meyers, *A New World Jerusalem*, 17 (caption to the illustration). Swedenborg's own description of his visionary experiences comes in his work *Arcana Coelestia*, trans. John E. Elliott, 5; accessed on March 11, 2008, at

<http://theheavenlydoctrines.org/static/d8086/5.htm>: "I have been allowed constantly and without interruption for several years now to share the experiences of spirits and angels, to listen to them speaking and to speak to them myself. I have been allowed therefore to hear and see astounding things in the next life which have never come to any man's knowledge, nor even entered his imagination. In that world I have learned about different kinds of spirits, about the state of souls after death, about hell (the miserable state of people who do not have faith), about heaven (the very happy state of those who do have faith), and above all else about the doctrine of the faith that is acknowledged in the whole of heaven. In the Lord's Divine mercy more will be told about these matters in what follows." It should be noted that Swedenborg's works are numbered by passage rather than by page, so that all editions and translations correspond by passage number. Thirty-five of his most important religious texts have been digitized and are provided in a searchable format on the internet at <http://theheavenlydoctrines.org>. That resource has proven invaluable to this study. All of Swedenborg's writings cited in this paper come from that digitized collection. Often, more than one translation from Swedenborg's Latin is included on the Web site.

22. On the publication of the vision, see Robert J. Woodford, *Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants* (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1974), 934, where he notes that "the Vision" was published in the *Evening and Morning Star* five months after the February 1832 receipt of the revelation. Woodford's extensive documentation of textual changes in all editions of this revelation underscores the fact that, minus some spelling and grammar changes and other minor editing, the revelation published today is substantially and doctrinally the same as in its earliest 1832 published form. All references to canonized Latter-day Saint writings (the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price) will be to the 1981 editions of those scriptures, unless otherwise noted.
23. Miller, "Did Emanuel Swedenborg Influence LDS Doctrine?" 10. Richard Bushman mentions Emma's residency with the Clevelands, but he does not mention Judge Cleveland's religious background (Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 376).
24. Hunter, Edward Hunter, 51.
25. Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 217-18; see also John L. Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644-1844* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 205: "Michael Quinn has noted that the idea of three heavens, or degrees of glory, was available in Emmanuel Swedenborg's cosmic system, in which three heavens-topped by a 'celestial kingdom'-were associated with the sun, the moon, and the stars... Swedenborg's cosmos was summarized in various short texts available in Palmyra, and translations of his original texts would not have been too difficult to locate in the 1830s." Brooke's book received wide acclaim as a winner of the Bancroft Prize.
26. Michael W. Homer, "Spiritualism and Mormonism: Some Thoughts on Similarities and Differences," *Dialogue* 27, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 174n16.
27. Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 217-18. He mentions a summary of those beliefs published in an 1808 *Canandaigua*, New York, newspaper (although Joseph Smith's family did not move to New York from Vermont until 1816) and a summary "in a book owned by Smith's hometown library since 1817." Finally, "in 1826 the *Canandaigua* newspaper also advertised Swedenborg's *A Treatise Concerning Heaven and Hell* for sale." *Canandaigua* is about twelve miles from Palmyra.
28. Lucy Mack Smith, *The Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, ed. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996), 111; see also Miller, "Did Emanuel Swedenborg Influence LDS Doctrine?" 11.
29. Michael Quinn added a new reference to an 1830 Palmyra publication mentioning Swedenborg in his 1998 revised edition of *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 176, that did not appear in his original 1987 edition. Interestingly, though, Quinn does not refer to this 1830 account in his notes related to Swedenborg's vision of heaven (Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, rev. ed., 520nn319-29). Because of its geographic and temporal proximity to Joseph Smith, this new discovery seems the most promising in support of Quinn's suggestion that Joseph Smith at least could have been aware of Swedenborg through local newspapers.

30. Meyers, "Death in Swedenborgian and Mormon Eschatology," 64. Compare also Miller, "Did Emanuel Swedenborg Influence LDS Doctrine?" 9-10, where he explores the possibility that other Swedenborgian evangelists may have been active in cities seventy-five miles from Palmyra. One Swedenborgian apparently lived in Rochester, twenty-four miles from Palmyra, but Miller notes that he could find no evidence of contact between this Mr. Harford-or between other Swedenborgian evangelists, for that matter-and any in the Palmyra Latter-day Saint community.
31. See Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 26. See pages 18-23 for a summary of Rigdon's decision to join Alexander Campbell.
32. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon*, 53-54.
33. The most detailed account of the actual receipt of this revelation was given sixty years later by Philo Dibble, who reported that he was present when the vision was given, although he himself did not see the vision. His recollection was published in the Salt Lake City periodical *The Juvenile Instructor*, May 15, 1892, 303-4.
34. The two periodicals are the *Christian Baptist* (published from 1823 until 1830) and its successor, the *Millennial Harbinger* (first published in 1830). Both periodicals are part of the digitized collection of restoration movement religious texts provided by the Memorial University of Newfoundland at [www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/people/acampbell.html](http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/people/acampbell.html).
35. *Millennial Harbinger*, October 7, 1830, 447-48; <http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/acampbell/tmh/MH0110.HTM>.
36. Sidney Rigdon had a falling out with Joseph Smith in the 1840s but did not officially break with the Church until after Joseph Smith's death. He was subjected to repeated accusations that he had been the primary writer of the Book of Mormon, yet even though he had broken with the Church, and even though he "never showed an inclination to relinquish his due, [he] vigorously maintained throughout his life that he had no part in the production of *The Book of Mormon* and never saw it until it was published" (Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon*, reprint [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999], 104). Significantly, and in a similar way, even after his trouble with Joseph Smith, and soon after Joseph Smith's death, Rigdon still witnessed of his participation in the vision of the degrees of glory (Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon*, 337).
37. Robert J. Matthews, "A Plainer Translation," *Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible: A History and Commentary* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 34-35.
38. See Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 196, about the Prophet's encounter with John 5:29: "The scripture raised the question of how God could divide people into stark categories of saved and damned when individuals were so obviously a mix in ordinary life. 'It appeared self-evident,' Joseph wrote, 'that if God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body, the term "heaven," as intended for the Saints eternal home, must include more kingdoms than one.' The question Joseph posed was a classic post-Calvinistic puzzle. For over a century Anglo-American culture had struggled to explain the arbitrary judgments of the Calvinist God who saved and damned according to his own good pleasure with little regard for human effort."
39. This assertion, and subsequent assertions about the use of certain words, phrases, and scriptural passages in Swedenborg's writings, are based on the searchable database of Swedenborg's religious works at [theheavenlydoctrines.org](http://theheavenlydoctrines.org). Although Craig Miller, in the body of his paper, seems to imply that Swedenborg did draw on 1 Corinthians 15:40-42, in an endnote Miller provides the important clarification that Swedenborg never referenced 1 Corinthians 15:40-42 and that "his followers generally don't see the three heavens in the words of these scriptures" (Miller, "Did Emanuel Swedenborg Influence LDS Doctrine?" 14n8).
40. For example, the searchable database *Early English Books Online* lists seventy-three seventeenth-century works-including the writings of John Foxe, Richard Baxter, and early translations of Augustine, Jerome, Eusebius, and John Calvin-that contain the phrase "celestial kingdom," all of which predate Emanuel Swedenborg's writings (<http://eebo.chadwyck.com>).

41. In all seventy-six passages containing the word terrestrial, Swedenborg uses it interchangeably with the associated (and most often listed) synonyms worldly, corporeal, or material-in other words, terrestrial always refers to the present life, and never the afterlife.
42. Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 602n11: "'Telestial' was not a known word. It has the ring of telos, meaning 'end' or 'uttermost,' a Greek word that appears in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 15:24, a few verses before a passage on bodies celestial and terrestrial in verse 40."
43. Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 217, 219.
44. See, for example, Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire*, 205: "Michael Quinn has noted that the idea of three heavens, or degrees of glory, was available in Emmanuel Swedenborg's cosmic system, in which three heavens-topped by a 'celestial kingdom'-were associated with the sun, the moon, and the stars." See also Richard Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 198: "Building on Paul, 'The Vision' [of Joseph Smith] made the three resurrected glories of sun, moon, and stars into three heavenly realms. The same scripture inspired eighteenth-century Swedish scientist and visionary Emanuel Swedenborg to divide the heavens into three parts, 'celestial,' 'spiritual,' and 'natural,' equivalent to sun, moon, and stars" (emphasis added). Bushman cites Quinn's work in his notes (*Rough Stone Rolling*, 602n16), but he then adds this important caveat, which parallels the argument of this paper: "Since Swedenborg attracted the attention of New England intellectuals□his ideas may conceivably have drifted into Joseph Smith's environment, but it was more likely the passage from Paul sparked the revelations of both men" (*Rough Stone Rolling*, 198-99).
45. Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, trans. Elliott, 5377; <http://theheavenlydoctrines.org/static/d8086/5377.htm>.
46. Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, 5377.
47. Swedenborg, *Heaven and Hell*, trans. John C. Ager, 118; <http://theheavenlydoctrines.org/static/d5399/118.htm>.
48. Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, 3887; <http://theheavenlydoctrines.org/static/d8086/3887.htm>. See again Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, 5377: "The subject at the end of the previous chapter was the correspondence of certain internal organs of the body with the Grand Man, that is to say, the correspondence of the liver, pancreas, stomach, and certain other organs with it. In this present section the same subject moves on to the correspondence of the peritoneum, kidneys, ureters, bladder, and also the intestines with it. Whatever exists in the human being, both in the external man and in the internal man, has a correspondence with the Grand Man. Without that correspondence with the Grand Man-that is, with heaven, or what amounts to the same, with the spiritual world-nothing can ever come into being and remain in being." See also Swedenborg, *Heaven and Hell*, 60.
49. Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, 3887; emphasis added.
50. For a thoughtful (and more thorough) discussion of the biblical passages outlined here, and their continued expansion into the doctrinally important revelations which soon followed "the Vision," see Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 195-214.
51. I am indebted to Greg Simpson for pointing out the repeated connection between Doctrine and Covenants 76 and Hebrews 12:22-24. On the doctrinal importance of Doctrine and Covenants 76:58, see also Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler, *Revelations of the Restoration* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 531: "This verse stands at the heart of Mormonism." While Joseph Smith did not explicitly teach the doctrine of deification-the potential for humans to become gods-for another decade, it is significant that he would thus expand upon early revelations (D&C 76:58-59, 95, for example, and related passages like D&C 88:107 and 93:19-20) and carry the implications of those passages in this doctrinal direction, a direction in which Swedenborg did not go. I appreciate Lori Nelson for providing the perspective of a Swedenborgian on this point (e-mail from Lori Nelson, October 3, 2007). Importantly, McDannell and Lang make this comment about Latter-day Saint distinctiveness: "While even nineteenth-century spiritualists were reluctant to predict that spiritual growth in the other world could eventually end with human deification, LDS theology took spiritual progress after death to its logical conclusion. The possibility of people evolving into gods is a Latter-day Saint tenet" (*Heaven*, 321-22). On this question of human deification, see Richard Bushman's review of John L. Brooke's *The Refining Fire*, "Mysteries of Mormonism," *Journal of the*



- Early Republic 15, no. 3 (1995): 503. Bushman notes that since, for John Brooke, "the goal of hermeticism was to recover divine power and perfection; 'divinization,' is Brooke's word for it," and since "Mormonism promised that the faithful would become gods," these "parallels lead Brooke to argue that Mormonism should be understood as more of an hermetic restoration than a return to primitive Christianity." For a differing view of parallels in the Mormon doctrine of exaltation and the early Christian (and contemporary Eastern Orthodox Christian) belief in human deification, see Jordan Vajda, "Partakers of the Divine Nature": A Comparative Analysis of Patristic and Mormon Doctrines of Divinization (Berkeley, CA: master's thesis, Graduate Theological Union, 1998); see Stephen E. Robinson, *Are Mormons Christians?* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991), 60-65, 68, 70.
52. Michael Stanley, *Emanuel Swedenborg: Essential Readings* (Wellingsborough, England: Crucible, 1988), 23.
  53. In later sermons, Joseph Smith also referred to this "third heaven" passage from 2 Corinthians 12 and connected it with "the Vision" and the three degrees of glory (see, for example, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 304-5, 311). Although the "caught up to the third heaven" (2 Corinthians 12:2) passage does not appear in the language of Doctrine and Covenants 76, the Prophet does use a phrase from 2 Corinthians 12:4 in Doctrine and Covenants 76:115 ("not lawful for a man to utter"). Compare also Doctrine and Covenants 137:1, where the phrase, "whether in the body or out I cannot tell," from 2 Corinthians 12:2 is used in a description of the Prophet's later (1836) vision of the celestial kingdom. It seems apparent that, like Swedenborg, Joseph Smith saw 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 as implying that heaven consisted of multiple kingdoms or glories.
  54. See, for example, Emanuel Swedenborg, *De Verbo*, 3.
  55. See, for example, Emanuel Swedenborg, *Conjugal Love*, 328.
  56. Meyers, "Death in Swedenborgian and Mormon Eschatology," 59.
  57. John Hyde Jr. was a teenager when he joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in England in the early 1850s. He served a mission in France, immigrated to Utah, left for a mission to Hawaii, and there, at age 23, became disaffected and separated himself from Mormonism. In fact, for several months thereafter, he launched some vicious attacks on the Church. He published in 1857 a stinging expose entitled, *Mormonism: Its Leaders and Designs*, in which he portrayed Joseph Smith a charlatan and the Book of Mormon a sham. The expose was published while Hyde was living in New York. He soon returned to England and there, in 1858, wrote a novel (never published) about Mormon conspiracies and crimes. But soon thereafter he became a follower of Swedenborg and eventually a well-known exponent of his teachings (Lynne Watkins Jorgensen, "John Hyde, Jr., Mormon Renegade," *Journal of Mormon History* 17 [1991]: 134-36). Even today he is renowned among Swedenborgians for his groundbreaking bibliography of Swedenborg's works. Hyde himself also wrote several books and pamphlets and articles on the tradition's theology. Grateful acknowledgement is given to Carroll Odhner, head librarian at the Swedenborg Library of Bryn Athyn College, Pennsylvania. I am indebted to Ms. Odhner for the insight about John Hyde's current reputation and notoriety among Swedenborgians (conversation with Carroll Odhner, May 4, 2005). It might seem natural, therefore, that a man in Hyde's position—one who had already criticized Joseph Smith for his unoriginality and deceit—could use his familiarity with Swedenborgian theology to bolster his accusations against Mormons by suggesting that they deceptively co-opted Swedenborg's teachings on heaven. Yet Hyde apparently never mentioned Mormon doctrines in connection with any of his writings on Swedenborg, even though one of his extensive pamphlets dealt specifically with the afterlife. He did criticize Mormons in 1868 for what he saw as their political attempts to establish an Old Testament-type theocracy, yet he never mentioned the doctrine of the degrees of glory (see John Hyde, "Adaptation," *The New Jerusalem Magazine* [Boston], August 1868, 89). Carroll Odhner brought this reference to my attention.
  58. Likewise, William Godbe was a Mormon who was drawn to Spiritualism, and eventually he left the Church to pursue his spiritualist interests. In doing so, he actively persuaded other Church members to join him. Before his final break with the Church, however, Godbe published *Utah Magazine*. During its three-year run, the periodical featured a smattering of articles related to spiritualism and the occult. Two of those dealt with Swedenborg. The first, "Swedenborg's Curious Powers," was an

excerpt from a biography of Swedenborg that chronicled his most famous manifestations of spiritual communication: directing a widow to find the secret drawer of her deceased husband; and describing a fire in Stockholm, as it happened, while he was in a city three hundred miles away (see "Swedenborg's Curious Powers," Utah Magazine, March 7, 1868, 104-5). But the second article, "Emanuel Swedenborg," not only provided a glowing biographical sketch but also an excerpt from his teachings (see Utah Magazine, October 16, 1869, 380). Copies of Utah Magazine are housed in Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah. If Godbe wanted to win followers to his spiritualist cause, and his reading audience consisted mostly of Latter-day Saints, one might expect that he would want to impress them with Swedenborg's prefiguring of Joseph Smith's vision of heaven. But as with John Hyde, Godbe is apparently silent about those suggested similarities.

59. See this representative passage in Spencer J. Palmer, Roger R. Keller, Dong Sull Choi, and James A. Toronto, eds., *Religions of the World: A Latter-day Saint View* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 1997), 249: "Latter-day Saints believe that the spiritual influence which emanates from God is not confined to selected nations, races, or groups. All people share an inheritance of divine light. Christ himself is the light of the world... If people act according to this inspiration, they progress from grace to grace, learning precept upon precept, until they receive full enlightenment" (see D&C 93:19-20; 98:11-12).
60. Sønnestvedt, *The Essential Swedenborg*, 25-26; see also Stanley, *Emanuel Swedenborg*, 23.
61. See, for example, Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire*, 205: "Swedenborgian theology ... provided one direct connection to the high hermetic tradition, and its system of a triad of heavens reflected a wide range of occult influences."
62. See Robert J. Matthews, "A Plainer Translation," 256: "The Prophet [Joseph Smith] was actively engaged in making the translation of the Bible from June 1830 until July 1833. Examination of the chronological table in the forepart of the Doctrine and Covenants will quickly show that most of the doctrinal revelations were received during this period. I believe this is not a coincidence but a consequence. It was Joseph Smith's study and translation of the Bible that set the stage for the reception of many revelations on the doctrines of the gospel. There is an inseparable connection between the New Translation of the Bible and many of the revelations that constitute the book of Doctrine and Covenants."
63. Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 217, 219; Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire*, 205.
64. Jan Shipps, *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years Among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 205. Compare also Richard Bushman, "The Mysteries of Mormonism," *Journal of the Early Republic* 15, no. 3 (1995): 501-5, and Philip Barlow, "Decoding Mormonism," *Christian Century*, January 17, 1996, 52-53.
65. Shipps, *Sojourner in the Promised Land*, 210-11; see also Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), especially his introduction, "The Bible in Antebellum America."

**2008**

**Casey Paul Griffiths, Latter-day Saint Scholar and Seminary Teacher**  
**Universalism and the Revelation of Joseph Smith**  
**Doctrine and Covenants: Revelations in Context**

Casey Paul Griffiths, "Universalism and the Revelations of Joseph Smith," in *The Doctrine and Covenants, Revelations in Context: The 37th Annual Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry, ed. Andrew H. Hedges, J. Spencer Fluhrman, and Alonzo L. Gaskill* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, Religious Studies Center, 2008), 168-187.

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The revelations of Joseph Smith cast a startling ray of light into the theological world. Foreordained in the eternities, raised in a spiritual environment, and schooled by divine messengers, the Prophet set the religious world on fire. Yet no fire begins in a vacuum. The intellectual climate of the time, influence of his immediate family, and spiritual background of his ancestors all nurtured the divine spark of the Restoration. This study intends to answer three questions. First, what was the religious background of the Prophet's family? Next, how did it prepare him for his labors? Finally, how did this background frame the work of his prophetic career?

While the truths of the Restoration can only be explained in the context of eternity, it is useful for us to understand the background of those who received the revelations. The Lord comments in the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants that He taught His disciples "after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding" (D&C 1:24). The language the Lord mentions refers not only to the vernacular of the day but also to the language of ideas in which the Prophet and his contemporaries were fluent. From this perspective, the Lord prepared the mind of the Prophet not only through the teaching of heavenly messengers but also in the religious philosophies of the day. In all things, Joseph was prepared not only to receive revelation but to accept it. This in turn helped him to assist others in making the transition from their own theological backgrounds to the restored doctrines of the true Church. A simple case study might best illustrate the value of the Prophet's religious background in his labors.

### **Early Reactions to Doctrine and Covenants 76**

Doctrine and Covenants section 76, commonly called "The Vision," was a milestone in the revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Today there is rarely a course taught in the Church without at least one discussion showing the familiar circles representing the three degrees of glory. This profound outline, presented with such grace in the descriptions given by the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon, provides eternal perspective and a convenient roadmap for Latter-day Saints. However, while the vision is accepted today as one of the crowning jewels of our theology, it initially received a mixed reception by the early Saints. The reaction to this stunning revelation says more about the diverse religious backgrounds of the early adherents of the Church than about the revelation itself. How one reacted to the vision was a kind of litmus test, acting as a measure of the hearer's ability to comprehend and incorporate new ideas into their perception of God and salvation. Many wrestled to reconcile these concepts with their theological backgrounds. Others, however, sprang from backgrounds that allowed them to see the power of this new revelation and gave them the will to nurse these profound truths until they became fully integrated into Latter-day Saint thought.

Foremost among those who embraced the revelation was the Prophet himself. Joseph was jubilant upon the reception of the vision. Looking back on the experience, he wrote:

Nothing could be more pleasing to the Saints upon the order of the kingdom of the Lord, than the light which burst upon the world through the foregoing vision. Every law, every commandment, every promise, every truth, and every point touching the destiny of man, from Genesis to Revelation, where the purity of the scriptures remains unsullied by the folly of men, go to show the perfection of the theory [of different degrees of glory in the future life] and witnesses the fact that that document is a transcript from the records of the eternal world. The sublimity of the ideas; the purity of the language; the scope for action; the continued duration for completion, in order that the heirs of salvation may confess the Lord and bow the knee; the rewards for faithfulness, and the punishment for sins, are so much beyond the narrow-mindedness of men, that every honest man is constrained to exclaim: "It came from God." [1]

While Joseph marveled at the "sublimity of the ideas," others in the Church struggled to accept the new revelation. Brigham Young gave a summary of the general feeling in the Church toward the vision:

When God revealed to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon that there was a place prepared for all, according to the light they had received and their rejection of evil and practice of good, it was a great trial to many, and some apostatized because God was not going to send to everlasting punishment heathens and infants, but had

a place of salvation, in due time, for all, and would bless the honest and virtuous and truthful, whether they ever belonged to any church or not. It was a new doctrine to this generation, and many stumbled at it.[2]

Records of the time verify the truth of Brigham Young's observations. Orson Pratt and John Murdock both recorded several incidents where members of local branches rebelled against the teachings contained in the vision. In one branch a certain brother rose up and declared that the revelation was from Satan, and he "believed it no more than he believed the devil was crucified" and "would not have the vision taught in the church for \$1000." [3] Elders Pratt and Murdock worked patiently to help the man accept the doctrine but were ultimately unsuccessful.

Realizing new converts may not be ready for the profound message of the vision, the Prophet counseled missionaries traveling to England not to mention it before the proper foundation could be built. He wrote: "My instructions to the brethren were, when they arrived in England, to adhere closely to the first principles of the Gospel, and remain silent concerning the gathering, the vision, and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, until such time as the work was fully established, and it should be clearly made manifest by the Spirit to do otherwise." [4]

Why did so many stumble to accept what today is taken for granted as one of the most appealing parts of Latter-day Saint theology? It must be remembered that when the vision was received there was no one in the Church who had been a member for more than three years. The most devoted followers struggled with the dramatic new ideas of the vision. Even a stalwart such as Brigham Young could not conceal his difficulties in understanding the revelation. He recalled, "My traditions were such, that when the Vision came first to me, it was so directly contrary and opposed to my former education, I said, wait a little; I did not reject it, but I could not understand it." [5] Though he would later be one of its greatest proponents, at the time he first heard of the vision, Brigham was a new and tender convert wrestling to grasp concepts diametrically opposed to everything he had known. Like Brigham, most of the converts of early Mormonism came from a background of what might be called "heaven and hell" Protestantism. Taught so long of the firm dividing line between the saved and the damned, they struggled to comprehend the largesse of God's plan of salvation, where even a murderer could inherit a kingdom glorious enough to surpass all understanding (see D&C 76:89). Brigham Young's brother Joseph perhaps best captures the spirit of the mood: "When I came to read the visions of the different glories of the eternal world, and of the sufferings of the wicked, I could not believe it at the first. Why the Lord was going to save every body." [6]

If so many members recoiled at the liberal nature of salvation as revealed in the vision, why did Joseph Smith seem to immediately embrace the revelation? No single answer may suffice, but the reason may be traced in part to his religious upbringing and the religious heritage of his ancestors. [7] Many streams of religious thought seemed to flow into the Smith household, but in the writings of family members and those who knew them, the theology of Universalism appears more prominently than the others. Starting with Asael Smith, the Prophet's grandfather, and continuing down to Joseph and his family, the spiritual tenets of Universalism provided fertile soil in which the Prophet's religious feelings began to grow and bloom.

### **What Is Universalism?**

Before the connection between Universalism and the Smith family can be explored, it may first be helpful to explain, in a general sense, what Universalism is. By the time Joseph entered the Sacred Grove and began his prophetic career, the Universalist movement was already widespread in New England. Its popularity may have stemmed from its optimistic appraisal of the human nature and the loving kindness of God. In layman's terms, Universalism was the belief that all men will eventually be saved. A Universalist declaration of faith adopted in 1803 read, "We believe that there is one God, whose nature is Love, revealed in one Lord Jesus Christ, by one Holy Spirit of Grace, who will finally restore the whole family of mankind to holiness and happiness." [8]

Universalism in America was a diverse movement, but its principal founder in the United States was John Murray. In England, Murray was initially one of its harshest critics. Encountering a Universalist preacher and seeking to rebuke him, Murray was in turn confounded by the logic and power of the preacher's scriptural arguments. He then launched into an intense regimen of study designed to disprove the Universalists but found his antagonism waning into tolerance and blossomed into full acceptance. He soon became an influential leader in the new faith in England. After a series of financial and personal setbacks, Murray departed from England in 1770 to start fresh in America. He did not come to the New World intending to spread the teachings of Universalism, but a series of fortunate events led him to begin preaching, and soon he developed a sizable number of disciples.[9]

Murray embraced America as a new homeland, becoming a passionate advocate for American independence, even serving as a chaplain in the Continental army. He counted among his closest connections prominent figures such as George Washington, John and Abigail Adams, John Hancock, and Benjamin Rush, who was also a Universalist. For Murray, Rush, and other followers of the faith, Universalism captured the millennial promise of the revolution. They felt it would transform the religious world, while the spread of democracy would transfigure the secular. After the American Revolution, Murray and his followers continued to prosper. Their ideals seemed to fit particularly well with the ideals of the Founding Fathers. As the new republic championed the equality of men in this life, Universalists trumpeted the equality of men in the salvation of God's plan.

### **The Smith Family and Universalism**

Murray preached for many years in Gloucester, Massachusetts. Only fifteen miles away was Topsfield, where Joseph's grandfather Asael lived. Latter-day Saint historians Richard L. Bushman and Richard Lloyd Anderson have pointed out the philosophical similarities and geographical proximity of Asael Smith and John Murray.[10] Like Murray, Asael had served during the revolution, sacrificing to ensure the birth of the new nation, and both were deeply enmeshed in the ideals of the revolutionary generation. Whether because of direct contact or filtering through the local community, Asael came to accept a conception of universal salvation very similar to Murray's.

Asael eventually came to settle in Vermont, one of the Universalist strongholds in New England. In 1797, Asael and his two oldest sons, Jesse and Joseph Sr., the father of the future prophet, organized a Universalist society in Tunbridge, Vermont.[11] The society itself was short-lived, but for the rest of his life, Asael adhered to the principles of Universalism. His grandson George A. Smith recalled that "not long before his death he wrote many quires of paper on the doctrine of universal salvation." [12] In an address written to his family, Asael devoted the larger part of his letter toward his views on religion. He wrote, "And if you can believe that Christ [came] to save sinners, and not the righteous, Pharisees, or self righteous; that sinners must be saved by the righteousness of Christ alone, without mixing any of their own righteousness with his; then you will see that he can as well save all, as any, and there is no respect of persons with God, who will have all mankind to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." [13]

How successful was Asael in passing his beliefs on to his children? The two sons who joined Asael in founding the Universalist society followed divergent spiritual paths.[14] Jesse Smith rejected it outright and instead became a devoted Calvinist, while Joseph Sr. seems to have maintained a philosophical, though not an institutional, tie to the faith. George A. Smith recalled his grandfather as "too liberal in his views to please his children, who were covenanters, Congregationalists and Presbyterians, with I think the single exception of his son Joseph [Sr.]" [15] William Smith, brother of the Prophet, also believed Father Smith's convictions leaned toward Universalism. He wrote, "My father's religious habits were strictly pious and moral, his faith [was] in the Universal restoration doctrine [which] often brought him in contact with the advocates of the doctrine of endless misery." [16] Father Smith was not a formal member of any particular religious sect until the Restoration, and Universalism may have been a good fit for those put off by the religious contentions of the time. Lucy Mack Smith recalled that "he would not subscribe to any particular system of faith, but contended for the ancient order, as established by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and his Apostles." [17]

Another significant factor in the Prophet's religious background was the impact of his mother. Lucy's father, Solomon Mack, showed no inclination toward any particular religion for much of his life. He underwent a remarkable conversion of faith later in his life, well after Lucy had married and begun her own family. He experienced and knew of Universalist doctrine early on, but he later denounced it as "building on sand." [18] Lucy's leanings when it came to religion seem to have been inherited from her mother, who taught her piety but established no formal church connections. [19] Though she affiliated with several churches before her son's ministry, for the most part she remained aloof from close affiliation with any single group. Lucy and several of her children did begin attending a Presbyterian church in 1820, but Joseph was not among the children joining her. [20] In religious matters, he seems to have been more inclined to follow his father. [21]

Though the Smiths were not part of any Universalist organizations during the Prophet's formative years, the doctrine may have formed a rough outline for Joseph's religious thinking. There were many aspects of Universalist beliefs which may have helped prepare the Prophet and his family for the times they faced ahead. First, Universalism emphasized the loving nature of God's personality more than most of the religions of the day. The doctrine of universal salvation brought its followers to see God as a loving father figure, not an arbitrary sovereign or an angry God bent on the punishment of mankind. One of Murray's followers, Hosea Ballou, summarized the Universalist concept of God in homely language: "Your child has fallen into the mire, and its body and its garments are defiled. You cleanse it, and array it in clean robes. The query is, Do you love your child because you have washed it? Or, Did you wash it because you loved it?" [22]

At best, Universalists may have erred on the side of mercy; at worst, such an argument could be used to deprive men of their agency. But such a simple analogy helps capture the appeal of this faith- their concept of God was that of an approachable, loving father. Raised in an environment where these teachings were present, it is not surprising that a passage like James 1:5 would have stood out to the young Joseph. The Prophet had this kind of being in mind when he concluded that God answers prayers "liberally, and upbraideth not" (James 1:5). Walking into the Sacred Grove, the Prophet expected an answer from a concerned parent, not a rebuke from a distant ruler.

Second, the Prophet grew up in a home outside the realm of religious orthodoxy. Universalism was a radical departure from the creeds and sects of the day, and partly because of Father Smith's affiliations with it, his family found itself outside of mainstream Christianity. Universalists were outspoken critics of the priestcraft and pretense found in many religions. They saw their system of belief as tied into the rights of the individual, and many felt the growing power in sectarianism in America was leading to the submission of individual rights. Many Universalists were concerned with the shameless emotional and psychological manipulation that took place in the revivals of the day, [23] a concern shared by the young Joseph as he attended revivals and noted that "the seemingly good feelings of both the priests and the converts were more pretended than real" (Joseph Smith- History 1:6). The generous nature of salvation in Universalist thought was well suited to many, like Father Smith, who continued to search for the true faith amidst the sectarian strife surrounding them. The broadness of the ideas of the movement allowed a great degree of theological flexibility and openness to new views. While Jesse Smith became so entrenched in his belief in Calvinism that he rejected the gospel and ordered his brother "not to talk 'about the Bible at all in his home unless it was upon Limited Election,'" [24] Joseph Sr. remained open to new ideas and revelations. Lucy Mack Smith recognized the blessings of this attitude. She once described a dream in which she saw two trees, one gracefully and gently moving with the wind, and another standing stiff and unmoving. When she sought an interpretation of the dream, it was revealed to her "that the stubborn and unyielding tree was like Jesse; that the other, more pliant and flexible, was like Joseph, my husband; that the breath of heaven, which passed over them, was the pure and undefiled Gospel of the Son of God, which Gospel Jesse would always resist, but which Joseph, when he was more advanced in life, would hear and receive with his whole heart." [25] The Lord also recognized the malleable nature of the father of the Prophet. After the first visitation of Moroni, the first person the young prophet was directed to confide in was his father (see Joseph Smith- History 1:49-50).

The influence of Universalism was not confined solely to the Prophet's family either. The pliancy of Universalist doctrine and its emphasis on God's love made it an ideal philosophical home for many who were religiously minded but concerned with the failings of the churches of the day. Many of the small circle of believers which formed around the Prophet in the infant days of the Church were adherents of Universalism, most notably Martin Harris, the Joseph Knight family, and the Hezekiah Peck family.[26]

Last, Universalism had prepared the Smiths to live in the face of religious persecution. As would be imagined, the doctrine of universal salvation was such a departure from conventional Christian thinking that it often raised the ire of the sectarians of the day. Universalism was spurned as a destroyer of morals, an insult to common piety, and the first cousin of atheism.[27] One minister wrote, "What has a Universalist, who really and sincerely believes that doctrine, to fear? ... Just nothing at all; for this flesh-pleasing, conscience soothing doctrine will not only justify him in his neglect of God and man, but gives fallen nature an unlimited license to serve the devil with greediness in any and every possible way." [28] When most of their contemporaries referred to Father Smith, Martin Harris, the Knights or any other member of the early Church as Universalist, it was intended as an slander on their character.[29] Asael Smith, who apparently possessed a deformation of the neck, was derided by one member of the community who said "some regarded his sentiments as more distorted than his neck." A more sympathetic recollection of him called him "a man of very liberal views ... which he would not yield to bigotry nor opposition." [30]

As the only son of his father to remain close to the tenets of Universalism, Joseph Smith Sr. seems to have inherited the persecution Asael had dealt with. William Smith recalled that Father Smith often faced persecution because of his Universalist beliefs: "The belief in the ultimate and final redemption of all mankind to heaven and happiness, brought down upon my father the approbrium or slur of Old Jo Smith." [31] The Prophet's courage in the face of persecution, even at a young age, is not surprising since both his grandfather and father before him had chosen a less popular road. When he wrote that experiencing persecution was second nature to him and that "deep water is what I am wont to swim in" (D&C 127:2), he was upholding family tradition. The Prophet's progenitors had been treading water in a sea of persecution for years before his first revelations came.

Was Universalism the Smith family religion? In the strictest sense, it was, as one historian has called it, an important overlay of the family's spiritual values. Early in the Prophet's life, his family's beliefs provided Joseph with a conception of God as an approachable, loving, and concerned father. The open nature of Father Smith's beliefs, combined with his suspicion of feigned religion, gave the young Joseph the freedom to explore religious beliefs and a critical eye toward hypocrisy. Not only was Universalism important in the Prophet's early life, it also played an important role during his work as the head of the Church. The debates raging over the implications of Universalist doctrine and its rapid spread through the new republic also influenced Joseph's later prophetic career.

### **Universalism and the Restoration**

The peak period of Joseph Smith's revelations coincided with the apex of Universalist activity in America. By 1833 the movement had grown to include three hundred official preachers, six hundred societies, and membership numbered at three hundred thousand. Adherents to the faith could be found in locations as distant as Georgia and Michigan, though it remained the strongest in the northeast United States, the area in which the Latter-day Saints were geographically centered at the time.[32] The discussion on Universalism was also growing. The period from 1820 to 1850 saw an explosion in the number of books and articles produced on the movement. These publications peaked in the 1830s, the same period in which the majority of Joseph's revelations were received.[33] Whether followers or detractors of the movement, most Americans in the Restoration period found themselves caught up in the discussion about the movement, and the Saints were no exception. The theological questions raised by the Universalists provide the context for many of the most crucial revelations of the Restoration. A comparison of the spiritual system constructed from the revelations retained the true elements of Universalism while highlighting and eliminating many of the movement's shortcomings.

While the teachings of Universalism may have provided questions leading to many of the revelations given to the Prophet, the power and authority with which the revelations were received highlighted many of the problems of the Universalist movement. The revelation found in section 19 of the Doctrine and Covenants is a good example of this. Given to Martin Harris, a former Universalist, the revelation quickly settled an argument that had rent the unity of the Universalist movement in America nearly from the beginning. Even while John Murray was alive, a vigorous debate erupted among the Universalists concerning the punishment for sinners. Some, including Murray, taught that souls would be saved through a mystical union with Christ, while others taught that souls would be saved after a long period of suffering for sin, and some taught that suffering for sin would be confined solely to earthly life. The division caused by this one doctrine was such that most churches could not ratify any type of unified profession of belief without filling it with numerous concessions to make all parties happy. One such creedal statement reads, "We regard all as Universalists who believe in the final salvation of all men through divine grace, however they may differ in opinion as to punishment or discipline extending into the future state and as to progressive improvement and different degrees of happiness in the future world." [34] Such wide-ranging and vague statements led to the unraveling of any sense of doctrinal unity, and social cohesion of the Universalist movement suffered because of it.

In section 19 the conflict rending the Universalist movement was settled for good. The Lord simply declares, "It is not written that there shall be no end to this torment, but it is written endless torment. . . . I am endless, and the punishment which is given at my hand is endless punishment, for Endless is my name. Wherefore-Eternal punishment is God's punishment. Endless punishment is God's punishment" (D&C 19:6, 10-12). This episode serves to indicate how Universalism, which was originally intended to simplify the gospel, found itself caught in the endless theological wrangling of the day. This incongruence was partly because its doctrine, however well intended, was produced by scriptural reasoning and debate, not revelation.

The main source of contention concerning Universalism stemmed from the fact that it offered a broad form of salvation without giving accountability for sin. Universalists frequently cited such scriptures as Romans 5:18-19, which speaks of the Savior's sacrifice as bringing salvation unconditionally, but they had a difficult time squaring this notion with such scriptures as Mark 16:16, where the Savior declared that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." While universal salvation fit the picture of loving God, it did not fit well with the concept of a just God. While some decried its Universalist overtones, the revelation declaring the three degrees of glory did not align well with universal salvation when it was carefully analyzed. Salvation was still graded, devotion was still required, and ordinances of the gospel still provided the gateway to the kingdom of God. Later revelations, such as the vision that became section 137, offered a liberal view of salvation but not without acknowledging commitment on the part of the followers. Later revelations offered salvation to all men while still acknowledging the necessity of the ordinances and covenants of the gospel.

The debate over Universalism was also used by the critics of the Church as a framework for attacking the authenticity of the Prophet's work. For example, the Book of Mormon has frequently been denounced as an attack on Universalism in the Prophet's day and into our time as well. [35] Even recently these arguments have been revived and cited as evidence for a modern origin for the book. Critics cite such passages as 2 Nephi 28:7, which criticize those who say "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die; and it shall be well with us" as an implicit indictment of the Universalist doctrine. Other frequently cited examples include the story of Nehor in the first chapter of Alma with his teaching that "all mankind should be saved at the last day" (Alma 1:4). Such criticisms reveal ignorance of the book's themes. It would be just as easy to pick out certain other passages such as 2 Nephi 2:4, which reads that "salvation is free" and argue that the Book of Mormon is a pro-Universalist tract! Moreover, it is curious that the critics of the Book of Mormon have always criticized it for doing exactly what it claims to do. Alexander Campbell, one of the earliest critics of the book, lambasted the book and Joseph Smith for deciding "all the great controversies" of his time when the book claims it was meant to do exactly that. [36] Nearly all the major writers of the Book of Mormon stated that they were writing for generations yet to come (see 2 Nephi 25:21; Jacob 1:3; Enos 1:15-16; Jarom



1:2; Mormon 7:1; 8:34-35). If Mormon and Moroni saw our day, as they claimed, wouldn't we have expected them to write on topics related not only to us but to those of Joseph Smith's day? As one of the burning issues of the day, if the book did not deal with Universalism, it wouldn't be fulfilling its promises.

Not only were Joseph's revelations designed to deal with the religious culture of the time, but they provided a firm organizational structure for the Church also. This allowed the movement to form an institutional home, something the Universalists struggled to accomplish. While Universalism may have provided fertile philosophical ground for the Prophet to grow up in, its open theology tended to lead its followers away from unified organizations and toward private devotion. Most converts to the movement were interested in the propagation and defense of a rational faith, not in the organization and administration of an ecclesiastical body.[37] To become a viable and lasting organization, an ideal needs to provide institutions, and the free nature of Universalism did not easily lend itself to organization. Asael Smith and the father of the Prophet are prime examples of this difficulty. Both moved to form a Universalist society in 1797, but within two years it had been disbanded. Asael remained devoted to the doctrines of the movement long beyond this period, though his feelings seemed to remain private, without any further attempts at public unity with fellow believers. Joseph Sr. may have been less devoted to the movement, but it still provided the theological framework for his search for the true faith. In spite of his devotion, Asael's writings indicate that he felt a desire for something more. One of his grandsons recalled a prophecy by Asael that "God was going to raise up some branch of his family to be a great benefit to mankind." [38] Shortly after the publication of the Book of Mormon in 1830, Joseph Sr. took a copy to Asael. Asael received it gladly and read it through, declaring that the prophet he had predicted would come had at last arrived. Unfortunately, Asael passed on before he could receive the ordinance of baptism.[39]

While Universalism may have played an important role in the development of the Prophet and his family, it did not provide the answers that could only be found in revelation from God. What it did do was give the Smiths a spiritual foundation, encourage them in their study of the scriptures, and cultivate in them a belief in a merciful God who would be willing to answer their questions.

### **Are Mormons Universalists?**

While the teachings of his fathers concerning universal salvation may have prepared Joseph Smith for the radical concepts of the vision of the degrees of glory, it took time for the rest of the Church to accept this new concept of the afterlife. The revelation was published five months after it was received in the Evening and Morning Star. Most of the controversy surrounding it seems to have come during the first two years after it was made known to the Church. Throughout the rest of the 1830s and into the early 1840s, it was rarely mentioned in the publications of the Church or the private writings of Church members during the time.[40] The first substantive discussion on the vision is found in Joseph Smith's 1843 poetic version. Written to W.W. Phelps, the entire revelation was rewritten as an epic poem, a work that may have caused him to ponder the doctrinal significance of the revelation. During the last eighteen months of his life, the Prophet issued a number of revelatory statements concerning the doctrine of the afterlife. The King Follett discourse delivered in 1844 contains a number of points relating to a different concept of the afterlife. During this landmark speech, the Prophet announced, "I have no fear of hell fire, that doesn't exist, but the torment and disappointment of the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone." [41] Several other important sermons from this time mention the degrees of glory, providing doctrine which would later form part of Doctrine and Covenants 131.[42]

The revelations of the Nauvoo period represent the pinnacle of Joseph Smith's labors. During this time, the Lord completed the bridge between the expansive view of salvation that Joseph's grandfather held and the concept of a just God taught in the scriptures. He wrote, "But while one portion of the human race is judging and condemning the other without mercy, the Great Parent of the universe looks upon the whole of the human family with a fatherly care and paternal regard; He views them as His offspring, and without any of those contracted feelings that influence the children of men, causes, 'His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.'" [43] Views like this line up surprisingly well with

Asael Smith's, who warned his children not to conclude that God loved them more than "the worst heathen in the darkest corner of the deserts of Arabia" but that "there is no respect of persons with God, who will have all mankind to be saved." [44] Further visions and revelations confirmed the Prophet's teachings of a kind and generous God. The January 1836 vision contained in Doctrine and Covenants 137 gave the Prophet the knowledge that God would "judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts" (D&C 137:9).

The final great phase of the Prophet's work consisted of bringing about a successful marriage of the munificent view of salvation given in the vision with the system of covenants and ordinances found in the ancient scriptures and revealed anew to the Prophet in our dispensation. When he learned that proxy work for the dead could be performed, a view of salvation was opened up that would allow all men who so desired to be saved, even if they had never heard the gospel or received the ordinances in this life. In essence, the revelations of the Restoration allowed for a merciful God, while not taking away from the need for order and justice. Joseph came to know God as a kind, fair being. His views may be best summed up in his own words: "Our heavenly Father is more liberal in His views, and boundless in His mercies and blessings, than we are ready to believe or receive; and, at the same time, is more terrible to the workers of iniquity, more awful in the executions of His punishments, and more ready to detect every false way, than we are apt to suppose Him to be." [45]

In time the vision was recognized as one of the greatest revelations received by the Prophet. Brigham Young, who had initially struggled to accept it, became one of the most fervent teachers and admirers of its doctrine. Speaking in 1860 he said,

I can truly say that, in my estimation, no other revelation so glorious was ever given. You may read the character of the Deity as portrayed in all that has ever been revealed, until you come to this vision [D&C 76], in relation to his justice, his judgment, his power, his life, his glory, his excellence, his goodness, his mercy, and the fulness of every gift, of every trait, of every principle inherent in the character of the Supreme Being, and it is not equal in magnitude, in my reflections, to that which God revealed to Joseph Smith and Sydney Rigdon. [46]

Any hesitation which may have come from the doctrines of the vision being associated with Universalism seems to have abated as well. Rather than seeking to distance themselves from Universalists, Latter-day Saints began to recognize the similarities in belief. Speaking on the doctrine of universal resurrection, Parley P. Pratt said, "This salvation being universal, I am a universalist in this respect,-this salvation being a universal restoration from the fall." While pointing out similarities, Elder Pratt also recognized that universal doctrine did not paint a complete picture of salvation. [47] What remained from the Universalist background of the Restoration was an emphasis on the goodness of God. On another occasion President Young read the revelation in its entirety then summarized its lessons by saying, "He is compassionate to all the works of His hands, the plan of His redemption, and salvation, and mercy, is stretched out over all; and His plans are to gather up, and bring together, and save all the inhabitants of the earth, with the exception of those who have received the Holy Ghost, and sinned against it. With this exception, all the world besides shall be saved.-Is not this Universalism? It borders very close upon it." [48] Within one generation the Saints had not only come to accept the vision but also to rejoice in its meaning and beauty.

### **Religious Yearnings Fulfilled**

In truth, disillusionment with the churches of the day kept most of Joseph Smith and his progenitors from fully embracing any system until the true Church could be restored again to the earth. But it is clear that the ideals and doctrines of Universalism played an important role in the development of the Prophet's spirituality. If Brigham Young's upbringing made it difficult to understand the great generosity of God's plan, something in the Prophet's background made him embrace and rejoice in it. We are fortunate that Joseph was taught upon his father's knee of a generous and kind God, one that would give liberally if asked. Recognizing this, it must also be acknowledged that Universalism only provided a temporary shelter for the Smiths, while

they sought the true Church of Christ. For all the comfort Universalism's doctrines may have given members of the family, only the true gospel could bring everlasting joy. No event better exemplifies this than the baptism of the Prophet's own father, on April 6, 1830, the day of the organization of the Church. Lucy Mack Smith records this touching event: "Joseph stood on the shore when his father came out of the water he cried out Oh! my God I have lived to see my father baptized into the true church of Jesus Christ and he covered his face in his father's bosom and wept aloud for joy as did Joseph of old when he beheld his father coming into the land of Egypt." [49] This moment was the culmination of the religious yearnings long felt by both father and son. The work of John Murray, the beliefs of Asael Smith, and the heritage of Joseph Smith Sr. were all important events leading to this moment. Just as the Prophet was led by the hand of the Lord, it is clear that his ancestors were also led into the right paths. As Brigham Young taught, "The Lord had his eye upon him, and upon his father, and upon his father's father, and upon their progenitors clear back to Abraham, and from Abraham to the flood, and from the flood to Enoch, and from Enoch to Adam." [50]

## Notes

1. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957), 1:252-53; brackets and emphasis in original.
2. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1874-86), 16:42.
3. John Murdock Diary (1830-59), 27-29, Orson Pratt Journal (1833-34), cited in Robert J. Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1974), 2:930-31.
4. Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:492.
5. *Deseret News*, September 14, 1852, 24, cited in Woodford, "Historical Development," 2:929.
6. *Deseret News*, March 18, 1857, 11.
7. Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 199-200.
8. *Profession of Faith of the General Convention of Universalists, 1803*, Winchester, New Hampshire, Article II, citing Rev. A. B. Grosh, "Universalists" and I. Daniel Rupp, *An Original History of the Religious Denominations* (Philadelphia, 1844), 727, cited in Milton V. Backman Jr., *American Religions and the Rise of Mormonism*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1965), 219.
9. Russell E. Miller, *The Larger Hope: The First Century of the Universalist Church in America, 1770-1870* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1979), 8-12.
10. Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Joseph Smith's New England Heritage*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 136; see also Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 27-28.
11. Dan Vogel, ed., *Early Mormon Documents* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), 1:633-34.
12. Anderson, *New England Heritage*, 133.
13. Anderson, *New England Heritage*, 161-62; punctuation modernized.
14. A Tunbridge, Vermont, declaration of membership in the Tunbridge Universalist Society contains the signatures of Asael Smith, Joseph Smith Sr., Jesse Smith, and thirteen others (Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:633). Jesse's later devotion to Calvinism and the doctrine of election suggests that he may have only joined the Universalist Society for tax purposes.
15. Anderson, *New England Heritage*, 68; emphasis added.
16. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:487; punctuation modernized.
17. Anderson, *New England Heritage*, 279n203.
18. Anderson, *New England Heritage*, 62.
19. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 5.
20. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 140.
21. An excellent summary of Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith's background may be found in Richard L. Bushman and H. Rodney Sharp, "Joseph Smith's Family Background," in *Prophet Joseph: Essays on the Life and Mission of Joseph Smith*, ed. Susan Easton Black and Larry C. Porter (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 1-16.
22. Ernest Cassara, *Hosea Ballou: The Challenge to Orthodoxy* (Boston: Universalist Historical Society, 1961), 150.

23. Ann Lee Bressler, *The Universalist Movement in America, 1770-1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 62.
24. Jesse Smith, as quoted in Anderson, *New England Heritage*, 141. "Limited Election" refers to the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, or the notion that God had already selected the saved, and thus salvation was unconditional and the Atonement of Christ applied only to that group.
25. Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 293-94.
26. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:29-30, 4:21, 110.
27. Bressler, *The Universalist Movement*, 40.
28. Miller, *The Larger Hope*, xv. For a good summary of the arguments against Universalists during the early years of the Restoration, see Bressler, *The Universalist Movement*, 37-40.
29. See Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:29, 4:110.
30. Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 17; see also Anderson, *New England Heritage*, 267-68.
31. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:487; spelling and grammar modernized.
32. Bressler, *The Universalist Movement*, 32.
33. The number of American publications relating to Universalism rose dramatically from 54 during the 1800-9 decade, to 134 in 1810-19, 304 in 1820-29, peaked at 378 in 1830-39, fell slightly to 351 during 1840-49, and then dropped off generally for the rest of the nineteenth century (Bressler, *The Universalist Movement*, 55).
34. Miller, *The Larger Hope*, 49.
35. Critics advocating this view can be found as early as 1835. Most recently Dan Vogel has taken up this view and written about it extensively in an essay entitled "Anti-Universalist Rhetoric in the Book of Mormon," in Brent L. Metcalfe, ed., *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 47. A good summary and response to these arguments may be found in Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 164-66.
36. For Campbell's arguments, see Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 54-55.
37. Bressler, *The Universalist Movement*, 58.
38. Anderson, *New England Heritage*, 148.
39. Anderson, *New England Heritage*, 149. Further details surrounding Asael's feelings about his grandson's works may be found in Anderson, *New England Heritage*, 288. One account reads, "Father Asael Smith ... on his deathbed declared his full and firm belief in the everlasting gospel and also regretted that he was not baptized when Joseph his son was there and acknowledged that the doctrine of universalism, which he had so long advocated, was not true. For although he had lived by this religion 50 years, yet he now renounced it as insufficient to comfort him in death."
40. A more detailed history of the movement of Doctrine and Covenants 76 toward acceptance in Latter-day Saint thought may be found in Grant Underwood, "'Saved or Damned': Tracing a Persistent Protestantism in Early Mormon Thought," *BYU Studies* 3 (Summer 1985): 95-100.
41. Stan Larson, "The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text," *BYU Studies* 18 (Winter 1978): 205.
42. See Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:392-93, 6:363-67, 6:473-79.
43. Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:595.
44. Anderson, *New England Heritage*, 161-62; spelling and capitalization modernized.
45. Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:136.
46. Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 8:153.
47. Parley P. Pratt, *The Essential Parley P. Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 57.
48. Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:92; emphasis added.
49. Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 477; capitalization modernized.
50. Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 7:289.

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**Examining and Applying the Scriptural Teaching of Rewards**

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**Heavenly Rewards from God**

Most of what was said about God's earthly rewards also applies to our reward in heaven. Especially the fact that it is a reward of grace, for we are saved from sin, death, and hell by grace alone in Christ. Nevertheless, a few questions come to mind about the heavenly rewards from God through Christ to us.

One of the primary questions is: What are they?

**What are the heavenly rewards?**

It is clear in some passages that the reward spoken of is the gift of heaven itself. The Apostle Paul says, "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:23-24). Here the reward is defined as the "inheritance" of eternal life. So also in Romans 2:6-7: God "will render to each one according to his deeds: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality. . . ." The Greek word for "render" in Romans 2:6 is the same as "reward" in Matthew 16:27; both use the future indicative form *avpodw,sei*, to give back (what is due). Jesus says in Matthew 16:27: "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works." Jesus is describing what He will do when He comes again on Judgment Day. Therefore the "reward" He gives will be the same as the one described in Romans 2: either eternal life or eternal condemnation.

In recognizing this truth, however, a key follow-up question comes to mind.

**How can the God of grace say that He will reward us with eternal life according to our works?**

Jesus says this very thing in Matthew 25:35, referring to those who will be on His right side. On the last day He will say to them, "For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in." We know it's been said many times before that such passages do not teach that we are saved by the works we do.

The Bible is very clear we are saved by grace alone through faith alone. But these passages do teach that we are judged according to our works. In other words, the works are the visible evidence which proves that one either has or does not have saving faith in Christ. The Lord says, "Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit." (Matt. 7:17-18). Faith naturally produces works of love to God and to others. Therefore if the works are present in one's life, these testify in a visible way that faith is present in his heart. Thus it is true that each individual will be judged according to his works, but those who believe are nevertheless saved by faith alone.

**Why does God speak of eternal life as a reward?**

On the one hand, when said this way, it is a strong warning to blatant unbelievers, and to those who think they can be God's children by a professed faith without any works or while living in a state of unrepented

sin. God gives notice that He will judge us on the basis of our works. He seeks to warn us in advance that “faith without works is dead” (Jas. 2:26) and that the life without works will be condemned, even though one claims to have faith.

Yet on the other hand, God uses the reward as a comfort and encouragement for true believers. God wants us to know the value of the Christian life of faith, for living as a child of God in this world is going to bring heartache and opposition. We face the temptations of the world which lure us and say, “All these laws in the Bible are depriving you of the real pleasures of life!” So God reminds you that those “pleasures of life” are the very things which bring God’s condemnation and eternal punishment. When by faith we live a godly life and endure to the end, we have God’s promise of rewarding us with true “pleasures forevermore” (Ps. 16:11).

Living as a child of God in this world also means conflict with family and friends (Matt. 10:34-36), being hated by all men (Matt. 10:22), suffering persecution (2 Tim. 3:12), and enduring much tribulation (Acts 14:22). One would naturally wonder: Is it really worth it? God reassures us with these promises that following Him will be more than worth all these troubles combined. As Paul says, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18). Jesus uses the promise of the reward of heaven in the same reassuring way when He says, “Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life” (Matt. 19:29).

In his exposition of Matthew 5-7, Christ’s Sermon on the Mount, Martin Luther observes the reassuring impact of God’s rewards with these words:

Merit is here altogether excluded. Any attempt to introduce it should be trampled on and consigned to the abominable devil in hell as a thing that destroys my faith and denies Christ. . . . But how, then, do you explain the many passages which speak of reward and merit? Of that we say to the common people that the promises of a reward are mighty consolations to the Christians. For after you have become a Christian and now have a gracious God and the remission of all your sins, both your past sins and those which you daily commit, you will find that you must do and suffer much because of your faith and Baptism. For the abominable devil in company with the world and the flesh will be on your trail and plague you on all sides, as Christ has shown sufficiently throughout these three chapters; you will feel as though there is no room left for you in the world. If, now, He would let us remain without a word of consolation, we would despair because of this persecution and say: Who wants to be a Christian, preach, and do good works? Is this to last eternally? Is it never going to change? Here He steps up to us, consoles, and strengthens us, and says: You are now in grace and God’s children; although you must on that account suffer in the world, be not terrified, but be firm, do not permit these things to tire and weaken you, but let every man perform his duty; he may fare badly, but that shall not be his loss; let him know that the kingdom of heaven is his and that he shall be richly repaid for it. What? Repaid? Has it not been given us already, through Christ, without and before all our work? God will repay in this manner that, as St. Paul says, He will make a great, bright star of you and give you particular gifts, already in this life. . . . Not that the works deserve it because of their worthiness, but because He has promised it for our strengthening and consolation, that we might not think that our labor, burden, and misery were in vain and forgotten. . . . When Christ says: “Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,” and “Blessed are ye if men persecute you for My sake, for great is your reward in heaven,” etc., He does not teach me to make this the foundation of my salvation, but He gives me a promise, namely, what is to be my comfort in my suffering and Christian life.”<sup>10</sup>

### **Are There Other Rewards in Heaven?**

In His Sermon on the Mount Jesus said to the one persecuted for His sake, “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven” (Matt. 5:12). Is that something above and

beyond or in some way different from receiving heaven as your eternal reward? In other words, are there different rewards given to different believers in heaven, based on the works they have done here on earth?

Within the realm of confessional Lutheranism a number of prominent theologians have said yes, including Martin Luther. The above quote from Luther's Works continues:

Since they [believers] are unwelcome on earth, they shall be the more richly rewarded in heaven; he that works and suffers the most will also get the greater reward. For though, as I have said, all are alike in Christ, and grace bestows on each one the whole salvation as the highest good, possessed by all, so that he who has Christ has everything, nevertheless there will be a difference in the brightness and glory with which we shall be adorned. Just as there is a difference in the gifts which we have now, one laboring more and suffering more than the other, so in the future life it will all be made manifest; all the world will see what everyone has accomplished, and he that has accomplished more will receive greater glory to the joy of the entire heavenly host. Let this now suffice. God keep us in His grace which He showed us in Christ! Amen.

Francis Pieper states his agreement with Luther in these words:

There are no degrees of bliss, because all the blessed are perfectly happy, that is, every one of them will find full contentment for himself in beholding God. However, Scripture does teach that there are degrees of glory (do,xa, gloria) corresponding to differences of work and fidelity here on earth.<sup>11</sup>

Pieper quotes Luther again on this subject:

It is true, there will be a difference in yonder life, according as they have labored and lived here. For example, St. Paul was an Apostle, Samuel or Isaiah a Prophet, etc. One will have greater brightness than the other because he worked or suffered more in his office. . . . Thus everyone will have his distinction and glory according to his office, and still one God and Lord will be in all, and one and the same joy and bliss. In his person none shall be more or have more than the other, St. Peter no more than you and I. None the less there must be a difference because of the works. For God did not do through Paul what He did through Isaiah, and vice versa. For that reason everyone will bring along his works, through which he will shine and praise God so that people will say: St. Peter has done more than I or another. This man or this woman has led such a fine life and done such great things. In short, all are to be alike before God in faith and grace and celestial bliss, but they are to differ in their works and their honor.<sup>12</sup>

Lutheran commentaries on the pastor's bookshelf have interpreted in a similar way. Lenski, for one, speaks of the rewards in heaven as being different from the reward of heaven. In his exegesis of Matthew 5:12 he describes the reward mentioned there by saying:

It consists, not in salvation, which becomes ours by faith before we ever do or suffer anything for Christ's sake, but in the greater glory that shall be ours in heaven." Also in explanation of the phrase, "for thus they did persecute the prophets before you," Lenski states: "In one and in only one way may we join this most illustrious company in heaven—by joyfully suffering persecution for Christ's sake. Beyond question the highest glory in heaven belongs to the martyr prophets, and next to them stand in due order all others who suffered in their various stations for Christ."<sup>13</sup>

Likewise, G. Jerome Albrecht and Michael J. Albrecht, co-authors of the People's Bible commentary on Matthew, say this about the great reward in heaven given to those who suffer for Christ's sake:

These rewards will be of grace, not merit, and they will be in addition to the salvation that is theirs by Christ's merits alone."<sup>14</sup>

After hearing the consensus of those who have gone before us, one is very hesitant to question the idea accepted by them. To this writer, however, there are concerns to address. The idea of differing rewards in heaven for differing degrees of service on earth is quite popular also among heterodox writers of our day. From their writings especially we note some dangers to avoid.

First of all, it is easy to slip back into the idea of human merit when it comes to reward from God. Much of the language used sounds like there is personal merit in suffering for Christ or in bringing many to faith. We need to remember that we do not choose to suffer. If it comes upon us and we are able to bear it, that is only because the Holy Spirit has given us the strength to do so. If you bring many to Christ, that is also the work of the Holy Spirit working through you. It is not you yourself. Hence there is no personal merit to be rewarded, for God deserves all the glory. No one will be able to say, or even dream of saying, that he has this reward because he willingly suffered shame for Christ's sake, or because he worked so hard in God's kingdom. Rather, we all will praise the glory of God's grace.

In addition, the idea of bonus rewards in heaven for certain works on earth can lead to a false motive, namely, that of doing extra works to seek a greater reward. There is a difference between edifying encouragement for our fight of faith by God's assurance of our eternal reward and doing certain works to gain a greater reward in heaven. Having the goal of heaven before our eyes is always good encouragement to endure. But if we do some charity work or spread the gospel so as to stock up extra bonus rewards for eternity, can one really say that these are the works of faith?

In his popular marriage book *Love & Respect* Dr. Emerson Eggerichs seems to use "The Rewarded Cycle," as he calls it, in a proper way at first. He encourages Christian husbands and wives to continue to give love and respect, even if their spouses do not reciprocate. He says, and rightly so, that you give love or respect to your use for Jesus' sake. Even if you don't see any good from it now, you will be rewarded in heaven. That line of thinking seems to be using the reward of eternal life to help Christians look past their present troubles and keep doing God's will. But then he goes on to say:

When you make a decision to love or respect your spouse, the dividends are without end. Jesus is offering you a bargain. Do a few things on earth in this life and get many things forever in heaven.

He calls it the "cha-ching! effect" and further describes:

It's as though a billion angels are holding a gigantic handle. Each time you do something loving or respectful toward your spouse, the angels pull down on that handle. A secret treasure dumps into a colossal golden bowl and cha-ching! The lead angel exclaims, 'He did it again! He put on love toward that disdainful woman!' . . . 'She did it again! She put on respect toward that pathetic man! Okay, everyone, hit it again! Cha-ching!' 15

He bases his assertions on Ephesians 6:8, which he quotes in the NASB: "Whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord." He then claims, "The Lord is keeping track somehow." He clearly takes this passage and others to mean that every good work you do, God is keeping track of it and will pay you back for it in heaven. These will be extra special blessings beyond the simple privilege of being in heaven.

Doesn't such teaching encourage us to do our good works in order to gain a greater reward? Doesn't it suggest that if you work hard now and suffer for Christ, you can store up for yourself a greater amount of treasure in heaven? Are we thus collecting more bonus points to cash in later? Is that what Jesus was telling us to do when He said, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matt. 6:20)?



If works are being done for that kind of motive, are they really good works before God? God says that “without faith it is impossible to please” Him (Heb. 11:6). Faith works spontaneously because God has created it to do so.

Faith seeks to glorify God without any special incentive. If you do a work seeking a greater reward in heaven, is it a work of faith? Or is it simply another way of serving yourself? Isn't that what James and John, along with their mother, were trying to do by asking Jesus if they could sit on His right and left hand in the kingdom of God? Jesus explained that greatness in God's kingdom comes through serving others. But shall we serve them only that we may become great? Isn't that really serving ourselves? Lenski says,

As vicious as is the secret desire for the praise of men, so vicious is the secret mercenary desire to trade our good works for far greater rewards from him.<sup>16</sup>

I had the opportunity to have several good discussions with a very committed Pentecostal. She may believe that she was saved by faith in Christ alone, by God's grace, and not by her works. Yet she was driven by fear and desire. She was driven by fear, thinking that every sin she commits will be brought out in the open and exposed for everyone to see on Judgment Day. She said she believed she would be forgiven, but she still feared the embarrassment of such exposure. She was also driven by her desire to do more works to gain greater reward in heaven. I was concerned that she really didn't understand the nature of God's forgiveness. I explained to her that all our sins are “blotted out” (Isa. 44:22) of God's book and forgotten, never to be remembered again (Jer. 31:34). Her desire for greater reward also concerned me because it almost seemed as though salvation in Christ was not enough, that we need to work for something greater and better. Isn't this the devil's subtle way of putting the sufficiency of Christ into doubt once again and adding in the value of human merit?

We do not shy away from a scriptural teaching simply because it can be and has been abused by others. Instead, we strive to teach it more clearly and warn against the abuses. With that perspective in mind we ask once more:

**Does Scripture teach that there are special rewards in heaven for works done on earth?**

Pieper says that the teaching of special rewards in heaven “is proved by Scripture texts such as 2 Cor. 9:6 f. and Dan. 12:3.”<sup>17</sup> These we consider below:

2 Corinthians 9:6-11:

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: “He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.” Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

In a footnote Pieper quotes Calov, who says of the promise and reward mentioned in the above passage: “It is to be referred not to eternal life as such, but to the rewards in eternal life, not to the essence of blessing and glory, but to the degrees of glory.”<sup>18</sup> Does this passage definitively say anything about eternal rewards? The whole context points more to the idea of God's earthly providence sustaining and blessing our stewardship. We may be able to apply it to the reward of heaven given to believers, but is there anything in the context that would compel us to understand that God is teaching us about degrees of glory in heaven?

What of the other text referred to by Pieper? Daniel 12:2-3:

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.

Here Pieper says in the same quoted footnote: “Those who have led many to a knowledge of salvation and to righteousness are specially mentioned among the risen saints.” Though we agree that this is true, does this passage say that they will shine brighter than all the other saints? Couldn’t it mean that in contrast to those raised “to shame and everlasting contempt,” those who have the wisdom of faith will truly shine brightly?

Pieper also makes reference to 1 Corinthians 15:35ff. in this same footnote. That section includes the familiar words:

There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory (1 Cor. 15:40-41).

That example could be used to show the differences in glory of the saints in heaven. But that does not seem to be the way Paul is using the example. Paul is answering the questions, “How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?” (v. 35). Then he gives several examples. A seed is planted; it comes up a far more glorious plant. There are different types of flesh with differing glory on earth. Then in verses 42-44 Paul gives the explanation of the examples:

So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

Paul’s point is that our resurrected body will be more glorious than our earthly body, not that one believer will be more glorious than another.

Other passages have been likewise used to support the teaching of varying rewards in heaven for certain works done on earth. We consider again Matthew 5:12: “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven.” Much is made of the wording “your reward in heaven.” As if it is saying that once you get into heaven by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, you will get an even greater reward if you have suffered persecution here on earth. But haven’t we noticed how several passages speak of the divine reward of grace as being the gift of heaven itself? Is there anything in the context of Matthew 5:12 that compels us to take this reward any differently? Is Jesus saying anything more than this: Rejoice if you are persecuted for My sake, for that shows clearly that you are on My side and eternal life is yours as promised? Heaven will be a great reward that will more than repay you for any suffering you endure here on earth.

The same could be said in the interpretation of passages like Matthew 16:27, Revelation 11:17-19, and 22:12. In regard to Matthew 10:41-42 it would be most natural to understand the reward given as the reward of eternal life. What of 1 Corinthians 4:5: “Then each one’s praise will come from God”? Must that imply that each believer will receive a different level of praise from God?

The idea of special rewards given to believers based on their works seems to go against what Jesus teaches in the parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16). Jesus told this parable in direct response to Peter’s question, “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” Jesus assured him that the apostles would “sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life” (Matt. 19:28-29). Then Jesus told the parable of the workers in the vineyard, in which He specifically showed that it doesn’t matter how long or how hard you work in God’s

kingdom; it doesn't matter how much you suffer, bearing the heat of the day, for all people working in God's vineyard will receive the same pay or reward. The gift of eternal life is more reward than the greatest apostle could ever deserve. Jesus was telling Peter and all who give up things for His sake: You will receive eternal life.

But He also warned them not to think that they have deserved more than others because they gave up more or suffered more or worked more. The reward for all believers who suffer much or little, who work long or short will be the same reward from a gracious and generous God.

### **Different Rewards or Different Ranks?**

There are a number of passages which suggest there will be different ranks in heaven. Indeed, it would not be strange to have different ranks among the saints in heaven, for aren't there ranks among the angels? God has established rank and order here in this world. It would seem natural for Him to establish rank among the saints in heaven also.

Jesus told the twelve apostles that they would "sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28). The Apostle John saw a visible representation of that in the vision of Revelation 4 and 5, where he saw 24 elders sitting on 24 thrones around the throne of God in heaven. When James and John came asking to sit at not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father" (Matt. 20:23). Those positions of honor will be given to someone, Jesus says. They could even be given to James and John, for all we know. The point here is that those are not positions we can seek or work for. God alone determines who will be given such honor. Will those positions be given to two people who lived very humbly in devoted service to God and suffered much for Christ's sake? Perhaps. That would be a logical deduction from all that Jesus taught about greatness in the kingdom of God. But only God knows.

That really is the final conclusion we must come to in the end. Only God knows, and therefore it is not something that we need to worry about or fuss over. Since every good thing from God is a reward of His grace,

He alone must determine who shall receive it and what they shall receive, whether honor or rank or some other blessing. If God chooses to give a greater blessing or some special honor to those who have labored harder and suffered more, that will be wonderful. As Luther points out, all heaven will rejoice in it. No one will feel slighted or be envious of another. No one will boast or show off his medals. All will rejoice in what God has done and praise and glorify His name forever and ever.

To God Alone the Glory!

**2009**

**Donna Max, GospelDoctrine.org Administrator**

**DC 76 Historical Background**

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The Amherst conference has just closed. Many brethren had been called upon to serve missions, and the Prophet returned to his work of translation. While working on the gospel of John, he read of the resurrection of the just and unjust as spoken of in John 5:28-29. This passage prompted the inquiry which led to the vision. The importance of this revelation cannot be overstated. While Christianity struggles to make sense of the concepts of salvation and heaven, the Latter-day Saints are blessed with a clear picture of the destiny of mankind after the resurrection of the dead.

**Joseph Smith**

Nothing could be more pleasing to the Saints upon the order of the kingdom of the Lord, than the light which burst upon the world through the foregoing vision. Every law, every commandment, every promise, every truth, and every point touching the destiny of man, from Genesis to Revelation, where the purity of the scriptures remains unsullied by the folly of men, go to show the perfection of the theory [of different degrees of glory in the future life] and witnesses the fact that that document is a transcript from the records of the eternal world. The sublimity of the ideas; the purity of the language; the scope for action; the continued duration for completion, in order that the heirs of salvation may confess the Lord and bow the knee; the rewards for faithfulness, and the punishments for sins, are so much beyond the narrow-mindedness of men, that every honest man is constrained to exclaim: "It came from God." (History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1: 252 - 253.)

### **Philo Dibble**

The vision of the three degrees of glory which is recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants was given at the house of "Father Johnson," in Hiram, Ohio, and during the time that Joseph and Sidney were in the Spirit and saw the heavens open there were other men in the room, perhaps twelve, among whom I was one during a part of the time—probably two-thirds of the time. I saw the glory and felt the power, but did not see the vision.

Joseph wore black clothes, but at this time seemed to be dressed in an element of glorious white, and his face shone as if it were transparent, but I did not see the same glory attending Sidney.

The events and conversation, while they were seeing what is written (and many things were seen and related that are not written) I will relate as minutely as is necessary.

Joseph would, at intervals, say: "What do I see?" as one might say while looking out the window and beholding what all in the room could not see. Then he would relate what he had seen or what he was looking at.

Then Sidney replied, "I see the same."

Presently Sidney would say, "What do I see?" and would repeat what he had seen or was seeing.

And Joseph would reply, "I see the same."

This manner of conversation was repeated at short intervals to the end of the vision, and during the whole time not a word was spoken by any other person. Not a sound or motion was made by anyone but Joseph and Sidney, and it seemed to me that they never moved a joint or limb during the time I was there, which I think was over an hour, and to the end of the vision.

Joseph sat firmly and calmly all the time in the midst of a magnificent glory, but Sidney sat limp and pale, apparently as limber as a rag, observing which, Joseph remarked, smilingly. "Sidney is not used to it as I am." (Hyrum L. Andrus and Helen Mae Andrus, comps., *They Knew the Prophet* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1974], 68.)

DC 76:1-10 Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory

### **Winslow Farr Smith**

Marvelous promises, beyond our comprehension, so deep and so unfathomable in their nature that we can not comprehend them, have been made to us, if ye will live according to his law and keep his commandments and do the things that he has commanded.

I want to read to you just a few verses from the D&C, and I want you to ponder over them, think about them, and study them, and I beg of you to make them a part of your lives. If you will do it, out of this study and this application will come the joy that is yours. In 1832 the Father gave to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, a man who fell away, this wonderful promise: (quotes D&C 76:1-10)

1675My brethren and sisters, to me the most glorious promise that we can expect here as mortals on earth is the promise that God gave in that revelation. I declare unto you in humility and in candor that this subject is so vital, so big, so all-embracing, that unless we take hold of it, study it, and make it part of our lives, we are losing the opportunity knocking at our door today. (Conference Report, October 1919, Out-Doors Overflow Meeting 189.)

DC 76:7 to them I will reveal all mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom

### **Bruce R. McConkie**

There are added revelations we could receive, and I hope will receive as we manage to get in tune with the Spirit.... This reaffirmation is what brings this subject down to us as individuals. Every man is supposed to be a prophet for himself. Every head of a house should be the revelator for his family. Joseph Smith said these glorious words as he talked about the Second Comforter: "God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them." (History of the Church, 3:380)....

What I am saying is that the ultimate end of spiritual progression is not only to know that the revelations are true, but also to see visions and feel the Spirit and get the added light and knowledge which it is not lawful to utter and which was not recorded in the revealed record. What a glorious dispensation we live in. We live in a day when the Lord desires to confirm his word in the hearts of all who will heed his voice, and it is our privilege so to obtain. ("This Generation Shall Have My Word through You," Ensign, June 1980, 58-59)

DC 76:7-8 all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old...

We should not miss the significance of the promises contained in this preface to the revelation. The Lord, in effect, is saying, "I am about to give you a great and glorious mystery (D&C 76), but I have many more in store for you. Eventually you will be given to know all my mysteries." When will this added knowledge be revealed? Bruce R. McConkie said there would not be "great added reservoirs of substantive revelation...before the Second Coming because of the wickedness of the world." ("This Generation Shall Have My Word through You," Ensign, June 1980, 58)

The scriptures declare the same thing. Yet great volumes of revelation await us: the record of the Ten Tribes, the sealed portion of the gold plates which contains the vision of the Brother of Jared, and more. "All the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old" must include more scripture about Adam, Noah, Melchizedek, Elias and others. These great mysteries are to be withheld until the righteous are sanctified and exert enough faith, "They shall not go forth unto the Gentiles until the day that they shall repent of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord. And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations...and there never were greater things made manifest than those which were made manifest unto the brother of Jared" (Ether 4:6-7,4).

Moroni further explains that the righteous will be sufficiently faithful and sanctified at the same time the wicked are ripening for destruction. "Great and marvelous things...have been hid up from the foundation of the world." (Ether 4:15) These are to be revealed when the House of Israel, "shall rend that veil of unbelief...when ye shall call upon the Father in my name, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit...then shall my revelations which I have cause to be written by my servant John be unfolded in the eyes of all the

people.” (Ether 4:15-16) Note that Moroni ties new revelations with the events described by John, or the destruction of the wicked and the Second Coming, as contained in the book of Revelation. “In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.” (Rev 10:7)

Furthermore, in the Millenium, we are told that “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (Isa. 11:9) And from section 121, we have a promise which is most likely Millennial as well:

God shall give unto you knowledge...that has not been revealed since the world was until now;

Which our forefathers have awaited with anxious expectation to be revealed in the last times, which their minds were pointed to by the angels, as held in reserve for the fulness of their glory;

A time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest.

All thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ. (D&C 121:26-29)

DC 76:9 the wisdom of the wise shall perish

#### **Ezra Taft Benson**

The wisdom of the wise shall perish. The prophecies of economists, would-be statesmen, and military experts fail, while those of the Lord through his prophets are vindicated. (So Shall Ye Reap, compiled by Reed A. Benson [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1960], 65 - 66.)

#### **George Albert Smith**

The wisdom of the world is failing, the scripture is fulfilled, and today the wisest of all men are seeking, by means of legislation, to bring about a better condition and a more wholesome life among the human family. They may strive in that way, but unless men have faith in God, unless they understand the purpose of life, they will not go very far. The people of the world must repent of their sins before the Lord can give to them the peace and happiness desired. No other plan will succeed. (The Teachings of George Albert Smith, edited by Robert McIntosh and Susan McIntosh [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996], 185.)

DC 76:10 those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man

#### **LeGrand Richards**

“...when you kneel around the altar in the Holy Temple of God and have sealed upon you kingdoms and thrones and principalities and powers and dominions and exaltation, you can receive blessings that you could not purchase with all the wealth of this world—and these are not idle words. They are the things that God has prepared for them that love him.

“No wonder Paul, who was caught up into the third heaven, and the paradise of God, and saw things he was not permitted to write, said, ‘Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.’ (1 Cor. 2:9)” (October 29, 1963, BYU Speeches of the Year, 1963 11.)

#### **George Q. Cannon**

“In our present condition we cannot conceive of these things because they are beyond our comprehension. But we have a foretaste of that glory given unto us in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit when it rests upon us. You have felt, no doubt, many times in your lives as though you were filled to overflowing and had no room

for another drop of happiness. The peace and love of God have filled your hearts. Of course, we are but mortal beings at the present time, and we are not prepared for that glory and immortality that God has in store for us. But we will grow up to it, and we will be prepared for it when it comes.” (Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of President George Q. Cannon, selected, arranged, and edited by Jerreld L. Newquist [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987], 84.)

DC 76:13 those things which were from the beginning...which were ordained of the Father

The doctrine of foreordination is usually applied to an individual, chosen and ordained before the world was. But more than just individuals were foreordained. The Father’s Plan of Salvation, His Plan of Happiness was foreordained as well. His doctrine, scriptures, and gospel are “those things which were from the beginning...which were ordained of the Father”. Why else would Joseph Smith refer to this revelation as “a transcript from the records of the eternal worlds”? (History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1: 252 - 253.) So we learn that the plan of three degrees of glory, including the exaltation of the saints in the celestial kingdom, was part of the plan from the very first—indeed it was the very purpose of the plan from the beginning. (See Moses 1:39)

### **Joseph Smith**

The great Jehovah contemplated the whole of the events connected with the earth, pertaining to the plan of salvation, before it rolled into existence, or ever “the morning stars sang together” for joy; the past, the present, and the future were and are, with Him, one eternal “now;” He knew of the fall of Adam, the iniquities of the antediluvians, of the depth of iniquity that would be connected with the human family, their weakness and strength, their power and glory, apostasies, their crimes, their righteousness and iniquity; He comprehended the fall of man, and his redemption; He knew the plan of salvation and pointed it out; He was acquainted with the situation of all nations and with their destiny; He ordered all things according to the council of His own will; He knows the situation of both the living and the dead, and has made ample provision for their redemption, according to their several circumstances, and the laws of the kingdom of God, whether in this world, or in the world to come.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 220).

DC 76:17 the resurrection of the just; and...the resurrection of the unjust

Joseph Smith reminds us when studying scripture to consider the question being answered, “I have a key by which I understand the scriptures. I enquire, what was the question which drew out the answer...?” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 276-7) Interestingly, after we finish reading section 76, we still might be unsure as to what constitutes the resurrection of the just and what constitutes the resurrection of the unjust.

The Prophet clearly states that those who attain celestial glory are part of the resurrection of the just (D&C 76:50, 64-65), but what of the rest? The answer can be clear to us if we go back and answer the question which drew out the answer. The resurrection of the just must include those souls destined for celestial and terrestrial glory—whose resurrection will occur in the morning and afternoon of the first resurrection at the commencement of the Millenium (D&C 88:98-99). The resurrection of the unjust must include those souls destined for telestial glory and perdition—whose resurrection will occur after the Millenium and at the great and last day, respectively (D&C 88:100-102).

“There are two major resurrections: the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust. The resurrection of the just includes those who will receive celestial glory and terrestrial glory.” (Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual, [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981], 163)

DC 76:19 while we meditated upon these things, the Lord touched the eyes of our understanding

“Prophets have used the words diligently, pondering, meditating, and feasting to explain how we should approach the scriptures. Clearly we should read with careful thought and much pondering. Even when we are not reading we should reflect constantly on God’s word. The prophets have promised that this will lead to new spiritual insights and to greater righteousness.

“The scriptures show us that we can ponder in two ways: we can meditate on the scripture itself, or we can relate what we read to our personal lives.

“This kind of reflection can help all of us make commitments that will decrease darkness and increase light. We must ask questions as we read, questions such as, How does this apply in my life today? or What lesson can I learn from this?” (Dean Jarman, “Well of Living Water,” New Era, Nov. 1973, 29)

### **David O. McKay**

I think we pay too little attention to the value of meditation, a principle of devotion... Meditation is the language of the soul... Meditation is a form of prayer... 4068Meditation is one of the most secret, most sacred doors through which we pass into the presence of the Lord. (Conference Report, April 1946, Afternoon Meeting 113.)

DC 76:22 this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him

In 1832, the Prophet said his testimony was the “last of all” testimonies given. While that may have been true in 1832, his testimony is no longer the last of all. Nor is he the last who can declare that he has seen the Lord. The apostles and prophets of our dispensation are careful in their language, humble in their testimony, but they have seen the Lord. The discerning listener can tell that their testimony is no less sure than that of Joseph Smith or Sidney Rigdon. Consider the following statements from some latter-day apostles. Elder James E. Faust said, “I understand that a chief requirement for the holy apostleship is to be a personal witness of Jesus as the Christ and the Divine Redeemer. Perhaps on that basis alone, I can qualify.” (“Response to the Call,” Ensign, Nov. 1978, 20) Similarly, Elder Neal A. Maxwell declared, “Humbly, as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, I say to you not only that Jesus lived, but that he lives—with all that those words imply!” (“Our Acceptance of Christ,” Ensign, June 1984, 69)

We should feel privileged to hear the testimony of those who have seen with their eyes and heard with their ears. Even now, we can hear the witness of Joseph Smith echoing in the testimonies of the latter-day apostles and prophets.

### **Ezra Taft Benson**

As one of His latter-day witnesses, I testify that He lives today. He is a resurrected Being. He is our Savior, our Lord, the very Son of God. I testify that He will come again as our glorified, resurrected Lord. That day is not far distant. (“The Meaning of Easter,” Ensign, Apr. 1992, 4)

### **Howard W. Hunter**

As an ordained Apostle and special witness of Christ, I give to you my solemn witness that Jesus Christ is in fact the Son of God. He is the Messiah prophetically anticipated by Old Testament prophets. He is the Hope of Israel. (“An Apostle’s Witness of Christ,” Ensign, Jan. 1984, 70)

### **Spencer W. Kimball**

I know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. I know that. I know that the gospel which we teach is the gospel of Jesus Christ and the church to which we belong is the church of Jesus Christ. (Ensign, Nov. 1974, p. 113.)

### **Heber J. Grant**



We have this testimony to bear to the world, that men in our day have seen Jesus Christ; that he has restored to the earth the gospel of life and salvation. (Conference Report, October 1926, 5.)

**Gordon B. Hinckley**

To all of these testimonies we add our own. He is Jesus the Christ, the Firstborn of the Father, the Creator of the heaven and the earth, the Jehovah of ancient Israel, the promised Messiah born in Bethlehem of Judea, the healer of the sick, the teacher of the doctrine, the Redeemer of the world, the author of our salvation, the resurrected Lord who sits on the right hand of the Father. (“Do Ye Even So to Them,” Ensign, Dec. 1991, 2)

**Gordon B. Hinckley**

In solemnity, and with understanding of the gravity of that which we say, we add our witness to all the world of the reality of the Resurrection, that this same Jesus who rose from the grave ascended into heaven... This is our testimony, which we bear in the name of Jesus Christ, and we invite all mankind to learn it so that they may rejoice in the blessings that come from following the teachings of our resurrected Lord, the Savior of Mankind. (“The Victory over Death,” Ensign, Apr. 1997, 5)

DC 76:24 the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God

**Joseph Fielding Smith**

Man is the greatest of all the creations of God. He is his offspring. We are all his children. It was made known through the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, who saw it in vision, that the inhabitants of this earth and other worlds are begotten sons and daughters unto God. That ought to put an end—so far as Latter-day Saints are concerned—to all this nonsense prevailing in the world regarding the origin of man.

Man, I say, as the offspring of God, is the greatest of all his creations. He is greater than the moon, the sun, and the stars, which are the work of the fingers of God, and are made for the benefit of man. (Doctrines of Salvation, 3 vols., edited by Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-1956], 1: 63.)

**Gordon B. Hinckley**

Man is in reality a child of God. Nothing in the universe is more important than the individual. His spirit was begotten of God; consequently all men are brothers in the literal sense. In the Mormon concept the phrase, “the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man” takes on a new and powerful meaning...

There is a mighty strength that comes of the knowledge that you and I are sons and daughters of God. Within us is something of divinity. One who has this knowledge and permits it to influence his life will not stoop to do a mean or cheap or tawdry thing. (Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 159.)

**Marion G. Romney**

The theory that man is other than the offspring of God has been, and, so long as it is accepted and acted upon, will continue to be, a major factor in blocking man’s spiritual growth and in corrupting his morals...

That man is a child of God is the most important knowledge available to mortals. Such knowledge is beyond the ken of the uninspired mind. Neither logic, science, philosophy, nor any other field of worldly learning has ever been, or ever will be, able to find it out. (“Man—A Child of God,” Ensign, July 1973, 14)

**Harold B. Lee**

Open your Bible or your triple combination or your Book of Mormon and in the most prominent place you write, “I must not forget that I am a son of God, or I am a daughter of God.” You write that and every time you open your book you look at that, “I must never forget that I am a child of God.” That's the idea. (The Teachings of Harold B. Lee, edited by Clyde J. Williams [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996], 162.)

DC 76:26 He was called Perdition, for the heavens wept over him

### **Hugh Nibley**

Perdition means lost. It means losing something that you had. It means one fallen from high estate. You can't be Perdition; you can't be lost unless you were found. And you can't be fallen unless you were high, fallen from high estate. (Ancient Documents and the Pearl of Great Price, edited by Robert Smith and Robert Smythe [n.p., n.d.], 10.)

DC 76:26 he was Lucifer, a son of the morning

“Literally the Shining One; also Lightbringer or Son of the Morning. Lucifer is also known as Satan or the devil...Apparently Lucifer is the name of the devil before his rebellion and the fall.” (Bible Dictionary, Lucifer)

### **Jeffrey R. Holland**

Light, like truth, forsakes the evil one, that prince of darkness who was cast out of heaven into the earth. The casualty of that rebellious son's fall is glimpsed at least partially in the meaning of his name Lucifer, literally “a bearer of light,” a son of the morning. Having lost that fresh radiance of an eternal dawn and destined to dwell in a kingdom without glory (i.e., light), Satan now consciously seeks to take away light from the children of men. We are able to elude such lifeless desolation, however, because God once again looked upon a darkened world and said, “Let there be light.” He gave his Only Begotten Son that whosoever would believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (See John 3:16.) I am the Light and the Life of the world. (“Whom Say Ye That I Am?” Ensign, Sept. 1974, 9)

DC 76:28 the devil...rebelled against God, and sought to take the kingdom

“Having been told in Doctrine and Covenants 76:25–26 that Lucifer, a son of the morning, was an angel in authority in the presence of God, we may read Moses 4:3–4 with renewed clarity and personal application.

Because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down;

And he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice (emphasis added).

“Here we are told explicitly of Lucifer's great crime; he ‘rebelled’ against God, or, in other words, he apostatized from God's established order. He did so by seeking to change the plan of the Father and then audaciously attempting to usurp God's own power, prerogatives, and glory. Though he did not start out as Satan, he became Satan through opposition. (The original Hebrew word satan means ‘adversary.’) He drew away his own cadre of disciples who refused to follow the Father and the Son. He and his followers were then expelled from the heavenly realms, free for a time to lay hold on the minds and hearts of willing rebels in every earthly dispensation. As expressed by John the Revelator, ‘It was given unto him [Satan] to make war with the saints, and to overcome them’ (Rev. 13:7). The Prophet Joseph Smith said, ‘the moment [Latter-day Saints] revolt at anything which comes from God, the devil takes power.’” (Andrew C. Skinner, “Apostasy, Restoration, and Lessons in Faith,” Ensign, Dec. 1995, 27)

### **Joseph Smith**

The contention in heaven was—Jesus said there would be certain souls that would not be saved; and the devil said he would save them all, and laid his plans before the grand council, who gave their vote in favor of Jesus Christ. So the devil rose up in rebellion against God, and was cast down, with all who put up their heads for him. (History of the Church, 6:314.)

**Mark E. Petersen**

It will be noted in Moses' record of these events that Lucifer said: "Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor." (Moses 4:1Moses 4:1.)

Here is illustrated two dreadful things: One was the unmitigated and colossal egotism of Lucifer. The other was his determination to save people by force "that one soul shall not be lost." He would have destroyed free agency and thus made slaves of us all, his slaves, forever doomed to obey his wicked commands. (Abraham: Friend of God [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979], 142.)

DC 76:29 he maketh war with the saints of God, and encompasseth them round about

Perhaps one of the most dramatic evidences of the war between Satan's forces and his servants can be seen in the compelling story of the early missionaries to Great Britain. In the summer of 1837, Elders Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, Willard Richards, and Isaac Russell were serving together as missionaries. Their miraculous success was noted by Satan who rallied his forces to stop the work.

**Heber C. Kimball**

One Saturday evening I was appointed by the brethren to baptize a number the next morning in the River Ribble which runs through that place. By this time the adversary of souls began a rage and he felt a determination to destroy us before we had fully established the gospel in that land; and the next morning I witnessed such a scene of satanic power and influence as I shall never forget while memory lasts.

About daybreak, Brother Russell (who was appointed to preach in the marketplace that day), who slept in the second story of the house in which we were entertained, came up to the room where Elder Hyde and I were sleeping and called upon us to arise and pray for him, for he was so afflicted with evil spirits that he could not live long unless he should obtain relief.

We immediately arose, laid hands upon him and prayed that the Lord would have mercy on his servant and rebuke the devil. While thus engaged, I was struck with great force by some invisible power and fell senseless to the floor as if I had been shot, and the first thing that I recollected was, that I was supported by Brothers Hyde and Russell, who were beseeching the throne of grace in my behalf. They then laid me on the bed, but my agony was so great that I could not endure, and I was obliged to get out, and fell on my knees and began to pray. I then sat on the bed and could distinctly see the evil spirits, who foamed and gnashed their teeth upon us. We gazed upon them about an hour and a half, and I shall never forget the horror and malignity depicted on the countenances of these foul spirits, and any attempt to paint the scene which then presented itself, or portray the malice and enmity depicted in their countenances would be vain.

I perspired exceedingly, and my clothes were as wet as if I had been taken out of the river. I felt exquisite pain, and was in the greatest distress for some time. However, I learned by it the power of the adversary, his enmity against the servants of God and got some understanding of the invisible world. (Mark E. Petersen, Moses: Man of Miracles [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977], 170.)

**Wilford Woodruff**

Brother George Q. Cannon... said that one third of the hosts of heaven were cast out because of their rebellion. I suppose we may say that at least one hundred thousand millions were cast down from heaven to earth... Do you suppose these devils are around us without trying to do something? Are they asleep? Have they not a work to perform? I say to my brethren who bear the priesthood, we have got a mighty warfare to wage with these spirits. We cannot escape it. What will they do to you? They will try to make us do anything and everything that is not right. (The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, edited by G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], 239.)

DC 76:31 suffered themselves through the power of the devil to be overcome

Reading the description of the fate of the sons of perdition, some would begin to feel sorry for them. This is entirely appropriate as long as we don't begin to question the justice of God in the punishment of the sinner. If so, we become as Corianton, mere babes in our understanding of the justice of God. As Alma explained, the whole plan of salvation depends on repentance, but "repentance could not come unto men except there were a punishment, which also was eternal as the life of the soul should be" (Alma 42:16). Perdition is that punishment which is as eternal as the life of the soul. We see that it is necessary component, "affixed opposite to the plan of happiness" (Alma 42:16). Therefore, we can repent or suffer. What happens if we don't repent? Alma says "justice claimeth the creature and executeth the law, and the law inflicteth the punishment; if not so, the works of justice would be destroyed and God would cease to be God." (Alma 42:22, see also D&C 19:16-19)

Besides, these individuals suffered themselves to be overcome. They have no one to blame but themselves. Having the choice between life and death, they chose death. Such an individual does not sin in ignorance, rather "he has got say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it." (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, 6: 314 - 315.)

DC 76:35 having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it

Can the average latter-day saint be guilty of this horrible sin? President Kimball replied, "The sin against the Holy Ghost requires such knowledge that it is manifestly impossible for the rank and file to commit such a sin." (Miracle of Forgiveness, 123)

### **Joseph Smith**

All sins shall be forgiven, except the sin against the Holy Ghost; for Jesus will save all except the sons of perdition. What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against him. After a man has sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy. This is the case with many apostates of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

When a man begins to be an enemy to this work, he hunts me, he seeks to kill me, and never ceases to thirst for my blood. He gets the spirit of the devil—the same spirit that sins against the Holy Ghost. You cannot save such persons; you cannot bring them to repentance; they make open war, like the devil, and awful is the consequence. ("The King Follett Sermon," Ensign, May 1971, 16)

DC 76:35 having denied the Only Begotten Son...having crucified him unto themselves

One common misconception is that the unpardonable sin can only be a sin against the Holy Ghost. Such is not the case. The unpardonable sin can be a sin against the Holy Ghost or it can be a sin against the Only Begotten Son. Perhaps you remember the words of the Savior, "whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him." (Matt 12:32). Some have concluded from this passage, that sinning against the Son is forgivable, but sinning against the Holy Ghost is not. This conclusion is incorrect. All manner of blasphemies against the Son of God will be forgiven, but denying the Son and crucifying him is an unforgivable sin. This is why the Savior was careful to ask the Father to forgive the Roman soldiers who put him to death, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34) He was saying, "these have not committed the unpardonable sin even though they are crucifying me."

Others have thought that Judas Iscariot was not guilty of this sin because he may not have had a sufficient endowment of the Holy Ghost to warrant such a punishment. But Judas' sin was against the Son, and he is clearly referred to as warranting perdition. Speaking of Judas and the Twelve, Jesus said, "none of them is lost, but the son of perdition." (John 17:12)

The scriptures clearly teach this principle. Those who, if they had the opportunity, would crucify Christ again are guilty of this sin. Hereby, they become ex post facto accomplices to the murder of Jesus Christ and receive judgment as if they had personally nailed Jesus to the cross. "They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." (Heb 6:6) The Lord says to them, "ye commit murder wherein ye shed innocent blood, and assent unto my death, after ye have received my new and everlasting covenant." (D&C 132:27, italics added)

Charles W. Penrose

Those who have followed [Satan]... become imbued with his spirit, which is the spirit of destruction, in opposition to the spirit which brings life, are his. The spirit of murder enters their hearts; they are ready to put to death even the Son of God, if His existence in life comes in their way. They received light and truth and then altogether turned therefrom. They gain power to attain to the highest altitude of light and truth and glory, then they turn around and through falsehood and wickedness and corruption in their nature and in their works, they become servants unto Satan, sons of perdition. (Conference Report, October 1911, Second Day—Morning Session. 51 - 52.)

DC 76:36 they...shall go away into the lake of fire and brimstone

The lake of fire and brimstone mentioned is a figurative description of the eternal punishment of the sons of perdition. Their suffering shall be as a lake of fire and brimstone. Part of this suffering comes as a punishment from God—eternal separation from the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; part of it comes from within—from the remorse of one's conscience.

### **Joseph Smith**

A man is his own tormentor and his own condemner. Hence the saying, They shall go into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. The torment of disappointment in the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone. I say, so is the torment of man. (History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6: 314.)

### **Harold B. Lee**

The greatest hell that one can suffer is the burning of one's conscience. The scriptures say his thoughts will condemn him, he'll have a bright recollection of all his life (see "#alma 12:14Alma 12:14;"#alma 11:43 11:43)... there will be a burning of the conscience that will be worse than any physical kind of fire that I assume one could suffer. (The Teachings of Harold B. Lee, edited by Clyde J. Williams [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996], 67.)

### **Joseph Smith**

Those who commit the unpardonable sin are doomed to Gnomom to dwell in hell, worlds without end. As they concocted scenes of bloodshed in this world, so they shall rise to that resurrection which is as the lake of fire and brimstone. Some shall rise to the everlasting burnings of God; for God dwells in everlasting burnings and some shall rise to the damnation of their own filthiness, which is as exquisite a torment as the lake of fire and brimstone. (History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6: 317.)

DC 76:37-38 the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power

The second death, or spiritual death, is defined as being cut off from the presence of God. This means that you cannot see the face of God, you cannot withstand the presence of God, you will not enjoy the visitation

of the Son, and you are not worthy of the smallest portion of the spirit of the Holy Ghost. It is a total and complete separation from God. As described in scripture, spiritual death is the temporary punishment of those who suffer in hell. It also describes the state of the sons of perdition who are cast out after the last soul is resurrected, 'These are they who shall go away into the lake of fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels—And the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power' (DC 76:36-37).

One might be inclined to think that the "first death" must be the death of the mortal body. This is not the case. The Lord explains that the first death is also spiritual and occurs when we leave his presence and come to earth. This is symbolized by the fall of Adam, 'I, the Lord God, caused that he should be cast out from the Garden of Eden, from my presence, because of his transgression, wherein he became spiritually dead, which is the first death, even that same death which is the last death (or second death), which is spiritual, which shall be pronounced upon the wicked when I shall say: Depart, ye cursed' (DC 29:41).

We all need to be redeemed from this first spiritual death. Every individual who inherits one of the three kingdoms of glory is redeemed from this separation from God. Even those in the telestial kingdom enjoy the influence of the Holy Spirit (v. 86). Hence, they are both resurrected and redeemed. The sons of perdition are resurrected but not redeemed; they are saved from physical death but not spiritual death. The natural consequences of the fall of Adam continue to apply to them. Without redemption, they "become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of lies, in misery." (2 Ne. 9:9) "All other persons will be saved by the grace of God from death, hell, the devil, and endless torment." (Theodore M. Burton, "Salvation and Exaltation," Ensign, July 1972, 78)

### **Joseph Fielding Smith**

The second death is not the destruction of the body and the spirit, but a banishment into outer darkness away from the presence of the Lord, where they who partake of it are without the light, and dead as to all things pertaining to righteousness. They cannot be led by the Spirit of the Lord, their advancement is shut off, for they become followers of, and subject to, the will of Lucifer, once Son of the Morning, but now Perdition, the father of lies, because he rebelled against the Father and sought to destroy his work.

Let us be thankful, indeed, that the number who shall thus be punished are very, very few, and only those who wilfully place themselves beyond the power of redemption will partake thereof. (Improvement Era, 1918, Vol Xxi. January, 1918. No. 3)

DC 76:39 all the rest shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead

### **George Q. Cannon**

In many minds there has been a great misapprehension on the question of the resurrection. Some have had the idea, and have taught it, that the sons of perdition will not be resurrected at all. They base this idea, and draw this conclusion, from the 38th and 39th paragraphs of "D&C 76:1Section 76 of the book of Doctrine and Covenants. . . careful reading of these verses, however, and especially of the preceding paragraphs, will show that the Lord does not, in this language, exclude even the sons of perdition from the resurrection. It is plain that the intention is to refer to them explicitly as the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power: "for all the rest shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead, through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb." This excluded class are the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power, and "the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord after the sufferings of his wrath."

This is by no means to say that they are to have no resurrection. Jesus our Lord and Savior died for all, and all will be resurrected—good and bad, white and black, people of every race, whether sinners or not; and no matter how great their sins may be, the resurrection of their bodies is sure. (Roy W. Doxey, comp., Latter-day Prophets and the Doctrine and Covenants [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978], 2: 445 - 446.)

**DC 76:42-43 That through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power**

What a grand and glorious doctrine! Almost all of the inhabitants of the earth will be saved! Saved from what? Saved from the fall of Adam. In this sense, salvation means to inherit one of three kingdoms of glory. The miracle of the “gospel, the glad tidings,” is that the redemption of Christ atones for the fall on behalf of almost everyone. To a latter-day saint, salvation in the telestial kingdom sounds terrible, but it will be a marvelous and glorious reward for those who expect nothing more. We should rejoice in the mercy of God’s incredible plan to save his children.

**Brigham Young**

Behold the goodness, the long-suffering, the kindness, and the strong parental feeling of our Father and God in preparing the way and providing the means to save the children of men—not alone the Latter-day Saints—not alone those who have the privilege of the first principles of the celestial law, but to save all. It is a universal salvation—a universal redemption. Salvationa-Young, BrighamTP(Discourses of Brigham Young, selected and arranged by John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], 388.)

**Dallin H. Oaks**

The theology of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is comprehensive, universal, merciful, and true. Following the necessary experience of mortal life, all sons and daughters of God will ultimately be resurrected and go to a kingdom of glory. The righteous—regardless of current religious denomination or belief—will ultimately go to a kingdom of glory more wonderful than any of us can comprehend. Even the wicked, or almost all of them, will ultimately go to a marvelous—though lesser—kingdom of glory. (“Apostasy and Restoration,” Ensign, May 1995, 87)

**Brigham Young**

When God revealed to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon that there was a place prepared for all, according to the light they had received and their rejection of evil and practice of good, it was a great trial to many, and some apostatized because God was not going to send to everlasting punishment heathens and infants, but had a place of salvation, in due time, for all, and would bless the honest and virtuous and truthful, whether they ever belonged to any Church or not. (Karl Ricks Anderson, Joseph Smith's Kirtland [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989], 96.)

DC 76:43 Jesus...saves all the works of his hands, except those sons of perdition

**Joseph Smith**

I have a declaration to make as to the provisions which God hath made to suit the conditions of man—made from before the foundation of the world. What has Jesus said? All sins, and all blasphemies, and every transgression, except one, that man can be guilty of, may be forgiven; and there is a salvation for all men, either in this world or the world to come, who have not committed the unpardonable sin, there being a provision either in this world or the world of spirits. Hence God hath made a provision that every spirit in the eternal world can be ferreted out and saved unless he has committed that unpardonable sin which cannot be remitted to him either in this world or the world of spirits. God has wrought out a salvation for all men, unless they have committed a certain sin. (History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6: 313 - 314.)

DC 76:45 the end thereof, neither the place thereof, nor their torment, no man knows

**Brigham Young**

If people could see [the fate of the sons of perdition], as Joseph and Sidney saw it, they would pray that the vision be closed up; for they could not endure the sight. (Discourses of Brigham Young, selected and arranged by John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], 386.)

DC 76:46-48 Neither was it revealed, neither is, neither will be revealed unto man

“It is important to note that although no human knows the eternal state of these people, it would be incorrect to teach that there is possible redemption for them at some future time. In response to such doctrine taught by a Brother Hulet, Joseph Smith wrote:

Say to the brothers Hulet and to all others, that the Lord never authorized them to say that the devil, his angels, or the sons of perdition, should ever be restored; for their state of destiny was not revealed to man, is not revealed, nor ever shall be revealed, save to those who are made partakers thereof: consequently those who teach this doctrine have not received it of the Spirit of the Lord. . . . We, therefore, command that this doctrine be taught no more in Zion. (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 24)” (Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds., *Alma, the Testimony of the Word* [Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1992], 161.)

DC 76:50-70 The Celestial Kingdom

**Rudger Clawson**

Section 76 is a great revelation. We can sit down by ourselves and determine just which glory will satisfy us and how we can obtain it, and we are left without excuse. This great revelation appears in the book, and it is worthy of study and deep reflection. (Conference Report, October 1937, Church of the Air Broadcast 111.)

**Thomas S. Monson**

The lighthouse of the Lord beckons to all as we sail the seas of life. Our home port is the celestial kingdom of God. Our purpose is to steer an undeviating course in that direction. A man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder—never likely to reach home port. To us comes the signal: Chart your course, set your sail, position your rudder, and proceed. (“Sailing Safely on the Seas of Life,” *Ensign*, July 1999, 2)

**Glenn L. Pace**

Knowing the shortest distance from the world to the celestial kingdom is a straight line, the Lord has restored his gospel, which contains the truth and guidance we need to make the journey as smooth as possible. We can avoid unnecessary detours by reading the scriptures and listening to the Lord’s current prophets. (“Follow the Prophet,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 25)

**Thomas S. Monson**

What we need, as we journey along through this period known as mortality, is a compass to chart our course, a map to guide our footsteps, and a pattern whereby we might mold and shape our very lives. May I share with you a formula that in my judgment will help you and help me to journey well through mortality and to that great reward of exaltation in the celestial kingdom of our Heavenly Father.

First, fill your mind with truth; second, fill your life with service; and third, fill your heart with love. (“Formula for Success,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1996, 2)

**Joseph Fielding Smith**

All of the ordinances of the gospel—baptism, laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, the work in the temples for the salvation of the living and the dead—these ordinances, everything else, all of the ordinances of the gospel pertain to the celestial kingdom of God.

We are not preaching the gospel with the idea of trying to save people in the terrestrial world. Ours is the salvation of exaltation. What we are trying to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ is to bring people back again, through the power of the priesthood and the ordinances of the Church, as sons and daughters of God, receiving a fulness of the Father’s kingdom. That is our endeavor. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., edited by Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-1956], 2: 190.)



**Neal A. Maxwell**

Righteous desires need to be relentless...because, said President Brigham Young, “the men and women, who desire to obtain seats in the celestial kingdom, will find that they must battle every day” (in Journal of Discourses, 11:14). Therefore, true Christian soldiers are more than weekend warriors. (“According to the Desire of [Our] Hearts,” Ensign, Nov. 1996, 22)

DC 76:51 They are they who...believed on his name and were baptized

**Melvin J. Ballard**

I now say to all the world that no man, no woman, ever shall see the celestial kingdom of God who is not baptized of the water and of the spirit. The Lord has specified it. He made it so binding and complete when after announcing the law he complied with every term himself, though perfect, so that no man who imagines himself to be perfect here can excuse himself or herself from obedience to the law of baptism. It is the door, the gate to Celestial Glory. (Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin J. Ballard [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1949], 236.)

**Joseph Smith**

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. This eternal truth settles the question of all men's religion. A man may be saved, after the judgment, in the terrestrial kingdom, or in the celestial kingdom, but he can never see the celestial kingdom of God without being born of the water and the Spirit. (History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1: 283 - 284.)

**Joseph Smith**

It is a sign and a commandment which God has set for man to enter into His kingdom. Those who seek to enter in any other way will seek in vain; for God will not receive them, neither will the angels acknowledge their works as accepted, for they have not obeyed the ordinances, nor attended to the signs which God ordained for the salvation of man, to prepare him for, and give him a title to, a celestial glory. (History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 4: 554 - 555.)

DC 76:53 those who are just and true

**Ezra Taft Benson**

“Those who are just and true.” What an apt expression for those valiant in the testimony of Jesus! These are members of the Church who magnify their callings in the Church (see "D&C 84:33 Doctrine and Covenants 84:33), pay their tithes and offerings, live morally clean lives, sustain their Church leaders by word and action, keep the Sabbath as a holy day, and obey all the commandments of God. They are courageous in defending truth and righteousness. To these the Lord has promised that “all thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ.” ("D&C 121:29 Doctrine and Covenants 121:29.) (Come unto Christ [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983], 13.)

**Rudger Clawson**

Now, we see from this that it is only possible to attain to so great a degree of glory in the presence of God by keeping His commandments, yielding obedience to the ordinances of the Gospel and walking in the light continually and being just and true. This is the price we have to pay for it, but if we are willing to make the sacrifice, if it can be called a sacrifice, our highest ambition, our fondest hopes, our most earnest desires will be realized to the very fullest extent. (Conference Report, October 1914, Second Day—Morning Session 80.)

DC 76:53 who overcome and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise

**Melvin J. Ballard**

We may deceive men, but we cannot deceive the Holy Ghost, and our blessings will not be eternal until they are also sealed by the holy spirit of promise, the Holy Ghost, one who reads the thoughts and hearts of men and gives his sealing approval to the blessings pronounced upon their heads. Then it is binding, and of full force. (Harold B. Lee, Stand Ye in Holy Places [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], 53.)

### **Bruce R. McConkie**

All things that are not sealed by this power have an end when men are dead. Unless a baptism has this enduring seal, it will not admit a person to the celestial kingdom; unless an eternal marriage covenant is sealed by this authority, it will not take the participating parties to an exaltation in the highest heaven within the celestial world.

All things gain enduring force and validity because of the sealing power. So comprehensive is this power that it embraces ordinances performed for the living and the dead, seals the children on earth up to their fathers who went before, and forms the enduring patriarchal chain that will exist eternally among exalted beings. (Mormon Doctrine, 2d ed., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, p. 683).

DC 76:54 they...are the church of the Firstborn

What do you think the name of the Church will be after the resurrection of the just? Will it be called the Church of Jesus Christ of Millennial saints? That sounds funny, but we do know the name of the Church once the earth is celestialized, it is "The Church of the Firstborn." Elder McConkie said it this way, "The Church of Jesus Christ is his earthly church, so The Church of the Firstborn is his heavenly church." (The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978], 46.) Once God's government is brought to earth, once the heavenly Jerusalem descends from heaven, and once the tabernacle of God dwells with men (Heb. 12:22-23; Rev. 21:1-3), the Church of the Firstborn will be the only Church on the earth. Our goal should be to become a member of this church. Admission, of course, depends on our faithfulness in keeping all the required ordinances. We are assured that "all those who are begotten through me are partakers of the glory of the same, and are the church of the Firstborn" (D&C 93:22). They are those "who overcome by faith and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise" (D&C 76:53).

DC 76:55-56 They are they who are priests and kings

### **Joseph Fielding Smith**

Comparatively few of the children of men will find the salvation which is found in the celestial kingdom, or in other words the exaltation which will make of them heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ—even sons of God. Those who gain this exaltation receive the fulness of the power, might, and dominion of that kingdom. They overcome all things. They are crowned as priests and kings and become like Jesus Christ. While this doctrine is taught in the Bible, the majority of mankind have lost sight of it, and it has become one of the peculiar teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints... Since the majority of men refuse to take the course in righteousness, or enter the strait gate into the narrow way, which would make them heirs in the household of God, it will be a select few who receive these crowning blessings. (Doctrines of Salvation, 3 vols., edited by Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-1956], 2: 24.)

DC 76:57 priests...after the order of Enoch

What is the order of Enoch? Prior to the days of Melchizedek, we conclude that the priesthood was called the Holy Priesthood after the order of Enoch. The purpose would have been to avoid the too frequent repetition of the formal name: "the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God." (D&C 107:3-4)

Melchizedek...having been approved of God, he was ordained an high priest after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch,

It being after the order of the son of God...

For God having sworn unto Enoch and unto his seed with an oath by himself; that every one being ordained after this order and calling should have power, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas, to dry up waters, to turn them out of their course;

To put at defiance the armies of nations, to divide the earth, to break every band, to stand in the presence of God; to do all things according to his will, according to his command, subdue principalities and powers; and this by the will of the Son of God which was from before the foundation of the world.

And men having this faith, coming up unto this order of God, were translated and taken up into heaven. (JST Gen. 14:26-32)

DC 76:58 they are gods, even the sons of God

“Note that the two terms gods and sons of God, are equated here, for to be one is also to be or to become the other. Children grow up to be what their parents are. If, through the gospel, we have truly become the sons and daughters of God as the scriptures insist.” (Stephen E. Robinson, H. Dean Garrett, A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2001] 2:307)

### **Joseph Fielding Smith**

Now they who enter into the terrestrial kingdom, and they who enter into the telestial kingdom will not be sons of God in the sense in which this term is used here. Of course we are all the children of God, every soul on the earth; we are His offspring, but in the great kingdom that shall be established in exaltation, all who receive exaltation will become sons of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ and entitled to all the privileges and all the blessings of the Fathers kingdom. What a wonderful privilege that is! This blessing will not come to the inhabitants of the telestial and the terrestrial worlds. (Conference Report, April 1942, Afternoon Meeting 28.)

### **Joseph Fielding Smith**

How could this doctrine be stated plainer? This is the doctrine taught by the Savior to the Jews, by David in his psalms and by others of the prophets. Here it is stated emphatically that they who are of the Church of the Firstborn (i. e., those who keep the whole law) even “as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God!” Where is it written? In this section; and in the words of the Savior wherein He says, referring to David's Psalm, the Scriptures “cannot be broken” (“John 10:34”John 10:35”John 10:36”John 10:34-36). Doesn't this teach plainly the doctrine of plurality of Gods? Does it not teach the fact that the children shall, through obedience, sometime obtain the exaltation of the Gods themselves? If not what does it mean? (Origin of the Reorganized Church and the Question of Succession, 106)

### **Joseph Smith**

Every man who reigns in celestial glory is a God to his dominions... They who obtain a glorious resurrection from the dead, are exalted far above principalities, powers, thrones, dominions and angels, and are expressly declared to be heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, all having eternal power.

The scriptures are a mixture of very strange doctrines to the Christian world, who are blindly led by the blind. (History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6: 477 - 478.)

### **Joseph Smith**

Stand firm, my friends; never flinch. Do not seek to save your lives, for he that is afraid to die for the truth, will lose eternal life. Hold out to the end, and we shall be resurrected and become like Gods, and reign in celestial kingdoms, principalities, and eternal dominions. (History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6:500)

DC 76:60 they shall overcome all things

**George Albert Smith**

How careful we as Latter-day Saints ought to be to live every day of our lives that we may be influenced by the power of the Lord, and that we may be able to turn aside from those things that have a tendency to break down our power to earn the celestial kingdom. The fact that we have been baptized into the Church is not sufficient. The fact that our names are on the Church records is not sufficient. The Redeemer himself has said that “not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (“#matt. 7:21Matthew 7:21). That is well defined, therefore we cannot drink with the drunken, we cannot debauch our lives, we cannot be dishonorable in our dealings with our fellowmen and gain celestial glory. We must keep the commandments of our Heavenly Father. (Conference Reports, October 1926, p. 103.)

DC 76:62 These shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever

**Melvin J. Ballard**

Do you comprehend it, you who gain celestial glory, the privilege of dwelling in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever? What did it mean to have in the world, during his ministry, for three brief years the Lord Jesus Christ—not the Father, just the Son? It was the most wonderful privilege the world has ever had. What would you give tonight for the privilege of standing in the presence of the Son for five minutes? You would give all your earthly possessions for that privilege. Then can you comprehend the full meaning and significance of the statement that those who gain celestial glory will have the privilege of dwelling in the presence of the Father and the Son forever and ever? That, in itself, will be reward enough for the struggle to obtain the prize. Yea, it is beyond price and earthly possessions. Even the giving of life itself would be a trifle for the privilege to dwell forever and ever in the presence of the Father and the Son. (Bryant S. Hinckley, Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin J. Ballard [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1949], 242 - 243.)

DC 76:66 These are they who are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly place

Mount Zion and the city of the living God are two different places. Mount Zion refers to the New Jerusalem; the city of the living God is a heavenly Jerusalem which will come out of heaven when the earth is celestialized to become the residence of God. John described this city as follows: “[the angel] carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God...And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” (Rev. 21:10-22)

**David O. McKay**

I...fell asleep, and beheld in vision something infinitely sublime. In the distance I beheld a beautiful white city. Though far away, yet I seemed to realize that trees with luscious fruit, shrubbery with gorgeously-tinted leaves, and flowers in perfect bloom abounded everywhere. The clear sky above seemed to reflect these beautiful shades of color. I then saw a great concourse of people approaching the city. Each one wore a white flowing robe, and a white headdress. Instantly my attention seemed centered upon their Leader, and though I could see only the profile of his features and his body, I recognized him at once as my Savior! The tint and radiance of his countenance were glorious to behold! There was a peace about him which seemed sublime — it was divine!

The city, I understood, was his. It was the City Eternal; and the people following him were to abide there in peace and eternal happiness.

But who were they?

As if the Savior read my thoughts, he answered by pointing to a semicircle that then appeared above them, and on which were written in gold the words:

"These Are They Who Have Overcome The World — Who Have Truly Been Born Again!" (Cherished Experiences from the Writings of President David O. McKay, rev. and enl., compiled by Clare Middlemiss [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1955], 102.)

DC 76:70 These are they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun

### **Sterling W. Sill**

We know quite a lot about celestial beings, as we have had a number of them appear to us upon this earth. And each time they have come, those who have received them have said that they are impossible to describe.

When the Prophet Joseph Smith had his vision of the Father and the Son, he said, “[Their] brightness and glory defy all description.” (JS—H 1:17) That is, we don’t have any background of knowledge; there isn’t a vocabulary to use in describing a celestial accomplishment. (“To Die Well,” Ensign, Nov. 1976, 47)

### **Joseph Smith**

We came to this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the celestial kingdom. The great principle of happiness consists in having a body. (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 181.)

### **Joseph Fielding Smith**

Some will gain celestial bodies with all the powers of exaltation and eternal increase. These bodies will shine like the sun as our Savior's does, as described by John. Those who enter the terrestrial kingdom will have terrestrial bodies, and they will not shine like the sun, but they will be more glorious than the bodies of those who receive the telestial glory. (Doctrines of Salvation, 3 vols., edited by Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-1956], 2: 287.)

### **Brigham Young**

Those who attain to the blessing of the first or celestial resurrection will be pure and holy, and perfect in body. Every man and woman that reaches to this unspeakable attainment will be as beautiful as the angels that surround the throne of God. (Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 10: 24 - 25.)

DC 76:69 These are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant

### **Bruce C. Hafen**

Those who inherit the celestial kingdom are “just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood.” (D&C 76:69.) As Moroni put it, “Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him ... by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ.” (Moro. 10:32–33.)

These scriptures make it clear that we do not achieve perfection solely through our own efforts. Knowing just that much is a source of new perspective. Because we feel overwhelmed with the scriptural injunction to seek perfection, the idea that divine grace is the final source of our perfection may seem too good to be true. That is how Christ’s grace appears to those carrying the burden of truly serious sins. Honest people called “Saints” may feel the same way as they stumble daily through the discouraging debris of their obvious imperfections. But the gospel has good news not only for the serious transgressor, but for all who long to be better than they are.

Through the Holy Ghost, the Atonement makes possible certain spiritual endowments that actually purify our nature and enable us to live a more “eternal” or Godlike life. At that ultimate stage, we will eat the fruit of the tree of life and partake of God’s divine nature. Then we will exhibit divine character not just because we think we should, but because that is the way we are. (“Beauty for Ashes: The Atonement of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1990, 12)

#### DC 76:71-79 The Terrestrial Kingdom

Many have wondered what will happen with the faithful Christians throughout the ages. Many missionaries have met genuine followers of Jesus—those who live according to the light of their understanding but reject the message of the Restoration. They have been baptized but not according to the law of God by one “who is ordained and sealed unto this power” (v. 52). What will happen to them? Where will they go?

They will rise in the resurrection of the just to enjoy the felicity of the Millenium. They will enjoy the presence of the Son. Their reward will be great. Perhaps, you might think that they are worthy of a greater reward—that some of them should inherit a celestial glory and perhaps some of them will. However, consider their understanding of heaven. They deny the doctrine that man through the atonement of Christ can become as God. They deny the doctrine of eternal marriage. They deny the doctrine of eternal families. In effect, they deny the possibility of a celestial reward. What do they expect of heaven? They hope to be live eternally with Jesus. They want to be saved! They don’t care about exaltation, they just want to be saved! In effect, they believe in a heaven like the terrestrial kingdom. Will they get what they want? Absolutely. Will their reward be greater than they could ever imagine? Absolutely. Will they go to heaven? Yes, they will go to the second heaven—the terrestrial kingdom.

#### **Brigham Young**

Will the Methodists be saved? Yes. Will other sects? Yes. I think you could not now find an Elder in this Church who would rise up in a congregation and tell you that John Wesley (founder of the Methodists) is weltering in hell. Have the Elders ever preached such a doctrine? Yes, some of them have preached that all the Reformers, from the days of Christ and the Apostles until Joseph Smith received the Priesthood, must be damned. I do not think that you could now hear such doctrine from any of them. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 8: 36.)

#### DC 76:72 these are they who died without law

The atonement has power to save those in a state of innocence. In particular, this applies to two main groups, children and “those who have not the law given to them.” (2 Ne. 9:26) This principle is taught in the law of sacrifice as found in the law of Moses, “If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord.... [the priest] shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering...the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them” (Lev 4:2,20).

The Book of Mormon teaches this principle in several different locations. King Benjamin’s sermon includes the following, “his blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned” (Mosiah 3:11).

#### **Joseph Fielding Smith**

“We may be sure that the Lord would do all things according to the law of eternal justice and that he would not punish people who in ignorance sinned and violated his commandments. It is one of the most glorious principles of truth and justice that was ever revealed that men are to be punished according to their disobedience to divine commandments, but not when they have acted innocently in ignorance of those divine edicts.” (*Answers To Gospel Questions*, 4:77)

#### **John Taylor**

There are heathen nations enveloped in idolatry; and if millions of people come into the world in these places surrounded with idolatry and superstition, it would be unjust for them to be punished for what they did not know, hence, if they have no law, they will be judged without law; and God in his own wisdom will regulate their affairs, for it is their misfortune, not their individual offense, that has placed them in their present position. (Government of God, p. 52.)

### **Joseph F. Smith**

There will be redemption for the heathen—those that know not God. Those that have no law are not judged by law; and they will come forth in the first resurrection—not perhaps in the morning of the first resurrection, but they will come forth in that resurrection—and they will sit down with Abraham and partake of glory for they lived and died without law. They will not be judged as those will who have received the light and the law and have rejected them. You and I have received the light. We have received the Holy Priesthood. We have received the testimony of the Holy Spirit, and have been brought from death unto life. Therefore, we are now on very safe or on dangerous ground,—dangerous if we are trifling with these sacred things that have been committed to our care. (Brian H. Stuy, ed., *Collected Discourses*, 5 vols. [Burbank, Calif., and Woodland Hills, Ut.: B.H.S. Publishing, 1987-1992], vol. 4, January 20, 1895.)

DC 76:73 the spirits of men kept in prison

Our understanding of the spirit world is that it is divided into two parts: spirit paradise and spirit prison. This understanding helps us to comprehend what the world of spirits might be like. However, the term prison can be used to refer to the entire spirit world, especially before Christ's ministry there. Why would the righteous spirits be in prison? They felt they were in prison because they "had looked upon the long absence of their spirits from their bodies as a bondage" (D&C 132:50). "A prison is any place you can't leave when you want to, and in the spirit world even the righteous are held captive by the chains of death." (Stephen E. Robinson, H. Dean Garrett, *A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2001] 2:315)

We should not conclude that those who inherit a terrestrial glory have to suffer a terrible punishment in "hell" or "spirit prison" as we commonly refer to it. Rather, they receive "their part in that prison (i.e. the spirit world) which is prepared for them, that they might receive the gospel, and be judged according to men in the flesh." (D&C 88:99, italics added)

DC 76:74 Who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it

### **Bruce R. McConkie**

Well, to me and to you, and to those to whom our missionaries go, this is a great warning. It is a warning that now is the time for us to keep the commandments of God. I do not know any reason for believing that a man who has belonged to this Church, and has then rebelled against the truth, who has forsaken it and gone his own wilful way, will have another chance to be an heir to that kingdom. (Conference Report, April 1948, Afternoon Meeting 51.)

### **Spencer W. Kimball**

They had had their opportunity; they had wasted the days of their probation; they had ignored the testimonies of the servants of God; they had followed the world and lived a worldly life. Perhaps many of them had taken the attitude, "I am not the religious kind." "I do not like to go to meetings." "I'm too busy; I can't be bothered." "I had other things of more interest." (The Miracle of Forgiveness [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], chap. 20)

### **Spencer W. Kimball**

Too late! The terrestrial for them! It could have been the celestial, and it could have been exaltation! But they procrastinated the day of their preparation. The same lamentable cry of "Too late!" will apply to many of

today's Church members who did not heed the warning but who proceeded-sometimes carelessly, sometimes defiantly-to bind themselves through mortality to those who could not or would not prepare for the blessings which were in reserve for them.

The Lord's program is unchangeable. His laws are immutable. They will not be modified. Your opinion or mine does not alter the laws. Many in the world, and even some in the Church, seem to think that eventually the Lord will be merciful and give them the unearned blessing. But the Lord cannot be merciful at the expense of justice. (The Miracle of Forgiveness [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], chap. 17)

DC 76:75 these are they who are honorable men of the earth

### **Spencer W. Kimball**

They must have been “honorable men of the earth.” Perhaps many of them were honest, good neighbors, good citizens, and committed no heinous crime, but were not valiant. Are not the scriptures very clear that they have lost their opportunity for exaltation? Is it not clear that it was everlastingly too late for them...

The terrestrial kingdom will not be enjoyed by the very wicked, for they shall obtain only the telestial. Neither will the terrestrial be given to the valiant, the faithful, the perfected, for they will go into the celestial kingdom prepared for those who live the celestial laws. But into the terrestrial will go those who do not measure up to the celestial. Speaking of one category of terrestrial people, the Lord says: “These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God.” (“D&C 76:79D&C 76:79.) The “unvaliant” Latter-day Saint will find himself there. (The Miracle of Forgiveness [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], chap. 20)

DC 76:79 they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus

### **Dallin H. Oaks**

What does it mean to be “valiant in the testimony of Jesus”? Surely this includes keeping his commandments and serving him. But wouldn't it also include bearing witness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer, to believers and nonbelievers alike? As the Apostle Peter taught the Saints of his day, we should “sanctify the Lord God in [our] hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh [us] a reason of the hope that is in [us].” (1 Pet. 3:15.)

All of us need to be valiant in the testimony of Jesus. As believers in Christ, we affirm the truth of Peter's testimony in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth that “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12; see also D&C 109:4.)...

To those who are devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ, I say there has never been a greater need for us to profess our faith, privately and publicly. (“Witnesses of Christ,” Ensign, Nov. 1990, 31)

### **Ezra Taft Benson**

Not to be valiant in one's testimony is a tragedy of eternal consequence. These are members who know this latter-day work is true, but who fail to endure to the end. Some may even hold temple recommends, but do not magnify their callings in the Church. Without valor, they do not take an affirmative stand for the kingdom of God. Some seek the praise, adulation, and honors of men; others attempt to conceal their sins; and a few criticize those who preside over them. (“Valiant in the Testimony of Jesus,” Ensign, May 1982, 63)

DC 76:79 they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God

### **Orson F. Whitney**



These voyagers paid only for second-rate privileges. They “drew the line,” giving a part but not all of their allegiance to Him who hath said: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” The things of this world were more precious in their eyes than the riches that perish not and that thieves cannot steal. They loved Truth, but not whole-heartedly. They loved money and pleasure more, and strove for fame and the applause of this world, rather than for the approval of heaven. Though clean of conduct and honorable in deal, they were not zealous for Christ, and knew not the meaning of self-sacrifice. These are worthy of the Kingdom, but not of the Crown; and they shine, not like the golden sun, but like the silvery moon, with a diminished or secondary radiance, with reflected rather than with original light. (Saturday Night Thoughts [Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1921], 319 - 320.)

DC 76:81-90; 98-112 The Telestial Kingdom

“We are living in a telestial world, complete with telestial arts and entertainment which can fill our minds with telestial images. Those telestial images often stimulate telestial thoughts, which, if not rejected, will lead to telestial behavior. The eventual result can be a telestial person. We would be more healthy spiritually if we never consumed any evil. Every bit harms us.

“The prophets of the Lord understand this process and have given us this sharp admonition: ‘Come ye out from the wicked, and be ye separate, and touch not their unclean things.’ (Alma 5:57.) (Lex de Azevedo, “A Closer Look at Popular Music,” Ensign, Mar. 1985, 40)

### **Spencer W. Kimball**

It often seems to be with people, having such a firm grasp on things of the world—that which is telestial—that no amount of urging and no degree of emergency can persuade them to let go in favor of that which is celestial. Satan gets them in his grip easily. If we insist on spending all our time and resources building up for ourselves a worldly kingdom, that is exactly what we will inherit.

In spite of our delight in defining ourselves as modern, and our tendency to think we possess a sophistication that no people in the past ever had—in spite of these things, we are, on the whole, an idolatrous people—a condition most repugnant to the Lord. (“The False Gods We Worship,” Ensign, June 1976, 6)

DC 76:83 these are they who deny not the Holy Spirit

### **Brigham Young**

There will not so many people go into that awful place that burns with fire and brimstone, where they sink down, down, down to the bottom of the bottomless pit, as the Christians say,—not near so many as the Christian world would have go there. That gives me great joy, notwithstanding all the perils and persecution we have suffered through the wickedness of the wicked. Liars, sorcerers, whoremongers, adulterers, and those that love and make a lie will be found on the outside of the walls of the city; but they will never get into the bottom of the bottomless pit. Who will go there and become angels of perdition and suffer the wrath of an offended God? Those who sin against the Holy Ghost. (Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 7: 144.)

DC 76:84 These are they who are thrust down to hell

“Just as paradise is not the eternal abode of the righteous, hell in the spirit world is not the eternal abode of the wicked... Hell in the spirit world will end when all people have been resurrected. Because of the atonement of Christ, there is an eventual release. (See 2 Ne. 9:6–12.) Those who remain “filthy still” (the sons of perdition) will remain in hell, but it will be a place separate from the hell of the spirit world...

“In short, the spirit world is the temporary home of the spirits of all mankind, be they good or evil. Thus Joseph Smith could declare that “the righteous and the wicked all go to the same world of spirits until the

resurrection.” (Teachings, p. 310.) (Dale C. Mouritsen, “The Spirit World, Our Next Home,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1977, 49)

DC 76:86-88 the telestial receive it of the administering of angels who are appointed to minister for them

One popular notion is that celestial beings will be able to visit friends in the other kingdoms but those of a lower kingdom cannot visit a higher one. This notion, while popular, is not entirely scriptural. This passage tells us that those of a celestial glory will not minister to the telestial kingdom, for they receive their ministrations through the terrestrial. Furthermore, celestial beings may not be able to visit even the terrestrial at their own will, for it appears that these ministrations are limited to those “angels who are appointed to minister for them.” Perhaps, the Lord will call friends, family members, and close associates to be the ministers for those of a lower kingdom, but if you have not been appointed to visit a lower kingdom, you may not be able to go there. This is just one more reason to get all our friends and family in the celestial kingdom.

DC 76:89 the glory of the telestial...surpasses all understanding

“Many of us have heard the statement made—and ascribed to either Joseph Smith or Brigham Young—to the effect that if a person could see the glory of the telestial kingdom he would commit suicide to get there. If only we could get the fundamental doctrines across to Church members as rapidly as we get across rumors, everyone would be saved. Am I saying that's a rumor? Well, I am saying this, that over a period of many years I have combed everything Joseph Smith said and wrote, and I can't find it. Hugh Nibley has done the same with Brigham Young's words, and he can't find it. It is hard to prove a negative, of course. What I can say is that we have found a statement from Joseph via Wilford Woodruff that says something else that is close, and I suspect it is the origin of the alleged statement (see *Diary of Charles C. Walker*, August 1837, in *Church Historical Department*).” (Truman G. Madsen, *The Radiant Life* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994], chap. 8)

“A rather common notion in connection with this verse is that Joseph Smith had taught that if we knew what the telestial kingdom was like, we would commit suicide to get there. What the Prophet said was not in reference to the telestial kingdom, but to life ‘behind the veil,’ which may mean a number of things. The Prophet's statement (Charles Walker quoting Wilford Woodruff quoting Joseph Smith) is as follows:

“Br. Woodruff spoke. . . . He referred to a saying of Joseph Smith which he heard him utter (like this) That if the People knew what was behind the veil, they would try by every means to commit suicide that they might get there, but the Lord in his wisdom had implanted the fear of death in every person that they might cling to life and thus accomplish the designs of their creator. (*Diary of Charles Lowell Walker*, ed. by A. Karl Larson and Katherine M. Larson [Logan, Ut.: Utah State University Press, 1980], vol. 1, pp. 465-66.)” (Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson, eds., *Studies in Scripture*, Vol. 1: *The Doctrine and Covenants* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989], footnote 29, chapter 27, p. 307-308)

DC 76:90 no man knows it except him to whom God has revealed it

The glory of the telestial kingdom is said to surpass all understanding. This is one of the Lord's secrets—one of the mysteries of godliness. Ask the average, non-religious individual to describe what would be heaven to him. He might describe a place of great beauty, perhaps a tropical paradise, in which he is relieved from all the troubles of this world. Does he expect to be a god, a king, or a priest unto the Most High? No. Does he expect to live in the presence of Jesus? No. He just wants to live in some place that is better than this world? Is he going to get what he wants? Absolutely. He will be pleased, or even thrilled, to inherit the telestial kingdom! He won't think of it as a punishment, but as a great reward. To him it will be heaven—beyond his wildest imagination. Without a revelation from God, he could never have imagined such a wonderful place.

What then is the great secret? The secret is that the final destination of all except the sons of perdition is heaven. There are three heavens and the first one, the telestial, is a great place to go. This doctrine “still eludes some of the Saints...All humanity is saved from sin, death, and hell at the resurrection—except the sons of perdition. All human beings are eventually redeemed from the custody and power of the devil—except the sons of perdition. What a glorious doctrine!” (Stephen E. Robinson, H. Dean Garrett, A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2001] 2:299)

### **Brigham Young**

Many of those who, through ignorance, through tradition, superstition, and the erroneous precepts of the fathers, do not receive them, will yet inherit a good and glorious kingdom, and will enjoy more and receive more than ever entered into the heart of man to conceive, unless he has had a revelation. (Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 8: 36.)

### **Neal A. Maxwell**

The blessings of our Heavenly Father to all of us are surely those of a very generous God. Even the much lesser telestial kingdom will be a place “which surpasses all understanding” (D&C 76:89D&C 76:89). God is quick to give us large blessings for our small obedience! (One More Strain of Praise [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1999], 111 - 112.)

DC 76:96-98 the glory of the celestial is one...and the glory of the terrestrial is one...and the glory of the telestial is one

### **Joseph Fielding Smith**

When a person rises in the resurrection, his body will be perfect but that does not mean that he will be perfect in faith. There will be different kinds of bodies in the resurrection—celestial, terrestrial, and telestial—and they will not be alike any more than whites, browns, and blacks are alike in this life. Every man will receive according to his works.

Bodies will come up, of course, as they were laid down, but will be restored to their proper, perfect frame immediately. Old people will not look old when they come forth from the grave. Scars will be removed. No one will be bent or wrinkled. How foolish it would be for a man to come forth in the resurrection who had lost a leg and have to wait for it to grow again. Each body will come forth with its perfect frame. If there has been some deformity or physical impairment in this life, it will be removed.

The Lord is not impotent to heal and restore the dead to their perfect frame in the resurrection. If the Savior could restore withered hands, eyes that had never had sight, crooked bodies, in this mortal life, surely the Father will not permit bodies that are not physically perfect to come forth in the resurrection. (Doctrines of Salvation, 3 vols., edited by Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-1956], 2: 292.)

DC 76:98 as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one from another...

One of the great lessons of this vision is that the Lord has prepared more than two rewards for his children. There is more than just heaven and hell. But if everyone in every kingdom had exactly the same glory and reward, how is that any better? If we can't put all God's children into just two categories, how can we put them into four?

The point is that four destinies is not much better than two unless there can be a difference in glory within those four kingdoms. Then is the justice of God complete. One star differs from another in glory because not all in the telestial kingdom deserve the same reward. Some were better than others.

What about the other kingdoms? Are there differences in glory there? We know there are three degrees of glory within the celestial kingdom (DC 131:1-4). However, we know nothing of different degrees of glory in

the terrestrial kingdom, but we can assume that the same principle applies. Herein is the great justice of our God. The Lord has prepared as many different rewards as there are different degrees of righteousness—otherwise the justice of God would be destroyed.

DC 76:99-101 these are they who are of Paul, and of Apollos, and of Cephas

In 1 Corinthians, Paul responds to reports he has heard that the saints are divided. Apparently, great contentions flourished and factions had developed within the church. Some of the Corinthian saints had been converted by Paul, some by Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew and an eloquent speaker who had much success among the Jews in Corinth (Acts 18:24-28), and some by Cephas or Peter, who had apparently traveled there with his wife (1 Cor 9:5). Elder Neal A. Maxwell noted: “Paul actually grieved because some members of the Church of Jesus Christ in the meridian of time wrongly thought of themselves as being Paul’s or Peter’s or some other’s converts. (See 1 Cor. 1:12–13.) True Christians, then and now, are converts to Christ and should not be known by the name of even his most devoted follower.” (“Our Acceptance of Christ,” Ensign, June 1984, 70)

Why would the Lord refer to these individuals as inheriting the telestial kingdom? The implications of this are rather frightening. Paul had referred to these Corinthians as “saints” and as those “called unto the fellowship of his Son” (1 Cor. 1:2,9). They were members of the church, who without repentance, could expect to receive no more than a telestial glory. They had received baptism, the key to entrance into the celestial kingdom, but that ordinance would not be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise because of their contention and strife. This is a frightening reminder to church members of all dispensations that “unto whom much is given much is required; and he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation” (DC 82:3). They were members of the church who “received not the gospel, neither the testimony of Jesus, neither the prophets, neither the everlasting covenant” (v. 101). Is it possible to be a Mormon and still reject all these? The Lord has warned, “O ye my people...ye that hear me not will I curse, that have professed my name, with the heaviest of all cursings.” (D&C 41:1)

While we might imagine less faithful members of the church inheriting a terrestrial glory, this passage indicates that their destiny is the telestial kingdom. Indeed, these are those who appear religious, but in their hearts, they reject the Lord.

“There are some telestial persons in the LDS Church and in other Christian churches who do not really have testimonies of the fulness of the gospel or even of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, though they would appear to. In reality, these persons are followers of men and believe in the teachings of men. They strive to turn the Church to the prevailing views of Babylon. Such persons merely use the church membership as a mask while they pursue their own individual ends in the service of a different master. The poetic version of the vision says of them, ‘They went their own way, and they have their reward,’ and ‘In darkness they worshipp’d; to darkness they go.’” (Stephen E. Robinson, H. Dean Garrett, A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2001] 2:325)

### **Bruce R. McConkie**

It matters not that people simply say they believe in Christ or think they are followers of Moses, Peter, Paul, or any of the ancients. What counts is the reality. If they truly believe in Christ and correctly understand the revealed word that has come down from them of old, they will believe the restored gospel, gain the testimony of Jesus by revelation from the Holy Ghost, and abide in the everlasting covenant. (A New Witness for the Articles of Faith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 24.)

DC 76:103 liars... and whosoever loves and makes a lie

### **Gene R. Cook**

The Lord told us that in the telestial kingdom, the lowest of the three kingdoms of glory, will be found the murderers, the adulterers, and the liars. Lying is that serious! We may temporarily deceive our fellowman, but we will never deceive the Lord. We will suffer agony and misery until the truth is finally known. However smart, educated, or talented you may be, you cannot fool the Lord. ("Worthy to Serve," New Era, May 1994, 6)

DC 76:103 adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie

### **The First Presidency**

The Lord has drawn no essential distinctions between fornication, adultery, and harlotry or prostitution. Each has fallen under His solemn and awful condemnation.

You youths of Zion, you cannot associate in non-marital, illicit sex relationships, which is fornication, and escape the punishments and the judgments which the Lord has declared against this sin. The day of reckoning will come just as certainly as night follows day. They who would palliate this crime and say that such indulgence is but a sinless gratification of a normal desire, like appeasing hunger and thirst, speak filthiness with their lips. Their counsel leads to destruction; their wisdom comes from the Father of Lies.

You husbands and wives who have taken on solemn obligations of chastity in the holy temples of the Lord and who violate those sacred vows by illicit sexual relations with others, you not only commit the vile and loathsome sin of adultery, but you break the oath you yourselves made with the Lord Himself before you went to the altar for your sealing. You become subject to the penalties which the Lord has prescribed for those who breach their covenants with Him.

Of the harlots and those who visit them, God speaks in terms of divine contempt. They are they who have bargained away an eternity of bliss for the momentary pleasures of the flesh.

The Lord will have only a clean people. He has said, "I, the Lord, will contend with Zion, and plead with her strong ones, and chasten her until she overcomes and is clean before me." ("D&C 90:36D&C 90:36.)

But they who sin may repent, and, they repenting, God will forgive them, for the Lord has said, "Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more." ("D&C 58:42D&C 58:42.)

By virtue of the authority in us vested as the First Presidency of the Church, we warn our people who are offending, of the degradation, the wickedness, the punishment that attend upon unchastity; we urge you to remember the blessings which flow from the living of the clean life; we call upon you to keep, day in and day out, the way of the strictest chastity, through which only can God's choice gifts come to you and His Spirit abide with you. (Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75), 6: 177, HEBER J. GRANT, J. REUBEN CLARK, JR., DAVID O. MCKAY, First Presidency.)

DC 76:106 These...suffer the wrath of Almighty God, until the fulness of times

### **Joseph Fielding Smith**

It will be impossible for the people of this class to remain on the earth during the millennium, for they would be as much out of their element as a fish out of water. The changed condition of the earth, which will be a terrestrial order during this thousand years, will be suited to the capacity of those of the terrestrial world as well as those who have kept the celestial law; and they will have part in the first resurrection.

But with those of the telestial order, this will not be so. These are they who are as stubble, who will be consumed when Christ comes. They will know that Christ has come and that on the earth he reigns in peace

and righteousness. They will know that they have lost all of this because of their wickedness; and during the thousand years they will be in torment with their sins, looking forward to the final judgment with fear and trembling.

Yet their punishment will be for their good. The Lord will not punish them merely because he is angry and delights in their suffering. Their suffering must be met, for they will have denied the mercies of Jesus Christ and therefore must suffer, even as he suffered for the sins of the world, for his suffering will not cleanse them. It will be a punishment of cleansing; and when they have paid the price—and it will be a most dreadful, painful ordeal—then will they be prepared to receive such blessings as the Lord, in his great mercy, is prepared to give to them. That is, they must learn to serve him and be obedient to his laws, such as they are worthy to receive. Those who receive punishment in this manner will constitute a countless multitude. And they shall be servants of the Most High; but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end, for they shall be judged according to their works, and every man shall receive according to his own works, his own dominion in the mansions which are prepared. (Seek Ye Earnestly [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1970], 90-91.)

DC 76:111 every man shall receive according to his own works, his own dominion

### **Marion G. Romney**

How blessed are Latter-day Saints to be assured by the revealed word of God that there will be no capriciousness in the world to come; that the rule of law is irrevocable; that every soul will be rewarded according to the law he has obeyed; that all divine law is as immutable as the law of gravity; that it is the same yesterday, today, and forever; that judgment will be mercifully administered, but that it will be administered pursuant to law, and that it will not rob justice. Not only are Latter-day Saints blessed by having this knowledge concerning “the rule of law”; they are twice blessed by having both a knowledge and an understanding of the laws by which they are to be judged.

In light of our knowledge of “the perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25), how shortsighted, how foolish, how tragic it would be if we were to fail to obey that law. (“The Rule of Law,” Ensign, Feb. 1973, 2)

### **Orson F. Whitney**

Thirty years ago I was crossing the Atlantic on an ocean liner. I was a first cabin passenger, and besides myself there were forty or fifty others in that part of the vessel. The second cabin had about twice as many passengers, and in the steerage were several hundred more. I found that the first cabin berths—secured by a fortunate few—were not only the best furnished, but the most favorably situated for comfort, convenience, and safety. The food was of the choicest, every possible courtesy was shown to the passengers, and they had the full freedom of the ship. They might go down into the second cabin, or lower down, into the steerage, at will, and return without hindrance or question. They had paid for these privileges, and were therefore entitled to them. The captain and other officers were their associates.

It was different in the second cabin. There the food was not so good, the berths were not so comfortable, and the privileges were fewer. The passengers there might descend into the steerage, but were not permitted upon the upper deck. In the steerage, conditions were even less favorable. The food was still poorer, and the restrictions yet more rigid. The occupants of that section were not allowed even in the second cabin. Having paid only for steerage accommodations, these were all they could consistently claim.

Viewing the situation, I said to myself, What a striking analogy of the final destiny of the human race, as set forth in the revelations of God! All men rewarded according to their works, and saved according to their merits in the eternal mansions of the Father! And I then and there resolved anew that I would be a first cabin passenger on the good ship Zion, over the ocean of life, into the haven of celestial glory. (Gospel Themes [Salt Lake City: n.p., 1914], 43.)

DC 76:112 they shall be servants of the Most High

Telestial souls are considered “servants of the Most High.” For latter-day saints, just being a servant of God is not good enough. To receive the inheritance desired, we must be a son or daughter of Christ. This is why Paul said, “Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” (Gal 4:7) “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God...and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Rom 8:14,17)

DC 76:112 where God and Christ dwell they cannot come

### **Melvin J. Ballard**

The question is often asked, “Is it possible for one who attains telestial glory in time in the eternal world to live so well that he may graduate from the telestial and pass into the terrestrial, and then after a season that he may progress from that and be ultimately worthy of the celestial glory?” That is the query that has been asked. I have just read the answer, so far as the telestial group is concerned. “Where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end.” I take it upon the same basis, the same argument likewise applies to the terrestrial world. Those whose lives have entitled them to terrestrial glory can never gain celestial glory. One who gains possession of the lowest degree of the telestial glory may ultimately arise to the highest degree of that glory, but no provision has been made for promotion from one glory to another. Let us be reasonable about it. (Bryant S. Hinckley, Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin J. Ballard [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1949], 255.)

DC 76:114-115 great and marvelous are the works of the Lord...Which he commanded us we should not write

### **M. Russell Ballard**

What a wondrous experience for the Prophet Joseph and Sidney. For more than an hour, the Lord showed them our premortal life, earth life, and life after death. As a result of that revelation, mankind’s understanding of Heavenly Father’s plan for our eternal happiness and peace was expanded and enhanced to a remarkable degree. Of course, it should be noted that Joseph was instructed not to record everything that he saw in vision. The Saints at the time were not prepared to receive all of the new information that he was given. But as we look at the Prophet’s later teachings, we see what appear to be bits and pieces of this great revelation being taught—here a little and there a little—as the Saints grew in their spiritual understanding. (“Marvelous Are the Revelations of the Lord,” Ensign, May 1998, 32)

### **Glenn L. Pace**

The last verses of section 76 are some of the greatest scriptural beckonings to a higher spiritual plateau in holy writ. Unfortunately, in many of our gospel discussions we never reach the end of that section. One reason may be that too often we get into a debate as to whether or not one can progress from one degree of glory to the other. We also tend to think up every hypothetical situation possible and argue over to which degree of glory each person would be assigned. In other words, we delve into the speculative mysteries—and while thus engaged, we don’t catch the vision of supernal truth available to us if we are willing to pay the price.

After disclosing the vision of the Father and the Son, the three degrees of glory, and many other beautiful truths that had previously been mysteries to all mankind, Joseph Smith concluded the revelation as follows: “Great and marvelous are the works of the Lord, and the mysteries of his kingdom which he showed unto us, which surpass all understanding in glory, and in might, and in dominion; which he commanded us we should not write while we were yet in the Spirit, and are not lawful for man to utter.” (D&C 76:114-15.)

The Prophet almost seems to be teasing us by saying, in effect, “If you think what we’ve written is exciting, you should have seen what else we saw, but we can’t tell you.” (Spiritual Plateaus [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1991], 126.)

### **Joseph Smith**

I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them. (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 305)

**2009**

**Edward T. Jones (Latter-day Saint Researcher)**

**Patristic Teachings on Degrees of Glory**

**Mormonism And The Christian Doctrine Of Deification (Excerpts) on the BackyardProfessor.com website**

### **Patristic Teachings on Degrees of Glory**

There are several aspects of the deification scenario as taught by the earliest Christians that add to our knowledge of just what salvation entailed in the early Church. We need to discuss these briefly also. One of these concepts is that of varying degrees of glory for the righteous in heaven.

In a recent article evangelical scholar Craig Blomberg decries the tendency to discuss the subject. He finds that the subject is not the least biblically oriented and asks that “all evangelicals ... do away with the depressing and damaging notion of eternal degrees of reward in heaven once and for all.”<sup>197</sup> He writes that he does “not believe there is a single NT text that, when correctly interpreted, supports the notion that believers will be distinguished one from another for all eternity on the basis of their works as Christians.”<sup>198</sup>

Whether that is true or not, the fact remains that for many of the Church Fathers the idea was very appealing; and the idea continues to appeal to modern theologians and scholars.

As our starting point, we will again begin with Jesuit Brian E. Daley. In his book on early Christian eschatology Daley cites the following as having taught some form of variation in beatitude in heaven for those who are saved:

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, who, based on Matt 13.23, “foresees different grades of beatitude for the just, according to each one’s merit: the most worthy will be taken to ‘heaven,’ the next will be taken to ‘Paradise’, and the least worthy will ‘possess the splendor of the city;’”<sup>199</sup>

Cyprian, the Bishop of Carthage (d. 258) wrote that “‘there are degrees of reward in heaven;’”<sup>200</sup> Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, “seems to conceive of the beatitude of the saved as admitting both of different degrees of bliss and of the possibility of growth.... Even in the Kingdom of heaven, there will be a ‘progression in dwelling places’ adapted to the merits of each person;”<sup>201</sup>

For Macarius the “glory of the saints does not mean uniformity.... Human perfection in the world to come will display a variety of beauties and virtues;”<sup>202</sup>

Augustine indicates that “even though there will be many different levels of happiness and glory in the eternal city, there will be no envy or discontent among its citizens;”<sup>203</sup>

Quodvultdeus (d. 453), Bishop of Carthage, and friend of Augustine, taught that just will shine like the sun, although with varying degrees of brightness;”<sup>204</sup>



Severus, Bishop of Antioch (d. 538) taught that “there will be different degrees of beatitude, corresponding to the love and fidelity of each of the saints;”<sup>205</sup>

Ceasarius, the Bishop of Arles, taught that there would be differing grades of glory.<sup>206</sup>

Other scholars have also referred to the early writers and writings dealing with our topic.

The Pastor of Hermas states that if one does anything good beyond what is commanded, then that individual will gain for themselves “greater glory and be more in favor with God” than they had been destined for.<sup>207</sup>

Quasten adds to that list the name of Origen.<sup>208</sup>

Wagner has the following to say about Clement of Alexandria: “The soul’s earthly career was not long enough to complete the educational plan to salvation, but neither change nor space was limited to existence at the base of the cone. The Logos had prepared still more places for learning. Death on earth simply transferred the soul from one classroom to another, from which it continued to be promoted until it reached its consummation among the ranks of the gods. The grades a soul entered in its ascent depended on the improvement it had made at the previous level. In the end, the soul would reach the mansion that the Logos had readied for it. The mansions differed from one another because each soul had a different capacity to love and contemplate God. Each soul, however, would achieve consummation and be as completely as it could be in the image and likeness of the Logos. In other words, the soul was cleansed and informed until it reached divine status.”<sup>209</sup>

Widdicombe indicates that for Athanasius, while there are many rooms in the Father’s mansion, dependent upon the preparatory advance in moral attainment, yet all will be within one wall, within one fence.<sup>210</sup>

J.N.D. Kelly refers to the comments by Theodoret of Cyrus (d. 466) regarding the many mansions for the blessed, as well as comments from Hilary and Ambrose.<sup>211</sup> About 500 Julianus Pomerius wrote his ‘Contemplative Life.’ In it he recorded that those who are resurrected to an incorruptible body, and live in heaven, will nevertheless vary in rank due to varying merit, with a diversity of mansions, yet only one perfection.<sup>212</sup>

Recently Father Hugh Feiss has written about the concept of heaven as taught in the writings of three monk/priests of St. Victor: Hugh (d. 1141), Achard (d. 1171), and Richard (d. 1173). All three of them taught that the redeemed in heaven secured for themselves a “diversity of rewards.”<sup>213</sup>

Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange refers to Thomas Aquinas (died 1274) as having taught that “in heaven all the blessed see God without medium, but with a penetration that varies in proportion to their merits.”<sup>214</sup> Later the same writer refers again to Thomas as follows: “Not in heaven do we learn to love God, but here on earth. The degree of our life in eternity depends on the degree of our merits at the moment of death. There are many mansions in the Father’s house, corresponding to varied merits (John 14.1). ‘He who soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who soweth in blessings shall also reap blessings’ (II Cor 9.6).”<sup>215</sup>

Recently Catholic writer John Young has quoted the Council of Florence (1438-45) which stated that “the souls in heaven ‘clearly behold God himself, one and triune, as he is, yet one more perfectly than another according to diversity of merits.’”<sup>216</sup> In 1968 Pope Paul VI issued his ‘Credo’ or Profession of the Faith, paragraph 22 of which reads in part: ‘We believe that the multitude of those gathered around Jesus and Mary in paradise forms the Church of heaven, where in the enjoyment of eternal beatitude they see God as he is (I John 3.2), and where they also in different ways and degrees, are associated with the holy angels in the

divine rule exercised by the glorified Christ.”<sup>217</sup> Emma Disley indicates that the primary sources for the idea of different degrees of glory are Matt 5; John 14.2 (‘many mansions’); I Cor 15.41 (stars differ in glory from one another); Matt 20. 1-14 (parable of the Vineyard). She says that “the writings of the Fathers were weightily disposed towards the concept of degrees of reward and punishment,” citing Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Jerome, and Pope Gregory the Great.<sup>218</sup> Jovinian, who taught that there was but one place for reward and one for punishment, was “effectively silenced after /his/ condemnation at the synods of Rome and Milan (c. 390).” His condemnation was brought about by the actions of Jerome.<sup>219</sup>

Some of the early reformers taught against unnamed others who were teaching ‘degrees of joy and felicity in heaven affirming that we shall there excel one another in glory.’<sup>220</sup> Disley writes that “the majority of Protestants who expressed convictions on the subject were convinced by the weight of Scriptural evidence which appeared to indicate that there are degrees of reward hereafter, just as there are degrees of punishment.”<sup>221</sup> She cites William Fulke who wrote in 1589 that “as the stars differ in glory...so the bodies of saints shall differ in glory,” basing the concept on I Cor 15.41.<sup>222</sup> Disley also quotes Melancthon from his Apology of the Augsburg Confession (1531): “Therefore there will be different rewards for different labors.... There will be distinctions in the glory of the saints.”<sup>223</sup>

Disley concludes: “For the majority of Protestant writers who addressed the issue, belief in degrees of reward in heaven thus did not conflict with the Protestant insight of justification freely attained through the merits of Christ, since rewards resulted naturally or automatically from good works, which were part of the elect’s sanctification.”<sup>224</sup>

When discussing the nature of our salvation it is necessary to include a discussion of the varying degrees of reward to which one may aspire. It would appear that heaven is not just a single monolithic ‘place’ to which one goes, but based on one’s personal merits, one may be assigned to any one of several levels.

In her study of deification Marta Ryk also refers to the “diverse degrees of deification.”<sup>225</sup>

The concept of varying degrees of glory for the redeemed is basic to an understanding of LDS doctrine. In 1832 Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon received a revelation while in prayer. Their concern in going to the Lord in prayer was what they read in John 5.28-9 regarding the resurrection of the just, and that of the unjust. It seemed to suggest something other than what they had been taught as young men. The prophet then goes on to describe three different grades of glory in the heavenly kingdom, and the ‘qualifications’ for residence in each of them. The understanding gained from this vision of the three degrees provides a clear understanding of Paul’s reference to the glory of heaven being likened to that of the Sun, moon, and stars; as well as to Paul’s reference to his ascension to the third heaven, and to paradise.<sup>226</sup> Many in the young Church had problems with the new doctrine revealed to the Prophet; it flew in the face of their concepts of heaven or hell as the only two consequences of earth life.<sup>227</sup>

**Notes:**

197 Craig L. Blomberg, “Degrees of Reward in the Kingdom of Heaven?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35 (1992): 159-72, at page 172. He discussed several articles, and the biblical passages used to defend the theme.

198 *Ibid.*, 160.

199 Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 31, citing AH 5.36.1-2.

200 *Ibid.*, 42, quoting Epistle 37.3.

201 *Ibid.*, 100, citing In Luc 5.61; De Exc Frat 2.116.

202 *Ibid.*, 118, citing Homily 36; and 34.2-3.

203 *Ibid.*, 147, citing *City of God* 22.30; in the same chapter Augustine wrote: “who can conceive...what degrees of honor and glory shall be awarded to the various degrees of merit? Yet it cannot be doubted that there shall be degrees.” Cf. Isabel Moreira, “Augustine’s Three Visions and Three Heavens in Some Early

Medieval Florilegia,” *Vivarium* (Leiden) 34 (1996): 1-14, especially page 12, where it is stated that Augustine had based it upon Paul’s ecstatic experience in the three heavens and in paradise (II Cor 12.1-4).

204 Daley, *op. cit.*, 153-4. For more on Quodvultdeus’ place in history, cf. Robert B. Eno, “Christian Reaction to the Barbarian Invasions and the Sermons of Quodvultdeus,” in *Preaching in the Patristic Age. Studies in Honor of Walter J. Burghardt, S.J.*, edited by David G. Hunter (Paulist Press 1989): 139-61.

205 Daley, *op. cit.*, 186-7, citing Epistles 72, 73; Homily 86. Congar wrote that Severus’ teaching on deification was based on II Peter 1.4 and Psalm 82.6, *Tradition and Traditions* (1997): 74-5. For more on Severus, see Roberta C. Chesnut, *Three Monophysite Christologies: Severus of Antioch, Philoxenus of Mabbug and Jacob of Sarug* (Oxford University Press 1976).

206 Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 208.

207 Quasten, *Patrology*, 1.102, citing Hermas, *Similitudes* 5.3.3. Compare *Patrology* 1.58 where Quasten refers to two letters on virginity from the early third century which state that virgins and celibates will attain a higher level in heaven than other Christians (all other things being equal).

208 Quasten, *Patrology*, 2.88-9, quoting Origen, *De principiis* 3.4-6.

209 Walter H. Wagner, *After the Apostles: Christianity in the Second Century* (Fortress Press, 1994): 178, citing Clement, *Stromateis* 3.6 and 7. Further citations on Clement can be found in Quasten, *Patrology* 1.58: celibates will have higher place in heaven than other Christians; at 2.27 Quasten also cites *Stromateis* 6.13.107 on degrees of glory in the hereafter. See also Erik ten Napel, “‘Third Heaven’ and ‘Paradise.’ Some remarks on the Exegesis of 2 Cor 12. 2-4 in Syriac,” *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 236 (1990): 53- 65.

210 Widdicombe, *Fatherhood of God*, 247; cf. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 4. 528-9.

211 J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York 1960): 487.

212 Julianus Pomerius, *The Contemplative Life*, translated and annotated by Sister Mary Josephine Suelzer (Newman Bookshop 1947: *Ancient Christian Writers* volume 4): 23; also referring the reader to Augustine’s *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 67.2; cf. Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, 206.

213 Hugh Feiss, “Heaven in the Theology of Hugh, Achard, and Richard of St. Victor,” in *Imagining Heaven in the Middle Ages. A Book of Essays*, ed. Jan Swango Emerson and Hugh Feiss (New York 2000): 145-163, at pages 150, 151, 153, 154.

214 Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Life Everlasting. A Theological treatise on the Four last Things: Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell* (TAN books, 1991; 1st English translation 1952): 225, citing *Summa Theologia*, Ia, q. 12, a. 6, 7. In this passage Thomas writes that the vision “will take place because one intellect will have a greater power or faculty to see God than another. The faculty of seeing God, however, does not belong to the created intellect naturally, but is given to it by the light of glory, which established the intellect in a kind of deformity,” in St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, translated by the English Dominican Province (Benziger Brothers 1947), volume I: 53. In his defense Thomas cites I John 3.2 and I Cor 15.41: one star differs from another in glory. This aspect of Thomas’ thought is also discussed by J.P. Arendzen, “Heaven, or the Church Triumphant,” in *The Teaching of the Catholic Church: A Summary of Catholic Doctrine*, arranged and edited by Canon George D. Smith II (1949/1927): 1248-82, at page 1271; cf. 1281, on a plurality of heavens.

215 *Ibid.*, 240, citing ST, Supplement, q. 93, a. 3. See also Lawrence F. Hundersmarck, “Thomas Aquinas on Beatitude,” in *Imagining Heaven in the Middle Ages. A Book of Essays*, ed. Jan Swango Emerson and Hugh Feiss (New York 2000): 165-183, at page 175: in heaven “the unique individuality of each person will be eternally manifest.” In a footnote to this Hundersmarck writes that “Aquinas sees the text [John 14.2: ‘in my Father’s house there are many mansions,’] referring to the various degrees of rewards for, and charity in, the souls of the blessed,” 182, note 32, citing the same ST reference as Garrigou-Lagrange.

216 John Young, ‘Our Life in Heaven,’ *The Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 97 (1997): 8-14, at page 9. The relevant text from Florence is found in Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, paragraph 2308; also in *The Church Teaches. Documents of the Church in English Translation*, edited by John F. Clarkson, S.J., et al (Illinois 1973; 1st 1955), paragraph 889.

217 Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, paragraph 39.22; cf. *The Pope Speaks* 13 (1968): 273-82.

218 Emma Disley, “Degrees of Glory: Protestant doctrine and the concept of Rewards Hereafter,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 42 (1991): 77-105, at page 80.

219 Ibid.; also Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy* (Princeton University Press 1992): 99. Later in her book Dr. Clark refers to “Jerome’s ardent desire to express degrees of hierarchy in the afterlife,” 147. Elsewhere she writes: “Jerome takes gradation in the afterlife as a necessary proposition for the defense of God’s justice, since, he claims, it would be unfair for God to assign the same reward for unequal merits,” in Clark, “New Perspectives on the Origenist Controversy: Human Embodiment and Ascetic Strategies,” *Church History* 59 (1990): 145-62, at page 160; Jerome’s position is discussed 159-62, with references.

220 Disley, op. cit., 86, quoting Jean Veron, who preached in London during the 1560’s. Disley cites several others as well.

221 Ibid., 89, citing Calvin’s commentary on I Cor 15.41.

222 Ibid., 93.

223 Ibid., 101.

224 Ibid., 105. It was Disley’s article with which Blomberg was primarily concerned in his article above.

225 Ryk, “The Holy Spirit’s Role in the Deification of Man,” op. cit., 122.

226 Doctrine and Covenants 76. Cf. I Corinthians 15.40-42; II Corinthians 12.1-4. According to the revelation, the lowest of the three kingdoms, though its glory surpasses all understanding (76.89), is constituted of very many different degrees (76. 98: “as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one from another in glory” in the lowest kingdom); later the Prophet learned that the top kingdom is made up of three different degrees of glory (Doctrine and Covenants 131.1). Joseph Smith taught that John 14.2 ought to read “...many kingdoms,” in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, op. cit., 366.

227 See for instance, the comments of Brigham Young in *Journal of Discourses* 6.281, and 16.42, both in *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. Lyndon W. Cook (Provo 1981): note 4, page 311-12.

**2009**

**Brandon Washington, Outstanding Black Pastor and Theology Student at Denve Seminary**  
**Eternity, Life After Death - pt. 3 of 4**  
**The Lamppost Online**

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.” – John 14:1-4

“For we know that if the tent, which is our earthly home, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens...He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee...” – 2nd Corinthians 5:1-5

**Recapitulation**

In Essay #1 we addressed the Old Testament understanding of death and the afterlife. We concluded that sheol and hades are one and the same and they were the place of all departed souls. The body abided in the grave while the spirit abided in sheol/hades and the two await the resurrection where they will be reunited. This was the case for both believers and non-believers. The place of departed souls was divided into to compartments. Believers entered the paradise compartment (a.k.a. Abraham’s bosom)I and non-believers entered the torment compartment (a.k.a. tartarus).II There was a momentous change to this practice after the crucifixion of Christ. After he died on the cross Christ declared condemnation to those in the tartarus compartment of hades.III Essentially, He told them of His work on the cross and because they were not recipients of His salvific labor, they would be condemned to eternal judgement in the Lake of Fire (hell).IV He then turned to those in “Abraham’s bosom” and he ushered them into heaven.V For this reason, it is no longer true that the souls of both believers and non-believers abide in hades. Today, only non-believers occupy hades.1 For Christians, to “be away from the body” is to be “at home with the Lord.” Christ’s death is a model for all believers to appreciate. When we die, we do not simply reach a moment of cessation, instead we experience an exit. Luke 9:31 refers to Jesus’ death as a “departure.” The Greek word for

departure is exodus, from which we get our English word exit.<sup>2</sup> The Bible's understanding of death assumes a change in location, not a change in consciousness. We are simply transferred from our bodies into a state of bliss and communion with our God.

If all Christians go to heaven, then one must wonder what heaven is like. Is it a place or is it a state of mind? Will we know one another there or will we experience a revised consciousness. While the Bible does not give exhaustive information on heaven,<sup>3</sup> it does give us enough insight to gather an appreciation of the eternal state. We can know in part what the heavenly experience will be like and we can take joy in the fact that heaven will far exceed our expectations.

### **The Homecoming Party**

The idea of dying well is usually a peculiar concept for us. Ironically, if we had an appreciation for what awaits us, we would stumble over the idea of dying poorly because we would know that loving communion with God should be craved, not feared. The apostle Paul had just such an understanding when he said, "I am hard pressed between the two; life and death. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better." He had an appreciation for the bliss that is intrinsic to Christ's presence. He could not wait until his death because it would allow him to commune with the Master. He was not suicidal, he was anxious. He was an excited child who restlessly anticipated the grand party that would allow him the privilege of unwrapping his gift and he knew that the party began at the moment of death. If Luke 16:22 is any indication, angels will be dispatched to us and fulfill the role of ushers. They will escort us to our heavenly destination, where we will experience the face of Christ. Or maybe Acts 7:55 is an accurate portrayal of our future experience. Christ may stand up from His throne and welcome us into His kingdom firsthand.<sup>4</sup> Whatever the experience, there is one thing that the Bible is clear on; the first objective of the departed is to experience the face of Christ. This experience is known as the beatific vision. We have been given an innate desire to get a glimpse of God. We desire to know and commune with Him. This was Moses' sentiment when he presented his request to God, "Please show me your glory."<sup>VI</sup> During the last supper the disciples of Christ expressed this same sentiment. Philip requested of Christ, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."<sup>VII</sup> This request on behalf of Philip was probably the result of not fully appreciating the supremacy of Christ. His human cloak was interfering with a true appreciation of His magnificence so it allowed for an undervaluing of His person. He responded to this offence by saying,

Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?

Essentially, He was telling them that He and the Father are of the same essence and to see one is to have an understanding of the other. The disciples will not make this mistake in heaven because the Jesus that we will see then will be in His full majesty. He will not have the appearance of the broken and battered victim that we inappropriately identify with the cross. He will be the unmistakable King of the universe and those who see Him will be blessed with the overwhelming desire to give worship and praise. Jesus Himself identified this moment as a blessed occasion.

### **The Beatific Vision**

The beatific vision refers to the first hand, unhindered gaze at God. In Matthew 5:8 Jesus says of the beatific vision, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." In contrast to hell, heaven is the place where there is no wall between God and man. His presence is the very definition of eternal rest. Philosopher Mortimer Adler says, "...heaven is the presence of God,<sup>5</sup> where the souls of the blessed enjoy the beatific vision."<sup>VIII</sup> On the day of our death believers are welcomed into heaven and embraced by Jesus. Theologian R.C. Sproul gives the greatest summery I have ever read when he says,

The beatific vision is so called because it is the promise of the vision of God that carries with it the ultimate blessedness of the human soul. The highest benediction of Israel was, "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up

His countenance upon you, and give you peace” (Numbers 6:24-26). John promises us that though mystery attends much of what lies before us in heaven, of this much we can be sure: that “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1st John 3:2). This promise assures us that in heaven God will display Himself to us in a way that will go beyond a theophany (an external manifestation of God’s glory such as the burning bush). The vision will transcend that of a burning bush or a pillar of cloud. We will see more than an outward representation or a reflected image. We will see Him “as He is.” We will peer, somehow, into His very essence. Then there will be no need for skin.IX

### **What Will We Be Like?**

There are many ideas concerning man’s nature in heaven. I once had a conversation with a very dear friend who had been told by a young pastor that when we get to heaven we will have no memory of our time on earth and we won’t recognize one another. He said we would all be brilliant bodies of light, identical in every way. There will be no distinction of personalities and we will have no interaction with one another. She was grieved by this teaching because when we were very young her brother had died and she was looking forward to seeing him again in heaven. She came to me and told me what the pastor had told her and she pleaded with me to tell her that he was wrong. It brought me great pleasure to tell her that he was horribly mistaken. There is a one to one correlation between who we are now, and who we will be then. Erwin Lutzer says, “Heaven is the earthly life of the believer glorified and perfected.”X In other words, the life, senses, memories, and understanding that we experience in heaven will be the same as those experienced on earth, but we will not have the presence or the consequences of sin. What does that look like?

### **Perfection**

The inherent perfection of man in heaven is the most misunderstood aspects of our departure. We sometimes misunderstand perfect to mean infinite. John MacArthur says this mistake is driven by man’s difficulty in “envisioning anything truly perfect. Everything in our earthly experience is flawed, imperfect.”XI Since we can understand the concept of perfection but still have difficulty imagining what it will look like, we assume that we will be like the Perfect Being. This is a mistake because God is perfect in the sense that he possesses all possible perfections (we will address this in more detail when we consider communicable and incommunicable attributes) and He possesses them perfectly. In other words, God possesses every good conceivable attribute (i.e. power, knowledge, holiness) and he possesses them perfectly, to the greatest degree. This is not the case for man. For us, perfection in heaven refers to the removal of sin and its consequences and we will have the opportunity to learn endlessly and unhindered and achieve perfect understanding. The perfection that we will experience is one in which “sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”XII The universe will no longer “groan”XIII because the assaults of sin will be removed.

There will be another sense of perfection that we will experience in heaven. We will achieve glorification. From the moment of our rebirth (conversion) God began the process of causing us to be like Christ. Paul said, “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.”XIV He has already begun this work and he will complete it on the day of our departure. It is for this reason John says, “Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.”XV John is referring to Christ’s current state of glorification. We will receive a body like His and it will allow us to behold Him. Jesus is the perfect example of sanctification. MacArthur says, “He, God, is not merely making us better than we are; He is conforming us to the image of His Son.”XVI He is making us the perfect disciples. “Heaven is the perfect place for people made perfect. Perfection is the goal of God’s sanctifying work in us.”XVII

### **Our Knowledge Of Relationships Will Continue**

In Luke 16 we reviewed Jesus’ parable of Lazarus and the rich man. In it we find that after the rich man died he made reference to his earthly “father’s house.”XVIII He also pleaded for mercy on behalf of his “five brothers.”XIX This evidences the fact that the memories of his earthly family have not been lost in death. And such is the case for all information that we have gathered here in time. Lutzer says,

Death does not change what we know; our personalities will just go on with the same information we have stored in our minds today. Think back to your background: your parents, brothers, sisters, family reunions. Of course, you will remember all of this and more in heaven. Do you actually think that you might know less in heaven than you do on earth? Unthinkable!"XX

I wholeheartedly concur with Lutzer's point. The pastor who told my friend that she would never see her brother again was making one of two mistakes. He was either speaking without studying Luke 16, or he was affording a privilege to the condemned rich man that will not be afforded to blessed believers. This is inconceivable! **In fact, in the absence of sin we will know one another better than we do now!** There will be no shameful desire or thoughts that we feel compelled to hide so we will have conversations that are absolutely open. In addition to that, the noetic effects of sin<sup>7</sup> will be removed when we are glorified so we will have the ability to understand everything perfectly. We will not be omniscient because to be all-knowing is an attribute that can only be possessed by God, but we will have perfect understanding of that which we do know and we will be in a perpetual state of education. We will be in a constant state of perfect learning. This means that the fellowship in heaven will be so remarkable that the interaction that we experience now will pale in comparison.

### **Our Emotions Continue**

We will not be emotionless automatons in heaven. The affection that we experience here will carry over into heaven but they will not be hindered by sin. We will experience a sincere joy that will be selfless and driven by perfection. Just as the knowledge of the relationships continues, the affection for loved ones continues as well. The rich man selflessly, probably for the first time in his life, requested that Abraham save his five bothers from the torment of tartarus. He did so because his love of his brothers followed him into eternity. This is an important thing for us to note because it gives us insight into the thoughts of our departed loved ones. They think about us, they love us and they look forward to seeing us again. Lutzer says,

Of course, dear widow, you husband who is in heaven continues to love you as he did on earth. Today he loves you with a fonder, sweeter, purer love. It is a love purified by God. Your child loves you; so does your mother and father.<sup>8</sup> There is no more a break in love than there is in continuity of thought. Death breaks ties on earth but renews them in heaven.XXI

### **Our Personal Crafts Will Continue**

There is much emphasis on the "rest" that we will experience in heaven. Our common understanding of rest is often interpreted to mean that we will experience no activity. This is a flawed view. We are still bearers of God's image so there are certain behaviors that will persist after we enter eternity. To appreciate this we must review our understanding of the Imago Dei (image of God). Man has the unique privilege of being the Imago Dei; no other animal bears God's image. According to Wayne Grudem, "The fact that man is in the image of God means that man is **like** God and **represents** God"XXII (emphasis mine). When Genesis 1:26 says, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness..." it reveals God's plan to make a creature similar to himself. "Both the Hebrew word for 'image' (tselem) and the Hebrew word for 'likeness' (demût) refer to something that is similar but not identical to the thing it represents or is an 'image' of."XXIII Man is thereby distinguished from all other inhabitants of this world, and raised immeasurably above them. "He belongs to the same order of being as God Himself, and is therefore capable of communion with his Maker."XXIV This may seem to be a haughty statement, but further evaluation will give clarity.

God's attributes can be classified into two categories. Some are incommunicable.XXV These are the attributes that God cannot impute to someone else. Examples of these would be His eternality (God has always existed, but we have not), His immutability (God is unchanging, but we are not), and His omnipotence (God is all-powerful, but we are not). Other attributes can be categorized as communicable.XXVI These are attributes that God imputes to us. Examples of these would be love (God is love and we are capable of loving), knowledge (God is knowledgeable, and we can possess knowledge), and

mercy (God is merciful and we are able to extend mercy). This is significant because it gives insight into what it means to be created in the image of God. In a nutshell, Man is created in the image of God in that he is able to possess, and display, the communicable attributes of God.XXVII

God did not give us these communicable attributes just to have them die once we enter eternity. We will display them in heaven because we are made to exhibit the image of God. This display will be perfect (sinless) in heaven. In heaven we will be all that we were made to be. This means that we will be busy displaying mercy, love, and artistry.<sup>9</sup> We will be philosophers and scientists and we will not have sin to interfere with these practices. Lutzer says,

The artist will do art as never before, the scientist just might be invited to continue his exploration of God's magnificent creation. The musician will do music, all of us will continue to learn. We are, says Maclaren, saplings here, but we shall be transported into our heavenly soil to grow in God's light. Here our abilities are in blossom; there they shall burst forth with fruits of greater beauty.XXVIII

### **The Resurrection (Our Glorified Bodies)**

Earlier we addressed the perfection of man in heaven. The perfecting process is not complete until our souls are reunited with our bodies in the resurrection. MacArthur said, "God made man body and soul – we consist of an inner man and an outer man (Gen. 2:7). Therefore our ultimate perfection demands that both body and soul be renewed."XXIX Heaven, like earth, appears to have physical qualities.<sup>10</sup> As we discussed in week one, upon death the body of the believer goes to the grave and the spirit goes to the Lord. Jesus spoke of the moment when the body and soul would be reunited when He said, "Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment."XXX

The first thing we need to note is that our resurrection bodies are our earthly bodies, glorified. The body that we receive in the resurrection will have the same nature as that of Christ. 1st John 3:2 says, "...we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him..." This is important because His resurrection body was the same as His earthly body. He had a bodily resurrection. After He arose the tomb was empty. MacArthur says,

The body itself was resurrected – the very same body, but in a glorified state. The wounds from His crucifixion were still visible (John 20:27). He could be touched and handled – He was not merely an apparition or phantom (Luke 24:39). He looked human in every regard...He ate real earthly food (Luke 24:42-43). Yet his body also had other-worldly properties. He could pass through solid walls (John 20:19). He could appear in different forms so His identity was not immediately obvious (Mark 16:12). He could suddenly appear out of nowhere (Luke 24:36). And He could ascend directly into heaven in bodily form (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9).XXXI

This is descriptive of our future bodies. They will be the same as our current bodies but they will receive evident glorification. The apostle Paul says, "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself."XXXII 1st Thessalonians 4:13-17 says,

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the



clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

In this passage Paul says that believers who are dead will be united with perfected bodies, then those who are still alive will be caught up (raptured) and instantly “changed” – glorified. The important point is that both the living and the dead will have their old bodies made new and glorified. The apostle Paul assumes this understanding of glorification when he gives an illustration of the resurrection. He says, But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.XXXIII

Commenting on this illustration, MacArthur says, “The process of fermentation and decomposition is what triggers the new life. Similarly our bodies will die, be placed in a grave, and then be raised, just as the seed dies and produces a plant that is far more glorious than the seed.”XXXIV

### **Perfect Communion With God**

Perfect sanctification will inevitably result in one thing, perfect communion with God. For the first time in our existence we will understand what it was like for Adam and Eve to commune with God in the Garden. There will be no sin or shame to shield us from Him. He will look on us and smile and we will look on Him and praise. 2nd Thessalonians describes hell as the place of eternal separation from God. Contrastingly, John identifies heaven as the place of eternal communion with God. He says, “...indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.”XXXV We can get a glimpse of this today when we pray, study His word, worship and praise Him, but great as these things are, they fall woefully short of the heavenly experience. We will call Him Abba (Daddy) and He will speak to us face to face and share His person with us. He will adore us for who we are, and we will praise Him for who He is. Revelation 21:22 says, “And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.” This is important because it speaks to the type of access we will have. There are two assumptions that can be drawn from John’s statement. First, there is no place in heaven that is void of God. Our earthly experience treats the Church as the voice and embassy of heaven. The Universal Church is the voice and body of Christ. Heaven will have no need for an embassy because we will have firsthand access to the homeland. It is remarkably inundated with God’s presence and all sights are explicit declarations His holiness! Albert Barnes says,

They [The Father and The Son] are present in all parts of it in their glory; they fill it with light; and the splendor of their presence may be said to be the temple. The idea here is that it would be a holy world - all holy. No particular portion would be set apart for purposes of public worship, but in all places God would be adored, and every portion of it devoted to the purposes of religion.

The radiance of His glory will be without shadow and we will have unrestrained access to the God of our salvation. Because He is boundless, He will be able to entertain all of us at once and we will be in His presence at all times. The temple was the earthly place that represented the presence of God. In heaven, we will need no such place of representation because we will be able to go directly to God.

### **Eternal Rewards**

Just as there will be varying degrees of torment in hell, there will be varying degrees of reward in heaven. I would be remiss if I did not mention the logical concern that comes to mind when it comes to varying rewards in heaven. Dr. Craig Blomberg, a brilliant New Testament scholar and esteemed theologian, presents and argument against this teaching. He concedes that there will be varying degrees of torment in hell. He says, “There does seem to be Scriptural support for the doctrine of degrees of punishment in hell, according to the extent of one’s conscience transgression of God’s laws (see esp. Luke 12:47-48; cf. Matt. 10:15; 11:22, 24; cf. also possibly Rom. 5:13)...”XXXVI In his view, the justice of God would require that God punish the

most evil to a greater degree than others who are found in hell. He does not, however, concede that such a distinction will take place in heaven because we are all covered by the sacrificial work of Christ. That sacrifice has made all believers perfect and it is impossible to give varying degrees of reward to universal perfection. If both Deb and Andrea were made perfect by the work of Christ, then, according to Blomberg, it would be unjust to reward Andrea to a greater degree. Equality of perfection requires equality of reward. On this matter Blomberg says, "Grace, by definition, is not fair." In other words, God has covered us with righteousness that will persist throughout eternity and the good or bad works of the believer will be irrelevant. There will be no "fair" distribution of rewards because the grace of God has declared us all perfect in spite of our works.

I can appreciate Blomberg's view. I concede that in the matter of justification, all believers are made perfect. But in my estimation (and I am not alone) his view is not fully recognizing the fine distinction between justification and sanctification. For the believer, the moment that they come to Christ is commemorative because it nullifies the eternal consequences of all sin. We experience eternal justification in the eyes of God. This, however, is not the end of the process. We have the call to become surrendered, broken disciples (sanctification) and the commitment to good discipleship is what God will judge as it relates to believers. In other words, the pre-salvation works become irrelevant,<sup>11</sup> they have no bearing on our eternal justification, but the post-salvation surrender is relevant because it will determine one's heavenly reward. I want to be very intentional so there is no misunderstanding of my words. The believer is saved by grace alone, through faith alone (apart from works), but the believer is called to sanctification after having experienced the justification that God freely gives. Scholar Norman Geisler says, "We are not saved by works, but we are saved for good works."<sup>XXXVII</sup> In other words, salvation is a gift that is freely given to those in Christ (justification), but God desire that we display evidence of the work that God has done within us (sanctification). Contrasting the Reformed understanding of the Gospel with that of the Roman Catholic Church will give some clarity. The Catholic Church adds works to the justification process, so their salvific formula would be:

**FAITH + WORKS = SALVATION**

We know that this is a flawed understanding of the gospel because the apostle Paul said, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."<sup>XXXVIII</sup> In other words it is inappropriate for works to be on the left side of the equation. But we know that works are important to God because the apostle James told us that "faith without works is dead."<sup>XXXIX</sup> The reconciliation between Paul and James results in the following formula:

**FAITH = SALVATION + WORKS**

The works are the result of salvation, not the cause of it. While God does not require works prior to salvation, He desires works after salvation. And he will reward us for our work by giving us the appropriate reward in heaven.

Millard J. Erickson endorses this understanding when he says,

That there apparently will be degrees of reward is evident in, for example, the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:11-27). Ten servants were each given one pound by their master. Eventually they returned differing amounts to him and were rewarded in proportion to their faithfulness. Supporting passages include Daniel 12:3 ("Those who are wise will shine like the righteousness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever") and 1 Corinthians 3:14-15 ("If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames").<sup>XL</sup>

Wayne Grudem addresses this matter as well when he says,

It is important to realize that this judgement [The Judgement Seat of Christ] of believers will be a judgement to evaluate and bestow various degrees of reward, but the fact that they will face such a judgement should never cause believers to fear that they will be eternally condemned. Jesus says, “He who hears my word and believes Him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life” (John 5:24). Here “judgement” must be understood in the sense of eternal condemnation and death, since it is contrasted with passing from death into life. At the day of final judgement more than at any other time, it is of utmost importance that “there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). Thus the Day of Judgment can be portrayed as one in which believers are rewarded and unbelievers punished.XLI

I wholeheartedly concur with Grudem’s understanding. In Christ all are made perfect so the believer “does not come into judgement,” but he still stands before the judgement seat of Christ to give an account of his sanctification. Of believers, the apostle Paul says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.XLII

The judgment is going to be a public gathering. All will be judged on the same occasion. It is for this reason that the departed spirits are waiting in heaven and tartarus. On the day of the resurrection we will be reunited to our bodies when believers will stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ and non-believers will stand before the Great White Throne of Judgement. At this moment, every work the non-believer has ever done since birth will be evaluated and they will receive the appropriate punishment. For believers, every work we have ever done from the moment of conversion (rebirth) will be reviewed and we will receive the appropriate reward. Being that God is the perfect judge, we can trust that our reward will be just and in accordance with our sanctification. This will be a public hearing and everything that we have thought, done, or said will be publicly addressed. The apostle Paul says,

I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.XLIII

In this passage, Paul is referring to himself so it would follow that this statement applies to all believers. Notice that he says that God will publicly review the works of believers and he will give them the appropriate “commendation.” This is an explicit reference to the judgement and appropriate reward of believers.

I need to make a final note concerning the nature of these rewards. We do not know how they will manifest. The word “crown” is often used but I believe that it is metaphorical, not literal. It may not be the case that we will have objective circumstances that declare our various rewards (i.e. more jewels or a larger mansion). In my estimation, the revelation we have concerning heaven does not reveal such blatant distinctions. Again I say that we will not know the nature of the various rewards until we get to heaven, but I have noticed a consistent speculation that comes from notable theologians. Millard Erickson says,

May it not be that the difference in the rewards lies not in the external or objective circumstances but in the subjective awareness or appreciation of those circumstances? Thus all would engage in the same activity, for example, worship, but some would enjoy it much more than others...An analogy here is the varying degrees of pleasure different people derive from a concert. The same sound waves fall on everyone’s ears, but the reactions may range from boredom...to ecstasy. A similar situation may well hold with respect to the joys of heaven, although the range of reactions will presumably be narrower. No one will be aware of the differences in the range of enjoyment, and thus there will be no dimming of the perfection of heaven by regret over wasted opportunities.XLIV

While Erickson's statement is speculative, it is not an unreasonable assumption. In this view, the universality of heaven will stand, but the appreciation of it will vary. XLV No one will be jealous of another's bliss because they will never recognize the difference. I would make one revision to Erickson's statement by mentioning that in heaven, we will have a perfect sense of justice so even if the rewards are objective and external, we would not be jealous. We would rejoice over the blessing of another. Sinful jealousy is an earthly trait not a heavenly one.

Theologian R.C. Sproul mentions something that I believe is essential to this point. He says,

There will be degrees of blessedness in heaven. Paul uses a metaphor of the stars of differing brilliance shining in the same heaven to describe this...however...it is important to note that] all the stars will shine. That is to say, there is no unhappiness in heaven. All are blessed beyond our most insightful imaginations...The "works" of the believer, which "merit" greater or lesser blessedness are not good in themselves. Rather, it is the sovereign pleasure of God to regard these works as meritorious. He does so for the sake of Christ only.XLVI

Sproul's point is two-fold. First, even though there will be varying degree of reward in heaven, it will still be heaven for everyone. The least rewarded person in heaven will still have the remarkable bliss of God's presence and will be immeasurably more joyous than the least punished in hell. His second point is that our works do not make us better. God sovereignly decided to reward them because it gives Him the opportunity to display His justice even in heaven.

### **Bibliography And Notes**

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IV Revelation 20:14; English Standard Version

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IX R.C. Sproul, Essential Truths of the Christian Faith, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1992), pg. 282.

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XXXII Philippians 3:21; English Standard Version

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**Three Degrees of Glory**

**Meridian Magazine Website**

[Supplement to Gospel Doctrine New Testament lesson 34]

From the vision in D&C 76, Joseph Smith understood that there were three kingdoms of glory, called the celestial, terrestrial, and telestial. In his revision of the Bible, he reworded 1 Corinthians 15:40 to reflect all three, noting that there were "also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial, and bodies telestial; but the glory of the celestial, one; and the terrestrial, another; and the telestial, another" (JST 1 Corinthians 15:40).

Critics have contended that Paul had reference only to heavenly (celestial) and earthly (terrestrial) bodies and reject the concept of a "telestial" order, despite the fact that it reflects Greek etymology. 1 Joseph Smith's interpretation of Paul's discussion of the resurrection is identical to that of the second-century Christian theologian, Origen.

In order to understand his teachings on this subject, we must examine 1 Corinthians 15:39-44:

All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 2

Of this passage, Origen (A.D. 185-232) wrote that “certain beings are said to be super-celestial, i.e., placed in happier abodes, and clothed with heavenly and resplendent bodies; and among these many distinctions are shown to exist, the apostle, e.g., saying, ‘That one is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, another the glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory’” ( *De Principiis* 2.9.3). 3 After citing 1 Corinthians 15:39-42, he declared:

Our understanding of the passage indeed is, that the apostle, wishing to describe the great difference among those who rise again in glory, i.e., of the saints, borrowed a comparison from the heavenly bodies, saying, ‘One is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, another the glory of the stars.’ And wishing again to teach us the differences among those who shall come to the resurrection, without having purged themselves in this life, i.e., sinners, he borrowed an illustration from earthly things, saying, ‘There is one flesh of birds, another of fishes.’ For heavenly things are worthily compared to the saints, and earthly things to sinners. These statements are made in reply to those who deny the resurrection of the dead, i.e., the resurrection of our bodies. (*De Principiis* 2.10.2) 4

Clement of Alexandria (died A.D. 217), referring to Paul's comment about differing glories in 1 Corinthians 15:41, compared three priesthood offices to the glory found in the resurrection: “Since, according to my opinion, the grades here in the Church, of bishops, presbyters, deacons, are imitations of the angelic glory, and of that economy which, the Scriptures say, awaits those who, following the footsteps of the apostles, have lived in perfection of righteousness according to the Gospel. For these taken up in the clouds, the apostle writes, will first minister [as deacons], then be classed in the presbyterate, 5 by promotion in glory (for glory differs from glory) till they grow into a ‘perfect man’” ( *Stromata* 6.13). 6

Tertullian (ca. A.D. 160-230), commenting on Paul's description of the three glories, noted that there are different levels of reward that God will give to men. He wrote:

Or how will there be many mansions in our Father's house, 7 if not to accord with a diversity of deserts? 8 How will one star also differ from another star in glory, unless in virtue of disparity in their rays? But further, if, on that account, some increase of brightness also was appropriate to loftiness of faith, that gain ought to have been of some such sort as would cost great effort, poignant suffering, torture, death. (*Scorpiace* 8) 9

John Chrysostom (A.D. 347-407) had a similar understanding of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15. After discussing verses 38-41, he wrote, “And having said this, he ascends again to the heaven, saying, ‘There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon.’ For as in the earthly bodies there is a difference, so also in the heavenly; and that difference no ordinary one, but reaching even to the uttermost: there being not only a difference between sun and moon, and stars, but also between stars and stars. For what though they be all in the heaven? yet some have a larger, others a less share of glory. What do we learn from hence? That although they be all in God's kingdom, all shall not enjoy the same reward; and though all sinners be in hell, all shall not endure the same punishment. Wherefore he added, Vers. 42. ‘So also is the resurrection of the dead’” (*Homilies on First Corinthians* 41). 10

The fourth-century A.D. Christian historian Eusebius also commented on 1 Corinthians 15:40-42, comparing the three levels (sun, moon, stars) to the three members of the Godhead, ranking them in that order (*Preparation for the Gospel* 7:15). 11 His analysis reminds us that D&C 76 indicates that those who are worthy of the celestial kingdom enjoy the presence of the Father, while those who inherit the terrestrial

kingdom receive the presence of the Son but not the Father and those who are assigned to the telestial kingdom have neither the Father nor the Son, but the Holy Ghost only (see verses 62, 77, and 86).

### **The Three “Heavens”**

The apostle Paul is our only biblical source for the existence of three heavens. In 2 Corinthians 12:2, he referred to being taken to the third heaven. Commenting on this passage, Joseph Smith said:

Paul ascended into the third heavens, and he could understand the three principal rounds of Jacob's ladder — the telestial, the terrestrial, and the celestial glories or kingdoms, where Paul saw and heard things which were not lawful for him to utter. I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them (History of the Church 5:402).

A medieval Jewish text, Zohar Exodus 30b, also compares the different heavens to “rungs of a ladder.” 12 Zohar Numbers 159a-b notes that God is enshrouded in three worlds, 13 then adds:

Similarly man has three worlds. The first is the one which is called “the world of separation,” in which man both is and is not; as we look at him he departs and vanishes. The second is the world which is linked with the higher world, being the terrestrial Garden of Eden, while the third is a hidden recondite and unknowable world. Now the first world is a stepping-stone to the others, and did not man sin he would not have a taste of death when he is about to enter those other worlds and when the spirit is divested of the body.” 14

The fourth-century bishop St. Basil asked, “Are there two heavens?” then went on to write, “As for myself, far from not believing in a second, I seek for the third whereon the blessed Paul was found worthy to gaze [2 Corinthians 12:2]. And does not the Psalmist in saying ‘heaven of heavens’ [Psalm 147:4] give us an idea of their plurality?” (Hexaemeron 3.3). 15 In another of his works, he wrote,

For who is so ignorant of the good things prepared by God for them that are worthy, as not to know that the crown of the righteous is the grace of the Spirit, bestowed in more abundant and perfect measure in that day, when spiritual glory shall be distributed to each in proportion as he shall have nobly played the man? For among the glories of the saints are “many mansions” in the Father's house, that is differences of dignities: for as “star differeth from star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead.”

They, then, that were sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption, and preserve pure and undiminished the first fruits which they received of the Spirit, are they that shall hear the words “well done thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.” (On the Spirit , xvi [40], citing John 14:2, 1 Corinthians 15:41-42, and Matthew 25:21) 16

The Syriac version of Apocalypse of Paul 11 indicates that Paul was carried by the spirit to the third heaven; the Greek versions says simply that he was carried to heaven. His visit to the third heaven is mentioned in Apocalypse of Paul 3, and his visit to the second and third heavens is in Apocalypse of Paul 21. 17 Sedrach, too, is said to have been taken by an angel to the third heaven to appear before God (Apocalypse of Sedrach 2:1-5). 18

A medieval Gaelic (Irish) text has God telling the angel Michael 19 “‘Do not be remiss in taking great care of the soul of Adam, which has placed itself here in Paradise. Take with the hosts the bright pure soul of noble Adam, and place it in the peaceful gathering in the third royal section of Paradise.’ God said: In tertio caelo [“the third heaven”], which is called Ficconicia, there let him be, without sign of pain, until the time of the resurrection” (Death of Adam 44-46). 20 The Apocalypse of Moses also places Paradise in the third heaven (The Apocalypse of Moses 37:5; 40:1). 21

The Christian Arabic Book of the Rolls f.91b acknowledges the existence of three heavens and notes that the top two are full of light and fire, making it impossible for mortals to look on them. 22 This parallels Joseph Smith's observation that these are kingdoms of "glory," differing in glory as the sun, moon, and stars differed (D&C 76; cf. 88:29-32). He noted that even "the glory of the telestial world ... surpasses all understanding" and that it is excelled in turn by the glory of the terrestrial and celestial worlds (D&C 76:91-92).

A Mandaean text, *The World of Light*, mentions "the Lord of all the upper, middle, and lower worlds of Light." 23 An early Gnostic Christian document known as *Pistis Sophia* describes Jesus' ascent into the various heavens, called "the first sphere," "the second sphere," and "the aeons," each of which is forty-nine times brighter than the previous level (*Pistis Sophia* I.12). 24 It further notes that, during his ascent, there were three different types of light that surrounded him. 25

Testament of Levi 2:8-10 has Levi being shown the three heavens and declaring that the second heaven was "much brighter and more lustrous" than the first and that the third was even "more lustrous and beyond compare." 26 The lowest, he noted, was dark because it sees the wickedness of men on the earth (Testament of Levi 3:1). This correlates well with the description of the telestial kingdom as the abode of the most sinful of human beings (D&C 76:98-106).

The Falasha or "Black Jews" of Ethiopia 27 have preserved ancient texts that provide support for the concept of three heavens likened to the sun, moon, and stars. One of these, 5 Baruch (borrowed from the Christian Ethiopians, who also have the book), speaks of three trumpet blasts by the archangel Michael, 28 at the third of which "all the dead will be resurrected in the twinkling of an eye. The glory of some of them will be greater than the sun, others will stand up in honor, still others in misery. Then the King of Heaven and Earth will come and will reward all men according to their deeds" 29

In the same text, an angel shows Baruch the heavenly Jerusalem, containing

a golden column on which was engraved an inscription in a thin writing (brighter) than the sun, the moon, and the stars of the sky. I asked him: "What is this golden column and what is this writing on it (that has) the likeness of the sun, the moon, and the shining stars?" He answered me: "The names of the just are written for eternal life on this golden column, where they wax not old or corrupt." ... Then he took me to the west. There I saw a column of fire on which was writing by a pen of fire. The writing was thin and compact [and the column of fire] was greater than the column of gold. I asked him: "What is that written [on the column of fire?]" He said to me: "The names of the sinners." 30

Another Falasha text, *Te'ezizat Sanbat*, suggests three levels of reward after this life:

God said to Michael: "Go and bring the souls of the just into the garden, at the ninth hour on Friday!" Michael went as God commanded him. He gathered the souls of the just and brought them before God. God said: "Be blessed," and the Lord of Heaven and earth blessed them, gave them favor and grace, dressed them in garments of life, and brought them into the Heavenly Kingdom. And as for those of the just who had committed no sins when their souls left the body, God gathers them each according to His justice; He appears to them in His glory while their faces shine seven times brighter than the sun. Those who turned to God and repented of their sins have the appearance of the stars, of Orion, and of the lightning. 31

Though sometimes discounted by critics, Joseph Smith's teachings about the three kingdoms of glory has firm support among early Christian writers, who understood the meaning of Paul's comments in 1 Corinthians 15 in the same way Joseph Smith did. 32 The Falasha texts, possibly borrowed from the Christians of Ethiopia, provide additional support. This strongly suggests that the prophet restored ancient beliefs about the subject. 33



**For further reading:**

Larry E. Dahl, "The Vision of the Glories," in Kent Jackson and Robert Millet, eds., *Studies in Scripture: The Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: Randall, 1984), 1:279-308

Larry E. Dahl, "Degrees of Glory," in Daniel H. Ludlow, gen. ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan, 1992)

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**Notes**

1 Most Latter-day Saint scholars who have dealt with the topic consider that telestial derives from the Greek *telos*, "last." In a private communication, John Gee has noted that, while the terms rendered celestial ("heavenly") and terrestrial ("earthly") are often paired in the New Testament, only in Philippians 2:10 do they form a trio of terms. The third term used in that passage is *katachthonios*, literally "under the ground." Since the terms "celestial" and "terrestrial" derive from Latin rather than Greek (*caelum*, "heaven," and *terra*, "earth"), Gee suggests that a Latin term may lie behind "telestial" as well. He proposes the Latin word *tellus*, "earth, globe, land, ground." In light of this, it is interesting to note that the earth was a terrestrial sphere prior to the fall, that it will regain its terrestrial state during the millennium (Articles of Faith 10), and that in the meanwhile it is a sphere of the telestial order (see the description in D&C 76:98-103).

2 An early Coptic document, *Pistis Sophia*, thought by some scholars to have been translated from an original Greek text dating as early as the second or third century A.D., reflects Paul's idea of different types of bodies rising in the resurrection according to one's merits. Speaking of the soul of a deceased person, it says, "And the Virgin of Light seaeth that soul and handeth it over to one of her receivers and will have it cast into a body which is suitable to the sins which it hath committed." *Pistis Sophia* 111, in G. R. S. Mead, *Pistis Sophia* (London: John M. Watkins, 1955 [orig. 1896]), 238.

3 Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 4:290. Origen had his detractors, of whom he wrote, "There are numerous individuals . . . who object to us, that it cannot consist with the justice of God in creating the world to assign to some of His creatures an abode in the heavens, and not only to give such a better habitation, but also to grant them a higher and more honourable position; to favour others with the grant of principalities; to best powers upon some, dominions on others; to confer upon some the most honourable seats in the celestial tribunals; to enable some to shine with more resplendent glory, and to glitter with a starry splendour; to give to some the glory of the sun, to others the glory of the moon, to others the glory of the stars; to cause one star to differ from another star in glory. And, to speak once for all, and briefly, if the Creator God wants neither the will to undertake nor the power to complete a good and perfect work, what reason can there be that, in the creation of rational natures, i.e., of beings of whose existence He Himself is the cause, He should make some of higher rank, and others of second, or third, or of many lower and inferior degrees?" (*De Principiis* 2.9.5, *ibid.*, 4:291).

4 *Ibid.*, 4:294.

5 The Greek term *presbyteros* (whence the name of the Presbyterian Church) means "elder" and is so translated in the New Testament.

6 Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 2:505. Paul uses the term "perfect man" in Ephesians 4:13 and Colossians 1:28; cf. 2 Timothy 3:17 and James 3:2. Clement's discussion of other New Testament evidence for three heavens in the next section (*Stromata* 6.14) was discussed in chapter 37, *Three Levels of Reward*.

7 This is an allusion to Jesus' words in John 14:2.

8 The word "desert" here refers to what one deserves (whence dessert) and not to sand dunes and lack of water.

9 Ibid., 3:639.

10 Philip Schaff, ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* , first series (reprint Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 12:251.

11 E. H. Gifford, trans., *Preparation for the Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903), 351-2.

12 In this Jewish text, there are seven heavens rather than three. The passage reads: “There are on high seven firmaments, and seven zones of earth. Correspondingly, in the lower world there are seven graded firmaments and seven zones of earth. These, as the Companions have expounded, are arranged like the rungs of a ladder, rising one above the other, and each zone has ten divisions, so that there are seventy in all. Each of these is presided over by a Chieftain, and these seventy Chieftains have under their charge the seventy nations of the earth.” Harry Sperling et al., *The Zohar* (New York: The Rebecca Bennett Publications Inc., 1958), 3:99.

13 The three heavens may be suggested in *Zohar Numbers 196b*, referring to the sparrows of *Psalms 84:4*: “This does not mean all souls, but the souls of the righteous whose abode is there with Him. We have learnt that there are three walls to the Garden of Eden, and between each pair many souls and spirits walk about and enjoy the perfumes from within, though they are not permitted to enter . . . The ‘sparrows’ are the holy spirits that are privileged to enter and then come out again, and these ‘find a house,’ each one its appropriate chamber.” Harry Sperling et al., *The Zohar* , 5:281.

14 Ibid., 5:226.

15 Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* , 8:66.

16 Ibid., 8:25.

17 Montague Rhodes James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 526, 529, 536.

18 James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* , 1:610.

19 In early Christian literature, Michael and Adam are not identical.

20 Máire Herbert and Martin McNamara, eds., *Irish Biblical Apocrypha: Selected Texts in Translation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989), 15-16.

21 James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* , 2:291.

22 Margaret Dunlop Gibson, *Apocrypha Arabica* (*Studia Sinaitica* No. VIII; London: C. J. Clay and Sons; Cambridge Univ. Warehouse, 1901), chapter on “*Kitâb al Magâll, or The Book of the Rolls,*” 4.

23 E. S. Drower, *The Secret Adam: A Study of Na § oraeon Gnosis* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960), 12; also cited in Werner Foerster, *Gnosis: A Selection of Gnostic Texts* , translated by R. McL. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974) 2:148. The Mandaeans, who live in parts of Iraq and Iran, claim to be descendants of the disciples of John the Baptist.

24 Carl Schmidt and Violet MacDermot, *Pistis Sophia* , 43-47.

25 *Pistis Sophia* I.4, in *ibid.*, 7.

26 James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:788. Fragments of the text were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, though the full text was already known to scholars prior to the discovery of these scrolls.

27 This people is known as Falasha by Christian Ethiopians, but they call themselves Children of Israel.

28 Christians traditionally hold that Gabriel will blow the trump that announces the last day, but most ancient texts agree with D&C 29:26-27 and D&C 88:112 that it is Michael who will blow the trump announcing the resurrection.

29 Wolf Leslau, *Falasha Anthology* (New Haven: Yale, 1951), 76.

30 *Ibid.*, 68-70.

31 *Ibid.*, 18.

32 Twentieth-century Protestants were divided on the issue of multiple degrees of glory. For arguments in favor, see Elizabeth Disley, "Degrees of Glory: Protestant Doctrine and the Concept of Rewards Hereafter," *Journal of Theological Studies* 24 (1991): 77-105. For arguments against Disley, see Craig L. Blomberg, "Degrees of Reward in the Kingdom of Heaven?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35 (1992):159-72.

33 Much more could be said about ancient Jewish and Christian texts that describe multiple heavens or three levels of reward after the resurrection, but this would detract from our study of Paul's teachings about the three degrees of glory.



Paul talks about the four dimensions as the body, and three heavens (2Co 12:2) I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, such an one caught up to the third heaven.



The Scroll of Heaven: Detail from "the Last Judgement" in the Kariye Camii Church in Constantinople. This is the Cover Photo for Bishop Kallistos Ware, *The Inner Kingdom*. Note the Sun, Moon, and Stars.