

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS—2d Timothy, i. 13.

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It is true he had not ascended. But unquestionably his Spirit had been with his Father from the hour of his death on the cross, till the morning of the appointed day of his resurrection. On that glorious morning the same Spirit descended accompanied by Angels who rolled away the stone and frightened the keepers into a dead sleep, while the glorious victory over death and grave was achieved, and as his spirit was with his Father in Heaven between the death and resurrection of his body, so we are warranted, I think, in the belief that the soul of the penitent thief with the souls of all the pious dead will be with him in Heaven from the moment of departure from the body till the resurrection morn.

that he should be willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord." Paul's experience in this respect is that of thousands who never had those extraordinary revelations.

The soul renewed by grace divine
In God's own image freed from clay
In Heaven's eternal sphere shall shine
A star of day."

The following is from Toplady's hymn commencing
"Deathless spirit now arise
Soar thou native of the skies,
Go to shine before the throne
Deck the Mediator's crown,
Angels joyful to attend,
Hovering round thy pillow bend,
Wait to catch the signal given
And convey thee quick to Heaven."

with a membership of over 800. These are scattered like beacon lights along the coast from the extreme south to the most northern point.

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In confirmation of the same idea we may refer to John 16: 16 where Jesus says to his disciples "A little while and ye shall see me, and again a little while and ye shall not see me, because I go to my Father." This you will remember was uttered a short time before his crucifixion and received its exact fulfilment in the circumstances that followed. They saw him not between his death and resurrection because he went to his Father, and then after he arose he was seen of them occasionally for forty days before his ascension. If he referred to his going to heaven at his ascension and returning again at the end of the world we fail to understand the phrase "a little while" for he well knew that centuries would elapse before he should come to judge the world. But on the supposition that he referred to his going to his Father at death and returning at the resurrection of his body it is perfectly plain.

If the departed spirits of God's redeemed children when they leave the body do not go to Heaven to be with Christ and God the Father, whence this longing of the Apostle? And how else can we reconcile with consistency, the expressions uttered by thousands on the dying couch? Such as "I am going home to be with Jesus" "I am just waiting and longing for the hour to come that shall release me from this body of sin and bid me fly to his arms." How many thousands have deceived themselves in the hour of death and have left false impressions on the minds of surviving friends. What a fearful disappointment awaited Stephen and Paul and hosts of others if, at the hour of their departure when Heaven seemed to open in full view before them, instead of going in to enjoy its glories, they sank soul and body into a dead sleep, from which nothing could awaken them but the resurrection trump, or what is little better they awake to the consciousness that across the threshold of the home above they were not permitted to enter perhaps for ages.

I will give you one other specimen from the pen of Alexander Pope, in which the soul is represented as leaping from the body and flying to glory.
Vital spark of heavenly flame,
Quit O quit this mortal frame—
Hark! They whisper, Angels say
Sister spirit come away
The world recedes it disappears
Heaven opens on my eyes: my ears
With sounds seraphic ring:
Lend, lend your wings I mount! I fly!
O grave where is thy victory
O death where is thy sting."

ing the Angels of Heaven would carry them straight to the arms of Jesus to be always with him. Is this all wrong? Is it a delusion? Have our poor misguided mothers been to all this labour and painstaking, to fill the minds of their offspring with error? If so, is it high time for us to look about ourselves, and see that we are not blind leaders of the blind. It is time for us to say to the mothers of the present: Cease at once and forever to fasten on the young mind such false notions. Let us change the whole course of instruction handed down from our forefathers, and teach our children and all who come within the reach of our influence, that when they die they are not to go to Heaven, but to another place somewhere between Earth and Heaven called Paradise, where they will be happy enough to be sure, but that into the third Heaven where God resides, "they are not to enter perhaps for ages to come. Shall we do this my friends? Shall we make such a decided change as this? No God forbid. Thank God that with an open Bible we are not shut up to such a course as this. But we can say with all confidence Go on ye Christian Mothers and Fathers teach your children daily and nightly to commit the keeping of their souls and bodies to the Lord Jesus. Go on ye Sabbath-school Teachers and all workers in the vineyard of the Lord. Teach the children and all around that all lovers of the Lord Jesus who believe in his name and trust his grace and do his commandments have a home in the house of many mansions" "not made with hands eternal in the Heavens." And that when they come to the dark river of death, Angels will bear their emancipated spirits up to their Heavenly home where they shall "rest from their labours" and "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Meanwhile let us imitate the self-denial and perseverance of our Great Head, "who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the Majesty in the Heavens." Let us follow on in the footsteps of him who has entered heaven for us, singing as we go in the language of the poet William Hunter:

The bitterest opposition is yet manifested everywhere. Mr. Hubert has had his furniture seized and sold three times for baptizing persons under 19 years of age. A few years ago a man of over 60 years of age, that lived in the far North, had become convinced from the Bible that immersion was the only way of baptism, and having heard of Baptists being in the South, he travelled a distance of 1100 miles in order to be baptized, and then back over the same road, making 2200 miles, in order to follow Christ in that command. Candidates are immersed in the coldest part of winter without any inconvenience, and the cry can no longer be made that Baptists stick to warm climates, but we find that in cold, rocky Norway, as well as everywhere else, the true Bible principles will make their way against all opposition. If one man has gained such a strong foothold and accomplished so much in a few years, there is reason to hope that the day is not distant when there shall be religious liberty in Norway and we shall see that hardy race of men pressing into the Kingdom of Christ in his own appointed ways. ASHER.
Boston, April 8, '81.

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only occupies a middle state between earth and Heaven, what a fearful mistake has been made in the teaching of the pulpit and press for ages past. How many eloquent sermons full of heavenly anticipations for the believer in Christ after death, have been preached in vain. How many valuable works have been written by the eminently pious, at great sacrifice of time and labor, for the express purpose of giving comfort and cheer to the weary, worn and sorrow-stricken saints here below, assuring them that when the tribulations of this life were over they might confidently expect to be admitted to Heaven to be with Christ their Saviour and Lord.

These are only a few specimens among hundreds more that might be produced in which the soul is represented as leaving cold mortality behind and soaring upward, borne on the wings of angels to the New Jerusalem. And these are not referred to as positive proof, but merely to show how firmly the authors held to the immediate happiness of the souls of the pious dead; and how these sentiments enter as a living element into the compositions of those men, for the service of song. What is true of them, is equally true of thousands more.

Bound to a land of bright spirits above.
And when we arrive at the end of our journey, and lay our bodies down in the grave, and give our spirits back to God, may we have the assurance of Rev. Rowland Hill, who when very aged and exhausted from preaching was overheard, as he passed down the aisle of the church repeating slowly and softly the following lines:

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

CONCLUDED.

Another passage which confirms the same sentiment is found in 2 Cor. 12: 4, Paul says "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I cannot tell; or whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth) such an one caught up to the third Heaven." He repeats the statement with this variation, that the second time he says he was "caught up into Paradise." Now, to say that Paul was caught up into two distinct localities, or that he was caught up twice into the same place, is saying more than I think is warranted by the language used, for it seems to be a repetition of the same event—with the alteration of a single word—to make it more effective: but to say that he had two revelations is stopping far short of the truth, for we learn from verse 7, that he had "abundance of revelations." I believe with Scott that "although the language is indeed varied, yet only one vision seems to be intended, but in that one vision he doubtless had abundance of revelations." And also with Olshausen who says in connection with this passage: "That we are to assume a distinction between the third Heaven and Paradise (as Ireneus and others maintain) is incapable of proof: both expressions indicate, presumably the same thing, that is to say, the most exalted region of light, the immediate presence of God." If this be the true interpretation of the passage the argument in favor of Paradise and Heaven being two places, falls to the ground.

Moreover, many of the forms of religious worship, and much sublime poetry in the use of which the praises of God are sung by all evangelical worshippers, are entirely useless on either supposition referred to. I open the prayer book of the church of England, and in a form of prayer used at the burial of the dead, I read "Almighty God with whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh are in joy and felicity &c." This surely needs revision and correction if the soul goes not to heaven when the body dies. I open the hymn books used by Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians and others, and I find much of the poetry full of the sentiment that Heaven is the resting-place of the soul after death. A few specimens from several authors will verify the truth of the statement. Watts whose poetry is so full of the pith and marrow of the gospel, many of whose hymns have found their way into almost every collection for worship gives us the following.

But, on the supposition that souls do not go to Heaven when the body dies, what a grievous blunder these poets have made. How they have deceived themselves and others. What a solemn farce is enacted every time those poetic effusions are used in the worship of the Most High. O shades of Wesley, Doddridge and Watts, Toplady, Pope and Montgomery, come back from the unseen world and correct the mistakes you have made. Tell us that the heavenly gates are closed and barred against the souls of all the redeemed of the Lord. Tell us that we who soon expect to die and leave our bodies in the dust, need not hope to be admitted into the immediate presence of God and the Lamb, until our bodies are raised from the dead. Tell us, if ye can—what is the condition of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—the Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs—the innumerable hosts of the dead who have died in the Lord, old and young, small and great. Where are they and what are they doing? Yea, tell us where are the bodies of Enoch and Elijah, one of whom walked with God and God took him, and the other went up in a chariot of fire? O ye Mannings and Hardings, ye Crandalls and Dimocks, ye Ainsleys and Chipmans and Tappers and Parkers and a host of others who have taught us from the pulpit and at the fireside, that those who lived and walked by faith in Jesus, might be assured that on departing this life, they would have an abundant entrance into the glorious Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Come and correct the errors into which you have led us. We have buried our fathers and mothers, our brothers and sisters, our companions and little ones, sustained by the hope—nay the assurance, that while their bodies were covered out of our sight in the dark, cold grave, their spirits were before the throne; and oftentimes our souls have been filled with ecstasies of joy by the thought that when we ourselves shall pass through the cold dark river, possibly they might be the first to greet us on the other shore and welcome us to the joys of the Heavenly state. Are these only fanciful dreams never to be realized? If so come and tell us so that we may no longer deceive ourselves and those around us.

And when I'm to die,
Receive me I'll cry;
For Jesus hath loved me, I cannot tell why;
But this I can find,
We two are so joined,
He'll not be in glory and leave me behind."

The order of exercises arranged for the Fifty-seventh Anniversary of the American Baptist Publication Society, to be held at Indianapolis, commencing May 18th, has been published. It makes eight large pages and provides exercises and topics for two full days. A note from Dr. Johnson informed us that "those announced to speak are all pledged to be present and perform duty." If the brethren are all faithful to their pledges, the endurance of the delegates will certainly be put to the extreme test, and either smelling bottles or pillows will be in great demand.—Baptist Weekly.

while Jesus was agonizing on the cross, knowing that the moment of release was at hand, and also associates in suffering would be allowed to remain till the sun went down, said to the penitent thief, "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." And if the malefactor was not with him every day, then there was, as one promise uttered by him was not fulfilled. But Heaven shall pass away before the time of his promises can fail. Now look carefully at the circumstances and draw our conclusions.

I will refer you to one more passage which is the third and last in the New Testament where the word Paradise is found. In Rev. 2: 7 the sacred writer says: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." Now it appears to me that there can be but one view as to the meaning of this language. For what can be the meaning of the phrase Paradise of God, if not the holy "place of delights" the "Eden above" which is the habitation of the most high God. And, moreover, if the victors in the great battle against sin and Satan are to be partakers of the fruit of the tree of life, it is plain that they must be admitted within that divine enclosure where that fruit-abounding tree is to be found. From the obvious meaning of those texts under consideration, together with the teaching of many collateral passages supported by the opinions of pious and learned men, we conclude that the Paradise of the New Testament is none other than Heaven itself the great centre of the universe the dwelling-place of God and angels and the "spirits of just men made perfect." And no wonder that Paul, after having had such an abundance of revelations in the Heavenly Paradise and returned to earth again—no wonder that he should be conscious of a longing to depart and be with Christ which is far better." No matter of which,

I'll praise my Maker with my breath,
And when my voice is lost in death
Praise shall employ my nobler powers."
"Death is the gate of endless joy."
"But while the body is our home
We're absent from the Lord."
"We would be absent from the flesh
And present Lord with thee."
Wesley, too, whose hymns are equally popular and have become the vehicle of praise to God for thousands of Christians, breathes the same sentiment. The following are from his pen.

And when we arrive at the end of our journey, and lay our bodies down in the grave, and give our spirits back to God, may we have the assurance of Rev. Rowland Hill, who when very aged and exhausted from preaching was overheard, as he passed down the aisle of the church repeating slowly and softly the following lines:
"And when I'm to die,
Receive me I'll cry;
For Jesus hath loved me, I cannot tell why;
But this I can find,
We two are so joined,
He'll not be in glory and leave me behind."

BAPTISTS IN NORWAY.
I have heard it said that Baptists could not live and thrive in cold climates and it does not seem to be generally known that we have a Baptist Church so far north in Norway that for more than a month in summer the sun never sets and for the same length of time in winter never comes above the horizon, yet such is true. Perhaps a few facts about the Baptists in that cold country, as gathered from Rev. G. Hubert, may be of interest to some. Rev. Mr. Hubert is now in this country seeking aid to build churches in Norway. Having had an hour's talk with him as well as bearing him speak on his work, I have gleaned the following:
The Lutheran Church is the State Church in Norway and no other sect was tolerated there until within a few years, and no one is now allowed to leave the State Church who is under 19 years of age.
Mr. Hubert was converted at the Seaman's Bethel, in Boston, about 20 years ago, and felt it his duty to go to his home in Norway and tell his people of the true liberty in the gospel of Christ. He found when he got there that the opposition to him, as a Baptist, was so strong that it was almost impossible for him to get a house to speak in or even to stay in. But feeling that God would bless him he worked on and soon some were brought to Christ and followed him in baptism, and the first Church was formed. The Mission Society in England came to his aid and supplied the means of carrying on the work. We have now in Norway as the result of one sailor's work, in 18 years, fifteen Baptist Churches

The American and Foreign Bible Society has resolved to raise six thousand dollars for Dr. Brown's work in Japan, and ten thousand dollars for Brother Bennett's work in Burma to be placed in the treasury of the Missionary Union to the credit of these brethren and their successors, to be spent by them in carrying forward their Bible work.
No less than 40,000 children of the Fiji Islanders are now in Sunday-School, and thousands of the people are consistent Christians. Yet it is but forty years since these people were cannibals.
A correspondent of the Standard asks concerning Dr. Epstein, a Russian who united with the Baptists of Ohio more than a year ago: "Shall not the money be found to allow our Missionary Union to send him to Russia? He might become there what Otnoken has been to Germany. His knowledge of Hebrew and Greek fits him to give them a purer version of the Scriptures in the tongue in which he was born."
Messrs. Moody and Sankey have closed their revival work in California. As one of the results of their labors, the First Presbyterian Church of Oakland received, on communion day, 220 persons on profession.

These authorities to which I have added strongly favor that Paradise and Heaven are one and the same.

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