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- ART. I.—1. *The Intermediate State: a Sermon by the Rev. Reuben Sherwood of Hyde Park.* New York, pp. 18. Appendix, pp. 42.
2. *No Intermediate Place: a Sermon delivered in the Reformed Dutch Church in Hyde Park, by the Rev. William Cruikshanks,* pp. 22.

THE discourse of Mr. Cruikshanks is a brief, plain, straightforward, honest and manly illustration of the doctrine of an intermediate *state* of departed souls; with a refutation of the doctrine of an intermediate *place* of the dead. Mr. C. goes forth into the field to meet a challenge; and he goes with his sling and the smooth stones of the brook, although he is not a Goliath that he has to encounter. He goes forth with his Bible, and tells us what God's word has declared in reference to the state of departed souls.

That there is no intermediate *place*, he argues from the plain statements of the holy Scriptures; from the fact that it is contrary to all the desires and expectations of the people of God; that it is contrary to their approved faith; that it is in direct opposition to the case stated by our Lord, in his parable of Dives and Lazarus; and to the holy visions of the

saints in heaven, as seen by the apostle John. And he closes by reviewing the leading objections lately offered to this doctrine of the church of Christ, and making a touching appeal to the hearts of his audience.

The discourse of Mr. Sherwood we shall not attempt to criticise in detail. It sets criticism at defiance. No man of taste can endure the vulgarity of his style. Besides, Mr. S. has yet to study the theology of the best fathers of his own church; and in a special manner the subject which he has undertaken to discuss. He hastens to teach others, before he has himself studied the topic of discussion. He hurries into his subject without definitions or explanations. Hence he sails, the whole of his voyage, under false colours. He styles his discourse, "The Intermediate *State*." Now, no one belonging to the Reformed Churches, questions the fact of an intermediate *state*. But, under this erroneous title, and thence by erroneous arguments, does he actually labour, all the while, to establish the doctrine of An Intermediate PLACE!

His main argument, and we venture to call it the *πρωτον ψευδος* of his theory, is this: "There is a general judgment at the last day, when the saints are made perfect in holiness and happiness. This he fortifies with much vigour and anxiety, as if his Christian opponents really doubted it. Thence he draws the profound inferences, that, *therefore*, there is no particular judgment at their death; *therefore*, the believer does not depart *in holiness* at death; and, *therefore*, not one soul enters heaven until the final day of judgment; because they are all made perfect in holiness and perfect in happiness only at the last day! This single assumption is pressed in to sustain his whole theory. Hence he gravely collects many passages of holy writ, and many scraps of wisdom from the fathers of the church, to prove, irrefragably, what no sober man ever denied; namely, that the saints are really, and truly, and most certainly made perfect in happiness and glory at the last day.* Hence, feeling the laurels of victory already on his head, he shouts victory in simply drawing the eventful inference,—that, therefore,

* In his various quotations, we perceive that whenever he finds an author, or the creed of a Church admitting that the saints are made perfect in happiness and complete in glory *at the last day*,—these he is sure to press in to his support. Hence he quotes even the Confession of the Reformed Dutch Church. Sherw. Disc. Append. p. 51, 54. And he can also discover his doctrine in the Westminster Confession! Append. p. 59.

there is no particular judgment or decision at the believer's death; that no one is made perfect in holiness at death; and that no one enters into *any degree* of glory in heaven at death, for the most manifest reason, that they enter into *perfect* glory and happiness in heaven at the last day." This is the amount of the puerile and unanswerable logic of the Reverend Rector of St. James, at Hyde Park!

Having by this unique and matchless logic, more "mysterious than Geneva logic," dislodged the saints from heaven; and having brought quotations from the creed of the Reformed Dutch Church, the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches, and from ancient and modern fathers, as witnesses, all uttering as he supposes the same sentence of exclusion against the saints, he proceeds to lay down his theory. And it cannot boast of originality in his hands. It is a meagre gleanings from the pages of bishops Seabury and Hobart. It is this:—*First*, The souls of believers are *not* made perfect in holiness at death. *Second*, They are not received immediately into heaven, in happiness and glory. As they depart *not* in perfect holiness, they depart, of course, in their sins still cleaving to them. And they go "into the lower parts of the earth;"—"into a place out of heaven," and "apart from heaven;" they "are in the prison, whither *Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison;*"* and that place and prison is "NOT heaven, but paradise." Sherwood's Disc. pp. 6, 7, 13, &c.

In the history of the theological opinions respecting the state of departed souls, we discover a great variety. And many of them diverge widely from the plain and explicit doctrine of the Holy Scriptures on this point. The Spirit of God has declared that the Old Testament saints died in the faith of Christ; that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were in the kingdom of heaven, in the days of our Lord, and before his death and descent into the invisible world. Math. viii. 11, that the righteous entered into peace; and while their bodies "rested in their beds," of the grave, "each one of them was walking in his uprightness." Isaiah lvii. 1, 2, that "*the dead do all live to God:*" and, finally, that the departed saints are "the spirits of just men made perfect," Luke xx. 37, 38. Heb. xii. 23. Such was the doctrine of the ancient church of God.

* Thus our Rector actually avows his faith in the Popish Limbus of the Fathers.

Those nations who were not within the pale of the visible church, but had gone "forth from the presence of the Lord," soon lost the very tradition of this primitive doctrine. This is evident from the remaining writings and fragments of the most ancient classic writers; and of those that are less ancient. And from the time when the Hebrews mingled with heathen during the seventy years captivity; and, especially, after their doctors had been gradually corrupted by the theories of the Greek philosophers under the Grecian empire, and, finally, under the Roman empire, their sentiments on this point began to differ more and more widely from the doctrines of their sacred writings, and the faith of their fore-fathers. They seem to have adopted the fictions of their conquerors on this point. They conceived that departed souls are placed in different local habitations, or *places*, adapted to their characters. Many of them evidently adopted the doctrine of the transmigration of souls into other bodies. Hence that question put by the Jews,—“Who sinned; this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?” Hence their opinions about our Lord, that he was Elijah, or Jeremiah, or one of the old prophets in another form and body! Hence that remarkable expression in the book of Wisdom, written by a Jew, who had been corrupted by the philosophy of Pythagoras,—“I was a witty child, and had a good spirit; yea, rather, being good, *I came into a body undefiled.*”*

Others supposed, with the Platonists, that the soul, having departed from the material and gross body, went into a *place* called by the heathen writers, the Elysian fields; but by the Jewish doctors,—“the habitations and places adapted to the pure soul:” that it there had an ethereal, or aeriform body; but that it never was again to be re-united to the body by a resurrection. These Pharisees did, indeed, use the word *ἀναστασις*, which is usually rendered “resurrection.” But, as Dr. Campbell has proved by a quotation out of Josephus, all that even the Pharisees intended by the *ἀναστασις τῶν νεκρῶν*, was simply the existence of the soul in a future state; and the transmigration of the soul into other bodies.†

As the Platonic doctrine gained ground in the primitive Christian ages, this sentiment of course gained ground, that the immortal soul, in order to its being perfectly happy in Elysium, must be stript of its gross material body. St. Au-

* See John ix. 2. Wisdom viii. 19, 20. Campb. Dissert. VI. Part II.

† See Campb. Diss. VI. Part II. Sect. 19. Josephus, Antiq. Book 18, ch. 2, &c.

gustine inveighed with vehemence against this Platonic innovation, as a doctrine clearly militating against the divine doctrine of the resurrection of the body from the dead.* These denunciations fell with justice on those "*Christian fathers,*" the Platonic philosophers, who had embraced Christianity in appearance; but who, in reality, had not put off Plato, nor the old man; but had put the mask of Christianity over them. Plato, and his genuine followers, admitted that the departed soul had a body; but not a material body. That body, once sunk into the grave, was never to be recalled from the dust. The bodies in which they clothed the happy souls in Elysium were, as we have seen, aeriform, or ethereal bodies.

The platonizing Christian adopted this theory, without admitting those aeriform bodies. This, so far as we can discover, was their theory;—The souls of believers, at death, departed into perfect happiness, and received their full reward: the soul needed no body to make it happy: matter would only impede its happiness and glory. Hence there was no resurrection of the dead. This was the "*ancient heresy*" which distracted the early Christian church; to which Mr. Sherwood has alluded; and which, through inexcusable ignorance of church history, he has actually charged upon us as our doctrine! (Disc. p. 7.)

To counteract this ancient and dangerous error, one class of the early fathers who entered the lists against "the platonizing Christians," maintained that the souls of believers after death remained in a state of insensibility, and deep slumber, until they received their bodies back again from the grave. For they fell directly into the opposite extreme. They taught that the soul could not enjoy happiness and glory **WITHOUT THE BODY!**

Another class of these opponents flattered themselves that they could more effectually resist these Platonic errorists, by assuming a middle position. They did not go quite so far as the other opponents. They held that the departed souls did indeed retain the power of acting, and of knowing, and delighting in God. But, still, until the re-union of the soul to the body, they were not perfect in any thing. They did indeed allow them some sensations, some capacity of enjoyment: but they were not received into heaven: they were retained in a PLACE apart from heaven, and they did not allow

* De Civit. Dei. Lib. 13. Cap. 16.

them to enter heaven till they received their bodies back again from the grave.

There is nothing new under the sun, not even in the wild vagaries of theologians. The *first* of these sects was revived in the persons of certain speculators at the time of the Reformation; whom the pious divines who drew up the earliest Scottish Confession of Faith, in A. D. 1560, did impressively call "certain fantastics" (fanatics), "who affirm that the departed souls do sleep, and come to a certain oblivion." At a later period this theory was revived by Parker in his book "De Descensu," Lib. ii. p. 77.—The venerable John Howe has, in a brief manner, shown up this theory, as contrary to reason, philosophy, and Scripture.*

At a still later period, this theory was revived by Dr. Law, late bishop of Carlisle. He has been refuted by Dr. Campbell.†

On the other hand, the theory of the *second* class of these sects, has also been revived by several writers of the high church party in England and in our country. They profess to believe in "an intermediate PLACE." "It is not heaven:" "it is apart from heaven:" "it is not the kingdom of glory:" "it is in the lower parts of the earth:" "it is the prison of soul, *into which Christ descended and preached to the spirits there:*" it is the bosom of Abraham, and paradise"—"apart from the mansions of glory."‡

In opposition to these various theories, the doctrine of the purest of the early fathers, and that which is expressed in the confessions, canons, and articles of the different sections of the Reformed Churches, is this:—First, The souls of believers are at their death, made perfect in holiness. Second, They are judged at death, and admitted immediately into glory in heaven or paradise, where Christ is, there to enjoy true and eternal glory. This is THE INTERMEDIATE STATE of departed souls. There is, we believe, NO INTERMEDIATE PLACE. And at the last day, the souls of believers having again received their bodies raised out of the grave, do after the general judgment, receive their complete reward in PERFECT glory and PERFECT happiness.

We are now prepared, I. To review the arguments advanced by the high church party in defence of their theory.

* Howe's Works, Haven's N. York Edit. p. 222. Note R.

† Dissert. VI. Part ii. Sect. 23.

‡ Seabury's Sermons; Hobart, &c. &c.

II. We shall review the evidence by which the doctrine of the holy Bible on this point is fully sustained.

I. The doctrine of AN INTERMEDIATE PLACE.—In the *first* place, the advocates have eulogized this doctrine as “most reasonable and scriptural,” and as “*most comfortable, and glorious doctrine.*” We shall see presently whether it has any claims to be “reasonable and scriptural.” For its attributes of “comfort and glory,” it seems to us rather surprising that they should have been claimed for it. “Comfortable and glorious” to depart *not* perfect in holiness; and, therefore, with sin and corruption lingering in them! “Comfortable and glorious” to be excluded from heaven for untold ages! “Comfortable and glorious” not to be in glory with Christ until the last day! “Comfortable and glorious” to be in a place “away from heaven.” and “in the lowest parts of the earth!” “Comfortable and glorious” to be away from Christ’s presence, exiled from heaven, and shut up in the prison of Spirits until the last day!—Surely the reason of the humblest Sabbath School pupil would promptly pronounce it unspeakably more “comfortable and glorious” to be made perfect in holiness at death, and to enter immediately into true happiness and eternal glory, with Christ in heaven!

Second. The advocates of this doctrine involve themselves in ambiguity and confusion at every step. They profess to advocate the doctrine of “an intermediate PLACE.” Their proofs go to show merely the truth of an “intermediate STATE.” This error pervades their every argument. They lose sight, some how or other, of our doctrine entirely: namely, that the souls of believers at death, enter in a perfect state of holiness, into a *high* degree of happiness, and eternal glory, in heaven. And at the last day they reach the utmost perfection of felicity, and glory everlasting. They labour to represent us as teaching that the saints at death are completely perfect not only in *holiness*, but also in *happiness and glory!* And having by this manoeuvre, contrived to identify us with the platonizing fathers, they charge us with the guilt of adhering to an “ancient heresy.” (Sherwood, p. 7.)

Having thus put themselves in a wrong position, they have fallen and floundered into an argument befitting this false position. Their argument substantially is this, as we have already hinted:—At the *general* judgment, the saints are made perfect in holiness and happiness and glory: hence there is no *particular* judgment at death: hence souls are not in heaven, and will not be there, until they receive their bodies

from the grave, and enter on full perfection in glory after the last day. Every text which they quote, say they, goes to establish these positions: namely, that we are not made *perfect* in happiness and glory until the last day. Hence there *is* an intermediate STATE: and because there is such a state, therefore we have proved that there is an intermediate PLACE. For such is their inference! The evidence of an intermediate *state*, establishes an intermediate PLACE! And because no soul is perfectly happy until the last day: therefore no one has happiness in heaven in any degree whatever! Therefore no souls are in heaven: therefore they are somewhere else, and that is paradise, or the intermediate place! Such is the logic of the high church party on this point.

By this mode of reasoning, they might, with equal success, prove that because there is a *general* providence, there can be no *particular* providence! And because the son and heir of a kingdom does not reach the full honours, and the complete enjoyment of his estate, until he is fully of age; therefore, he is not admitted to his father's table, nor even allowed to appear in his father's house, during the "intermediate state" of his non-age!

Third. By way of *argumentum ad invidiam*, our opponents charge it to the guilt of our doctrine that it is, primarily, popish. Mr. Sherwood, following in the steps of his masters, even ventures to tell the public that the Church of Rome was the *first* to declare this doctrine authoritatively, that the souls of believers enter immediately into glory. (pp. 56, 57.) It will be enough, in order to set him, right simply to quote the Romish doctrine, as established by the council of Florence. "Tria esse loca, &c. There are three places of the departed souls: those of the saints are in heaven: those of the wicked are in hell: those who died under *venial* sins, are in purgatory."* Now, as the latest high church writer on this point, maintains that the souls of believers depart *not* perfect in holiness, and of course with sin and depravity still adhering to them, he must mean the sin adhering to the believer,—not the *mortal* sin of the impenitent. He must mean then, *venial* sins. And if they thus depart in sin, this sin must either be expurgated in the other world; or, as the necessary result,—it must "wax worse and worse." Here, then, we have our author putting souls, with their sins,

* Labbeus, Concil. Tom. XVIII. p. 26. Also Edgar's Variations of Popery, p. 452, London new edition.

“into a prison,” in “the lower parts of the earth!” If this be not purgatory, nothing has ever yet existed so precisely like it! And that things so very similar will approximate, by the law of their nature, until they shall become completely one, we have the following evidence in an extract from the Oxford Tracts, by Dr. Pusey. It will be seen that the only difference between our high churchmen, and the Oxford divines, and the Dublin Doctor Todd, is simply this,—the latter have got considerably the start of the former. They have been both on the same descent; and are both in full career of descent to find their level. Let us hear Dr. Pusey:—“Prayer for departed saints—since knowing them to be in a state” (place?) “of imperfect bliss, until the resurrection, whenever we pray for the final coming of God’s kingdom, we do, in fact (if we have any thought for the departed), *pray at the same time, for the perfecting of their bliss!*”* Hence there is scarcely even a degree of visibility between this high church doctrine, and the more ancient fiction of purgatory!

Fourth. They appeal to the primitive Christian fathers in favour of their novel doctrine. Now, no sober and discreet man, who is even very partially acquainted with these fathers, would venture such an appeal. I shall select a few specimens of the opinions of the best of them. St. Augustine says,—“We own a heaven and a hell; besides these we know of no middle place. *Tertium locum penitus ignoramus, &c.*† Ephraim teaches,—“that to escape hell, is to enter into the kingdom of heaven: to fail of heaven is to be plunged into hell.”‡ Ignatius, in his epistle to the Magnesians, speaks of “future happiness and misery:”—“a state of life, and a state of death,” without the slightest allusion to a “middle place.” Polycarp wrote on the resurrection; and Athenagoras, the Athenian philosopher, composed a treatise on the same subject. Yet neither of them allude either to a purgatory or a middle place.§ Cyril, of Alexandria, in the Homily *De Exitu Animi*, thus writes:—“Οἱ δίκαιοι εἰς παράδεισον κ. τ. λ. The righteous depart to paradise; the impenitent into unquenchable fire: the righteous into heaven; the wicked into hell: the righteous into the hand of God; the wicked into the hands of the devil.”|| And, finally, the

* Dr. Pusey’s Answer in Defence of Tracts 75 and 78.

† Tom. X. p. 40.

‡ Opera, pp. 19, 20.

§ See Edgar’s Variations, p. 469.

|| Cyril. Alex. Opera, Tom. V. Pars 2. p. 410. Bern. De Moor IV. p. 153.

other fathers who taught a "middle place," did all of them teach that that place was a place of purgation from sins. This opinion was introduced by them from pagan writers. And in course of time it originated the monstrous fiction of purgatory. Even the best of these fathers, such as St. Augustine and Ambrose, prayed for *the dead who were in heaven!* Thus the first of these prayed for the soul of his mother Monica, who, being an eminent Christian, was undoubtedly in heaven.* Nay, what seems almost incredible, such fathers as Cyril, Chrysostom, Augustine, did not only pray for the saints in heaven, they even prayed for the doomed in hell. To use the words of Augustine,—“Ut tolerabilior, &c. that their torments might come to an end.”† So monstrously have these fathers' works been corrupted; or, so monstrously corrupted were their own doctrinal opinions!

Fifth. The advocates of this novel doctrine of the intermediate PLACE appeal to certain texts of the Holy Scriptures. Their exposition of these texts we shall now review.

1st. They press in Heb. xi. 39, 40. These (Old Testament saints) all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us that they without us should not be perfect.” Here, say they, by “the promise” is meant heaven; hence the Old Testament saints have not yet received heaven! The error, here, lies in assuming, without proof, that by “promise” is meant heaven. But it will be quite obvious to those who critically examine the use of the word in the Sacred Scriptures, that it means that glorious promise—“THE PROMISE,” by way of eminence and superiority over all other promises; that which was given to our fallen and ruined race in the garden; namely, the promise of Messiah, who was to come in the flesh. This was THE PROMISE given to the fathers. On this promise all other blessings were suspended. To take it in any other sense, violates the apostle's argument. His aim in this epistle is to convince the Hebrews that Jesus Christ is the Messiah promised to the fathers. Now he assumes that these saints are in heaven; and that it was by the faith of the coming of the Messiah that they were in glory. This is the *first* fact which he establishes. The *second* is this:—the unspeakable superiority of the New Testament dispensation to that of the Old. All our fathers, said he, died without having re-

* See Aug. Confes. IX. cap. 13. p. 173. Ambros. Tom. V. pp. 114, 121.

† Aug. Oper. VII. pp. 238, 239.

ceived the fulfillment of the illustrious promise of the incarnate Messiah. They lived not to see him in the flesh. But, we have received the promise. We have seen and welcomed "God manifest in the flesh." They of old, have only the promise uttered to their faith. We have its fulfillment demonstrated before our eyes. And this new dispensation of grace is "that better thing" which we have. Their dispensation was one of types, figures, and shadows. Ours is that of the visible reality of the substance. They without us were not perfect. Theirs was the incipient dispensation. Ours is the consummated one.—This is the substance of the apostle's argument to convince and win over the Hebrews. What a repulsive argument would our opponents make out of this,—by making the apostle assure the Hebrews that not one of all their eminent patriarchs had yet reached heaven!

And even admitting their interpretation of "the promise," it can be referred only to the case of the Old Testament saints alone. For the apostle expressly names them, and limits his reference to them. Their conclusion then, were it even legitimate, cannot affect the certainty of the souls of New Testament believers entering immediately into heaven at death. So, then, even at the best, this lame and halting exposition, is nothing less nor more than the revival of the old popish doctrine of "THE LIMBUS OF THE FATHERS." That is to say, the imprisonment of the Old Testament saints in "the prison" of Limbus, until Christ, as they suppose, went down and preached to the spirits in prison, and brought them all up with him when he went, in his soul, to paradise!

But there is another strong point which fully establishes our exposition of this passage. It is this. To refer "the promise" to the soul's enjoyment of heaven; and, thence, to infer that the souls of the Old Testament saints, and also all other saints since their time, in their "not obtaining the promise," did not enter into heaven at death,—does actually place the apostle in direct contradiction to himself. In Hebrews vi. 12, he explicitly declared that departed saints, through faith and patience, do inherit the promises. In verse 15, he declares the same thing of Abraham, who had "obtained the promise." And this was true in reference to the temporal blessings promised: the multiplication of his family; the certainty of the descent of the Messiah from him; and, lastly, the grand end, and all absorbing aim of his faith in that Messiah, his introduction into the kingdom of heaven at death.

And, if possible, to make assurance doubly sure, the apostle rehearses the condition of departed saints as "the spirits of just men made perfect," with whom the church on earth is brought into a joyful and glorious communion. Heb. xii. 23.

2d. They press in John iii. 13, to prop their theory: "*No man hath ascended up to heaven* but he that came down from heaven; even the son of man who is in heaven." This is entirely foreign from the point. It has not the remotest reference to the state of departed souls. It is a passage similar to that of Rom. x. 6, "Say not in thy heart, who shall ascend into heaven; that is, to bring Christ down?" So, our Lord, in the above text, says, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" "And no man hath ascended into heaven,"—that is, no created being can ascend into heaven, in order no discover the infinite mind of God. No one can do this, but HE who came down from heaven; even the Son of Man who is in heaven." This text, therefore, is injured by their false exposition.

3d. They lay much stress on that divine sentence in John xiv. 2, 3, "In my Father's house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you;—and *I will come again* to receive you to myself: that where I am, there may ye be also."—Here, say they, it is manifest that no departed soul is in heaven, nor will be in heaven, until Christ *comes again* to receive them to himself. But Christ does not come again to receive them until the last day. Hence, no departed soul is in heaven now, nor will be, until after the general judgment.

This sophistry is founded on the assumption that there is only ONE "coming of Christ again." Now we humbly conceive that no one well acquainted with his Bible could have fallen into this error. There are certain "comings of Christ our Lord," which cannot be referred to the last day only. *First*:—God our sovereign "COMETH forth," when he inflicts severe judgments on men. See Isaiah lxiii. 1, and Micah i. 3. *Second*:—Our Lord COMES to a people, when he sends the gospel to them. Math. xvi. 28, "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, who shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." See also Ephes. ii. 15, 16. This coming of our Lord can by no rules of criticism be referred to his final coming at the last day.

Third:—Christ comes to each one of us, personally, at death. Math. xxiv. 44, and xxv. 12, “Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not of, the Son of Man cometh.” This cannot be referred to his coming at the last day. If so, then it is assumed that each one of us shall live on the earth until the Great God shall appear at the last judgment! *Fourth:*—There is a second coming of Christ, in his human nature, at the last day, as the Judge of all the quick and dead. “Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him.” Rev. i. 7.

This coming of Christ, alluded to in John xiv. 2, 3, has a double application. He comes at death to receive each of us *personally* into heaven. He comes at the last day to receive us *collectively*, as his CHURCH, into his mansions of glory. Their theory, therefore, derives no aid from this text.

4th. Another text on which they lay violent hands, is Acts ii. 34, “David is *not* yet ascended into the heavens.” Can any thing be plainer? David is not in heaven. And if such a saint be not in heaven, then, verily, no other saint is in heaven! Hence there is not a saint in heaven yet!! Therefore there is an intermediate PLACE.

This text, as is evident from the context, refers manifestly to the resurrection of the body, and not to the state, or place of David’s soul. The apostle is demonstrating to his audience the fact of Christ’s resurrection. To effect this, he quotes Psalm xvi. 10, 11, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,”—that is, in SHEOL, in Hades, in the invisible world: that is, in a state of separation from my body: “neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.” From this passage he reasons thus:—This account of the resurrection cannot be referred to David himself. For he is dead and buried; and his sepulchre is with us. He is, therefore, not received into the heavens, as this Holy One is here distinctly said to be. Hence, it is not of David’s dead body, that he speaks in this place; but of Messiah’s dead body. Hence our Lord said to Mary,—“Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my God, and your God.” His pure and holy soul had, indeed, been received by his Father, in heaven, in his “intermediate state;” but he had not yet ascended to heaven in his complete human nature. This took place at his ascent from Mount Olivet.

Such is the amount of their argument; and a specimen of their mode of conducting it. We shall now invite attention

to the arguments on behalf of THE INTERMEDIATE STATE, in opposition to this novel and ill-sustained fiction of AN INTERMEDIATE PLACE.

We beg attention to two distinct heads of discussion.—**FIRST:** That the souls of believers are, at their death, MADE PERFECT IN HOLINESS. **SECOND:** That the souls of believers do, at their death, PASS IMMEDIATELY INTO GLORY ETERNAL, AND A HIGH DEGREE OF HAPPINESS.

FIRST: THEY ARE MADE PERFECT IN HOLINESS AT DEATH.—This is the doctrine of the Church of Christ, professed by all the branches of the Reformed Church. The following quotations will show this. In the shorter catechism of the Westminster Assembly, which forms a part of the creed of all the branches of the Presbyterian Churches, at home and abroad, this doctrine is expressed:—"The souls of believers are, at their death, MADE PERFECT IN HOLINESS." Quest. 37. In the Heidelberg catechism, which is a part of the creed of the Reformed Dutch Church, it is thus taught:—"Our death is not a satisfaction for sin, but only AN ABOLISHING OF SIN." "After this life, I shall inherit perfect salvation. Quest. 42, 58. With the R. D. Church agree the Reformed churches of France, Switzerland, Holland, and the Reformed German Church in Germany, and in the United States, which adopt this as their catechism. In the Book of Common Prayer of the Protestant Episcopal Church the same doctrine is taught, by implication, in the Communion Service, and directly in the following passage in the Burial of the Dead. "O Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those who 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." Thus, departed saints are delivered from the burden of that "flesh and blood" which cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. This is the sense in which the apostle Paul uses the word "FLESH," in describing the corruption of our nature.* If the advocates of the intermediate place insist that by "flesh," in this passage, is meant the "*flesh*" literally, that is, the body, how can they reconcile the whole of this passage with their own doctrine, that the soul is not admitted into heaven "to live with the Lord," until it be reunited to the flesh at the last day? The "flesh" here intended is that which must be "cast off" utter-

* Rom. viii. 1, 4, 5, 9, 13, &c.

ly in order to our "dwelling with God in joy and felicity." We must be "*delivered from it.*" Now, assuredly, this is not the language used to describe the departure of the soul from the body at death. It appropriately describes our escape from a loathsome enemy in us, which is extirpated on our departure from the body. And we suspect strongly that this is the meaning of the passage in the opinion of all high churchmen; for they take special care not to quote *the whole* of this passage, in their arguments, offensive and defensive, on the novel doctrine of "the intermediate place."

Lastly: This is the doctrine of the holy Scriptures. "The righteous is taken away from the evil *to come,*" &c. "Isaiah lvii. 1. Here are two points of evidence: 1st. They "enter into peace:" that is "the peace of God," after death. Hence all their sin must be taken away. For there is no peace after death where sin is. That is, the righteous depart in a state of perfect holiness. 2d. "They are taken away from the evil." Let it be remarked that the words "*to come,*" are not in the Hebrew. They are "taken away from the evil:" that is, the evil of sin, and the evil of suffering. Can any other class of evil be intended?

In the glorious vision on the mount of Transfiguration, "Moses and Elias appeared in glory." Now our opponents teach that there is no perfection in holiness, in other words, no degree of eternal glory in heaven bestowed on saints until the day of final judgment. But here Elijah appears in his glorified body and soul. And here is Moses, not in his body, but in his glorified soul, appearing "in glory," as well as Elijah. Being in glory, they must of course be perfectly free of all sin.

The apostle in detailing the spiritual privileges of the saints of the New Testament times, enumerates, among other blessings, their close communion with heaven. "We are come to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to God the judge of all, to THE SPIRITS OF JUST MEN MADE PERFECT," &c. Since then, the spirits of the just are made perfect by God, they must be entirely free from sin.

And, finally, John, in the visions of their glory, beheld the souls of the departed saints "clothed in white robes;" "washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb;"—"in their mouth was found *no guile*; for they are *without fault before the throne of God*" This was their condition in the days of John; and such, therefore, is their state previous to the last day. See Rev. vi. 9, 10. vii. 13—17. xiv. 2—5.

SECOND: The souls of believers enter immediately after their death, into heaven, or paradise, to enjoy eternal glory, and a high degree of happiness.

Here it would be easy to parade quotations from the ancient Greek and Latin fathers. But we have, by the specimen already given, made our escape from this necessity. Gravely speaking, we think we could undertake to prove any doctrine from the fathers; and then, from the same fathers, prove directly the reverse of it! This state of their writings seems to be produced by two causes. 1st. Their works have been corrupted by the monks of the dark ages: and many additions foisted into them.* 2d. These writings exhibit the gradual approach of those fathers from error to truth: and from truth again into error. They are a kind of a barometer, to mark the risings and depressions of their minds. They are a diary, in short, in which they enter their progress in opinions; their speculation, and faith, from their youth to intellectual manhood; from the manhood of the mind, to their dotage. We have a striking instance of this in the two huge folios of the father of the Friends, William Penn. In the beginning of his 1700 pages folio, he is at first nothing; he gradually seems somewhat *Calvinish*: then he is Arminian; anon, he is Pelagian; then Arian; then Sabellian. In the same manner on the pages of the glorious Luther. On his early pages he is a papist, and adores the Pope. Then, year after year, and through page after page, his giant mind forces its way by the word and spirit of God into the commanding position of a pure, whole-souled, disinterested Reformer. We shall, therefore, make no farther appeal to the fathers on this point. Although it would be no difficult matter to produce the best of them, in our favour.

The doctrine we advocate has ever been the doctrine of the church of God. We rejoice that we can carry off bishop Bull from the camp of the enemy's hosts.† Let us hear him. "I do affirm the consentient and constant doctrine of the primitive church to be this:—that the souls of all the faithful, immediately after death, enter into a place and state of bliss, far exceeding all the felicities of this world; though short of that most consummate, perfect beatitude of heaven, with which they are to be crowned and rewarded in the resurrection.

* See Erasmus' preface to his splendid edition of St. Augustine's works, dedicated to a Spanish Prelate.

† Unless like the Greek and Latin Fathers, he wants the unanimous consent with his own self, in his own writings.

And so, on the contrary, that the souls of all the wicked are, presently after death, in a state of very great misery; and yet dreading a far greater misery at the day of judgment.”*

In consistency with this enlightened declaration, the Presbyterian Churches of the United States, Canada, Great Britain and Ireland, who adhere to the Westminster confession and catechisms, profess this doctrine, which Bishop Bull pronounces to have been “the consentient and constant doctrine of the primitive church.” A single extract will be sufficient. “The souls of believers are, at their death, made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory.” Catechism, Quest. 37.

The Reformed Dutch Church in the United States and in Holland; the Reformed Churches of France, Switzerland, Germany, and in the United States, do utter their voice strongly and decisively on this point. “After this life, we reign with Christ eternally over all creatures.” “Death is an abolishing of sin, and A PASSAGE INTO ETERNAL LIFE.” “My soul, after this life, shall be IMMEDIATELY taken up to Christ its head.” “After this life, I shall inherit perfect salvation.” Heidel. Catechism, Quest. 32, 42, 57, 58.† The doctrine which follows this statement, is in precise accordance with the statement of the learned Dr. Bull; namely,—At the resurrection of the body, we shall enter upon our perfect happiness and eternal glory in our souls and bodies, in the church triumphant.

The Protestant Episcopal Church also utters her voice we think very distinctly against the opinion of the high church party in her. We shall select the following from the beautiful and solemn service of the Dead:—“I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, from henceforth blessed are the dead, &c.” This quotation seems to be taken out of the old version of the scriptures, in use before our present translation was made.‡ And the position of the word “henceforth,” as it stands in this clause of the Burial of the Dead, makes it, if possible, even stronger in our favour. “Write, blessed from henceforth are the dead.” That is, if there be any meaning in plain language, the departed souls of the

* Bp. Bull's Sermon on THE MIDDLE STATE.

† Yet Mr. Sherwood quotes the standards of the Dutch Church as one with his fiction of an Intermediate Place! Disc pp. 51, 54.

‡ In the present version it runs thus:—“Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth, &c.”

saints are in heaven's blessedness from the very instant of their decease. We shall give another extract even stronger, if possible, than this, in order to do justice to the genuine doctrine of the Episcopal Church, in opposition to the innovations of the high church party within her. We allude to the prayer in the same service:—"Almighty God, with whom DO LIVE the spirits of those who 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." The prayer closes with the hope "of the perfect consummation and bliss, in body and soul," at the last day. The Episcopal Church is, therefore, decisively and perfectly at one on this point with all her sister churches. There is another sentence in the closing prayer to the same effect: and we quote it in order to point out an instance of unfair dealing in a late sermon writer on this subject. It is this:—"We humbly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him, AND that at the general resurrection, &c." Hence, the consummation of the last day is exhibited as coming in due time, after the soul shall have been long in heaven. But Mr. Sherwood, p. 14, puts the word "*but*" instead of "*and*" in order very probably to help the sentence to utter a tone in favour of his theory.

We shall now notice the sentiments of conspicuous modern divines in order to vindicate them from the imputation thrown on them by our opponents, that they believed in the *Intermediate Place*. And we shall accept of the quotations of these theologians as given by Hobart, Sherwood, &c. and thank them for helping our cause. Parkhurst says,*—"Paradise is, in the New Testament, applied to the STATE of faithful souls between death and the resurrection—where they are admitted to immediate communion with God in Christ, &c." Doddridge is not quite decisive on either side. Yet we accept of this quotation,—“Thou shall be with me in paradise, the abode of happy saints when separate from the body.” Dr. Watts also makes paradise a STATE, not a *place*, in which saints are happy.† Dr. Adam Clark, on 2 Cor. xii. 7, calls it “the *place* of the blessed, or the *state* of departed spirits.”

Dr. Dwight held the doctrine which we advocate. Yet Mr. Sherwood ventures to press him into his service, in the fol-

* Greek Lexicon, vox. Parad.

† Ess. on Separ. State, Sect. 3.

lowing form of quotation. "There can, I apprehend, be no reasonable doubt concerning an intermediate STATE." Now, in the first instance, this is nothing to *his* purpose. For Mr. S. advocates an intermediate *place*. In the next instance, it is a garbled and unfair quotation given by Mr. S. The whole sentence,—“Whatever may be true concerning an intermediate *place*, there can, I apprehend, be no reasonable doubt concerning an intermediate STATE.”* This is precisely our doctrine.

Dr. Campbell is also pressed in by the high church opposition. But he is on our side *so far as he is consistent with himself*. Here are his words:—“There is in a lower degree, a reward of the righteous, and a punishment of the wicked, in a STATE,”—he does not say a place,—“in a STATE intervening between death and the resurrection.” Again:—“The apostle Paul speaks of the souls as admitted to enjoyment, *in the presence of God, immediately after their death.*”†

The leading divines of the Episcopal Church of the good old way are manifestly with us. For instance, Dean Stanhope says,—“The soul lives in a separate STATE from the body, and such a STATE as is susceptible of happiness or misery.”

Dr. Wheatly says,—“The interval between death, and the end of the world, is a STATE”—not *place*—“A STATE of expectation and imperfect bliss.” Then he adds that the completion and perfection of their happiness take place at the last day.‡ Archbishop Secker thus writes:—“Hades means the invisible world, one part or other of which, the souls of the deceased, whether good or bad, inhabit.” And he adds, that the saints are there, “waiting for a still more perfect happiness at the last day.”§ Bishop Newton says,—“The separate souls are happy or miserable: but not so miserable nor happy as they shall be at the resurrection.”|| Bishop Mant, as quoted by Mr. Sherwood, is decidedly of orthodox belief. “The intermediate STATE,”—he does not say *place*,—“is one of rest and repose.” He adds that this will be succeeded by another state of perfect happiness at the last day.¶

* Serm. 164. Vol. iv. p. 423, New Haven edit. of 1823.—

† Vol. i. Diss. vi. Part ii. Sect. 19, 22.

‡ On the Com. Prayer, p. 304, Boston edition of 1825.

§ Secker on the Catechism, Lect. 9.

|| On the Intermediate State, vol. iii. pp. 559, 661, Lond. edit.

¶ Happiness of the Blessed, p. 10.

In a word, the ancient and sound fathers of this venerable section of the Reformed Church, do, to a man, believe as do their compeers of other Churches. But the party of the high churchmen within her, and those approximating to Romanism, do, to a man, advocate this *quasi* purgatory of an intermediate place of souls, *not* perfect in holiness.

We now proceed to examine the evidence of our doctrine derived from the Holy Scriptures.

The king of Israel declares that "the dust shall return to the earth, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." This, as will be more fully explained by the texts to be quoted, determines that the soul of the righteous at death is with God who is in heaven.

The prophet Isaiah assures the mourner that the righteous do, at death, enter into peace. That cannot mean the grave, for the wicked also enter the grave. It is the peace of God in heaven. "They rest on their beds." Their bodies sleep in the grave. "Each one walking in his uprightness." This indicates life, activity, and happiness. Let this be explained by the following texts; for the system of divine truth is unique and one.

On the mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elias appeared in glory with Christ. They both appeared in glory. Moses therefore, as a pure spirit, was where Elias, in body and soul, was. But, we have the testimony of the Holy Spirit, that Elias "was taken up into heaven." 2 Kings ii. 1 and 11. Therefore, Moses was in heaven, and in no intermediate PLACE, "apart from heaven," and "out of heaven."

Our Lord, in refuting the Saducees, said, "The Lord is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob : he is not the God of the dead, but of the living : for all *live unto him.*" Luke xx. 37, 38. Set down with this the words of Paul: "None of us liveth unto himself ; and no man dieth unto himself : for, whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord ; living, or dying, therefore, we are the Lord's." Rom. xiv. 8, 9. Hence the patriarchs, and all who lived to the Lord, have died to him. He is their God after death, as well as in life. They are with him ; for "they live to him." This implies presence with him, and happiness, and glory, as the necessary consequence.

When Stephen was dying, "he saw Christ standing on the right hand of God," and he said, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." This was spoken by one who was full of the Holy Ghost. It was therefore the prayer of one guided by

the Holy Ghost. Hence it was heard : and hence his soul was received by Christ, and was where he is. Therefore the soul of Stephen is in heaven, where Christ is.

The whole family of God, *named after Christ*, is in heaven, and on earth. Eph. iii. 15. This family is that which is named after Christ. Hence it includes all Christians only. But, they are "in heaven, or on earth." The departed are, of course, *in heaven*, as certainly as those who are *not* departed, are *on earth*. There is of course no middle place. It is unknown on the pages of the Holy Bible. They are all either in heaven, or on earth. Hence every member of Christ's family, when they leave the Church below, are received into the family of God above, in the heaven of heavens.

"Them that sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him." 2 Thess. iv. 14. In connection with this passage, take Jude, ver. 14. "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment on all." Nothing can be more evident than this, that when Christ comes to judgment, he will summon his *saints* as well as his angels, to attend him downward to the services of the last judgment. But in as much as he brings the *SAINTS* with him when he comes, it is quite evident they were *with him* previous to his descent to judgment. How could he bring them *with him*, if they had not previously been *with him*? Hence, departed souls are now with him, in heaven. And when he returns to his glory with all his triumphing saints, now invested with their bodies raised from the dead, "he will bring them with him," in the fulness of perfection in happiness and glory, to his everlasting habitations.

Our exalted Redeemer, in his intercessory prayer, John xvii. 24, says,—"Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be *WITH ME WHERE I AM*," &c. Let this divine expression be explained in connection with *two* facts. 1st. That Christ ceases to plead for those who are dead. 2d. That, as we have already shown, he comes at death to each one of his people, to receive their souls to himself. Therefore, when the saints die, according to the will of God, and according to the intercession of Christ, they do go to Christ, to be *WITH HIM*, and where he is. But our Saviour is in heaven, in his glory. Therefore departed souls of believers do go into heaven, and its eternal glory. There is no way of evading this conclusion, but by making out one or other of two things. 1st. That Christ does *not* come to each one of

his ransomed children at death. But we have already shown, out of Math. xxiv. 44, and xxv. 13, that he does certainly so come in his infallible love of righteousness. Or, 2d. That our Lord's intercessory prayer is *not* heard, nor answered by the Father, even when, as his equal, he says,—“Father, I WILL!” But no one of these truths and facts can be questioned for a moment. Therefore, the souls of departed Christians are with Christ in the glory and happiness of heaven.

The apostle assures us, by divine inspiration, that “when the house of this tabernacle,” the body, “is dissolved” in death, “we have,”—he does not say *shall have*,—but “we *have* a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Can any thing be more explicit? When the body is dissolved, the soul departs,—whither? “Into a house not made with hands, eternal, IN THE HEAVENS, where our Saviour is. The following adds the force of demonstration to this. “While we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord,” ver. 6, 8. To these, let me add the following:—“To me to live is Christ: to die is gain. To depart, and to be with Christ is far better,” Phil. i. 22, 23. Here the evidence is complete. To be absent from the body “by death,” is to be present with the Lord. When, therefore, we leave the body, we are present with Christ. But, he is in heaven in his glory. When, therefore, we leave the body, we are in heaven in glory and felicity with him.

Had Paul believed in the “intermediate place,” and had he been assured that his soul at death went into “a prison,” into “a place apart from heaven,” “a place away from heaven,”—most assuredly he never would have poured out his holy soul in this ardent desire. “To depart and to be with Christ, is far better!” We have, therefore, the whole weight of St. Paul's experience and divine inspiration against an “Intermediate Place.”

The apostle John was permitted, in the visions of glory, to have a glimpse of the Intermediate State in heaven. The souls of the martyrs he beheld in their glory. He saw them “under the altar;”—that is,—stripping the language of what is figurative,—he saw them at the feet of our Divine Redeemer, who makes intercession “at the golden altar;” even in the heaven of heavens. He “saw white robes given unto them.” And they are before the throne of God; and serve

him day and night, in the glories and felicity of the beatific vision. Revel. vi. 9, 10. vii. 13, 17.

Now, if there be an Intermediate Place, "apart from heaven,"—then is our Jesus Christ in his glorified nature in that Intermediate Place; and in a "place out of heaven." If there be an Intermediate Place, then is the throne of God there, in "a place apart from heaven," and "out of heaven." But these saints are at the feet of Christ; they are where he is: they are where the throne of God, and the Lamb, is. Hence, they are in a state, and place of perfect holiness, and in the glory and felicity of heaven, and in no Intermediate Place, "apart from heaven," and "away from heaven."

We may be allowed to advert again to the consolatory message of our Lord to John in Revel. xvi. 13. "I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write; Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours: and their works do follow them." This testimony is decisive. "The dead who die in the Lord, are blessed." "They are blessed from henceforth;" even from the moment of their departure, "they *are* blessed;" they are blessed from the instant that they are "the dead." Their death, and their blessedness in glory in the Lord, are instantaneous. Their blessedness, or glory, lingers not until the last judgment. It has already commenced. And it commenced at their death. Hence, from the hour of their death, the souls of believers are with the Lord in heaven.*

We shall conclude with an examination of two Biblical expressions. The first is "*the bosom of Abraham.*" The souls of departed saints are, as well as that of Lazarus, in "the bosom of Abraham." See Math. viii. 11, 12. This is an exhibition of the joys of heavenly communion and glory, under the familiar figure of an intellectual feast and joyful flow of soul. As the beloved disciple reclined on the bosom of Jesus, at the communion of the first supper: so each of the departed saints in heaven reclines on the bosom of Abraham in glory. That is, they are admitted where that father of the faithful is; they enjoy the intimacy, the communion, and the fellowship, and the happiness, and the glory of heaven, in common with Abraham. We cannot con-

* Schleusner, on the word ἀρτι, observes that when it is construed with the preposition αὐτο, as in this text under review, it denotes the present time, even this very instant. "They are blessed *from the very instant* of their death."

ceive any other meaning that can be attached to this expression. But Abraham, with the other patriarchs, is in no other place than the third heavens, or where "the Lord is, in his kingdom above." "Many shall come," said our Lord, in Math. viii. 11, 12,—“from the east, and from the west; and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.” Now, these patriarchs are dead, and buried. They do not belong to the Lord’s “kingdom of heaven upon the earth.” Hence they are in “the kingdom of heaven above; where the Lord Jesus Christ is; and where “the dead all live to the Lord.” Luke xx. 38. Rom. xiv. 8. This receives additional strength from the contrast in the following verse. To be out of “this state and place of Abraham,” is to be “with the rebellious children of the kingdom, who are cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.” As certainly, therefore, as the latter are in the punishment of Gehenna, that is, hell; so certainly are the former in the glory of heaven.*

It now only remains, in the second place, to decide the import and location of PARADISE. The advocates of the intermediate place take very great pains to show that paradise is NOT heaven: but a “place out of it,” and “apart from it.”

There happens to be only one passage on which they expend their criticism to sustain that opinion. This passage is 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4. “I knew a man in Christ, about fourteen years ago, whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth: such an one was caught up into the third heaven. And I knew such a man, whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth: how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”

Here, say they, are two distinct visions. The apostle is first wrapt up into the third heaven: then, afterwards, in another vision, he is caught up into paradise. Hence they are TWO DISTINCT PLACES; and heaven is *not* paradise.

On this loose and inconclusive logic we beg leave to remark:—1st. That even were we to admit the supposition of two distinct visions, and raptures, it does by no means logically follow that there are two *distinct places* into which the apostle was taken up. All that can be logically inferred is simply this,—that Paul was caught up *twice*, into a place of

* See Bernard De Moor’s dissertation on this, in Tom. vi. p. 607, of his Perpet. Comment. in Markii Compendium.

glory: that in speaking of the first rapture, he called it the third heaven; and in speaking of the second rapture, he called it paradise. The admission of two visions, therefore, will not prove that he was in two different places. This must be obvious to every scholar.

2d. Admitting farther, for the sake of argument, that these were *two* distinct places, it would clearly follow from the words of the apostle, that if there be any difference at all between these two places, paradise must be the principal, and most glorious place in the third heaven. For he speaks of nothing he had seen, and of nothing that he had heard, in the third heaven. It was paradise, that was the grand theatre of display in this sublime exhibition. It was in paradise that he heard unspeakable words, even words "not lawful to be uttered." Now, while this can be explained on our assumption, that heaven and paradise are the same place;—it is quite evident that those who make them two distinct places, must, by the most logical inferences, admit from these words of the apostle, that paradise is the chiefest place in the third heavens!

But, 3d. We can see no decisive evidence in the sacred narrative, that the apostle had two distinct visions: or that he makes heaven and paradise two distinct places. He sets down only one date,—namely fourteen years ago. When he mentions his rapture into the third heavens, he details nothing of aught he had seen or heard. He then repeats the wonderful statement, in order to give it a solemn and impressive emphasis; as if he had said:—"Yes, when speaking on the subject of revelations, and visions, I say, that I knew a man, fourteen years ago, caught up into the third heaven; which I also call paradise, into which I say, that man was caught up; and I call it distinctly by this name of paradise, in order to guard Christians against the whimsical fiction of the Jews, who, without any divine warrant, make paradise to be a place distinct from heaven. Now, in this third heaven, which is also called paradise, I heard unspeakable words—words not lawful to be uttered."

4th. Our Lord assured the dying penitent that "he should to day," that is, forthwith, "be with him in paradise." Now, while dying, our Lord cried with a loud voice,—"Father into thy hands I commend my spirit!" To be in "the hands of God," is unquestionably the same thing as to be WITH HIM where he is, in the heaven of glory. And, assuredly, if "the spirits of just men made perfect" "return to God," and are

with him, according to the testimony of divine revelation; beyond doubt the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, in answer to this parting prayer, went to God in heaven. For he uttered this prayer as one who had fully completed the work given him to accomplish; and who was, thence, to go to the Father, to be with him, henceforth. Hence, in his intercessory prayer in John ch. xvii. he said:—"And, now, I am no more in the world—AND I COME TO THEE." The departed soul of our Lord was, therefore, beyond all controversy, with his Father in the heaven of heavens, while his body was in the grave. By paradise, therefore, he meant heaven, whither he went at death; and into which he conducted the soul of the penitent on the cross. And the expression which the Lord of life, and of all the worlds, visible and invisible, uttered, is very remarkable. He did NOT say,—“I will be with thee;”—But, “THOU SHALT BE WITH ME IN PARADISE!” That is to say,—thou shalt be where I am. But our Lord was in heaven. Wherefore the penitent’s soul, which was in paradise, was in the heaven of heavens.

Lastly:—In Revel. xxii. 2, we have an impressive and heart-stirring description of heaven. No one will venture to deny that this passage reveals the reality, and particularities of the heaven of heavens. It follows consecutively, on the sublime and awful description of the general judgment, and can be referred to no other thing whatever.

Now, in this exhibition of heaven, THE TREE OF LIFE is set forth before us as occupying the midst of heaven. “It is in the midst thereof.” But there is only ONE Tree of Life. And that is the Lord Jesus Christ, the only source of our spiritual and eternal life; the only “way, and truth, and the life.”

Turn we, now, to Revel. ii. 7, and we find these words;—“To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of THE TREE OF LIFE, which is IN THE MIDST OF THE PARADISE OF GOD!” This, the one, only Tree of Life, is in the midst of heaven; and in the midst of the paradise of God. Therefore HEAVEN IS PARADISE: and PARADISE IS HEAVEN. And, hence, there is no *Intermediate place* of departed souls, except what exists in the field of fiction and romance.