

**MANUALS OF
FAITH AND DUTY.
NO. IX. HEAVEN**

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Manuals of Faith and Duty. No. IX. Heaven by George Sumner Weaver

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GEORGE SUMNER WEAVER

**MANUALS OF
FAITH AND DUTY.
NO. IX. HEAVEN**

Manuals of Faith and Duty.

EDITED BY REV. J. S. CANTWELL, D.D.

A SERIES of short books in exposition of prominent teachings of the UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, and the moral and religious obligations of believers. They are prepared by writers selected for their ability to present in brief compass an instructive and helpful Manual on the subject undertaken. The volumes will be affirmative and constructive in statement, avoiding controversy, while specifically unfolding doctrines.

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No. IX.

HEAVEN.

BY

GEORGE SUMNER WEAVER, D.D.

*In my Father's house are many mansions:
if it were not so, I would have told you. I go
to prepare a place for you. And if I go and
prepare a place for you, I will come again, and
receive you unto myself; that where I am,
there ye may be also. — JOHN xiv. 2, 3.*

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Et lies around us like a cloud,
A world we do not see ;
Yet the sweet closing of an eye
May bring us there to be.

Its gentle breezes fan our cheek
Amid our worldly cares ;
Its gentle voices whisper love,
And mingle with our prayers.

Sweet hearts around us thro' and beat,
Sweet helping hands are stirred,
And palpitates the veil between
With breathings almost heard.

HARRIET BECKER STOWE.

HEAVEN.

INTRODUCTION.

EVERYWHERE among intelligent men are there visions and hopes of a world and life better than we are experiencing in the flesh. Universal man is pained with the sense of limitation and imperfection, while he has an active consciousness of capacity for a freer and nobler activity. It is common for men to feel themselves prisoners, while they crave and cannot help craving a free life for all their powers. They long to be more and better than they are. They think and dream of ideal men and lives such as they would be glad to be and live, and feel that they have capacities for. Their limitations are always suggesting freer and larger reaches of activity. Their ignorance intimates knowledge. Their failures make success a most desirable thing. Their sinfulness and its mis-

eries make a holy life the richest of all coveted prizes. Everything on the human side of their experience so suggests an ideal excellency that they have come to live largely under the hope of such excellences to be realized by and by. Their present possessions constantly intimate richer ones to be attained. They see on before and up above a life and a world so desirable that they now live much under inspiration drawn from them.

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never is, but always to be blest."

✓ This hope is the seed of the idea of heaven. It is universal, and hence the anticipation of heaven is universal among men. It is in the nature of man; hence men in the form of men would not be men without it. Men, or creatures so called, would not be men without intellects, nor would they be men without affections; no more would they be men without the hope which gives the visions of heaven. Not revealed any more than natural is the heaven which men anticipate. Not of the Bible any more than of history is the heaven in which men have believed. It is in men to have a vision of heaven ✓ before them. Call this vision by what name we

may, it is that notion of anticipated good which their nature produces.

I. — THE BIBLE HEAVEN.

This is the heaven suggested and illustrated by the great teachers of the Bible. It was not in the beginning a clear and fully revealed outline of the actual world and life of men in the spirit, so much as a recognition of such a world and life, and their wholesomeness and value to men in the flesh. The recognition grew through the ages of the growth of the Bible, till we have the consciousness and clearness of the vision of heaven given in the teachings and life of Him who is the "Light of the World."

The idea of heaven given by the great Teacher is so much a matter of faith that all local and material notions concerning it must be left to the individual conception of it. "We see through a glass darkly" in relation to it. "We walk by faith and not by sight," when we search for "the things not seen which are eternal." We must not expect positive knowledge of the things we hold by faith. The most we can expect is a rational and satisfying belief concerning that