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THE HEAVENLY HOME

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In and About the Bible
The Man of the Ages
Christ Crucified

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INTRODUCTION

(A Radio Message Over a Canadian Station, January, 1932)

The words to which we invite your attention for a short time are recorded in the gospel according to John, chapter fourteen, and verse two: "I go to prepare a place for you."

Christ Jesus died not only to save the world but to prepare a people for the heavenly country. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify" her. Christ returned to heaven to prepare a place for that prepared people. His promise is that He will come again, and receive His people unto Himself.

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01 -- HEAVEN IS A PLACE

Heaven is called a "city," a "country," a "better country," "Father's house." It is the home of the holy, the place of angels, the Eden of delight, the country of a cloudless day, the dwelling place of God. It is a place built by Almighty God on the everlasting hills of glory for the eternal abode of His people; a place of beauty -- a beauty far surpassing the beauty of this world of nature and art. What would this world have been had sin not entered? A world without sin-stain!

The wonders of creation as revealed by astronomy suggest the possibility of a wonderful and glorious heaven. "They measure vast distances by the velocity of light; light travels at the rate of one hundred and eighty-five thousand miles a second, eleven million miles a minute. Some of the fixed stars are so far away that it would take light three thousand years to come from one of these stars to the earth. Mars is one hundred and thirty-one million miles from the Sun. Jupiter is four hundred and fifty-seven million miles from the Sun. Saturn is eight hundred and eighty-one million miles from the Sun. The distance between Mars and Jupiter is three hundred and thirty-nine million miles. Uranus is one billion, seven hundred and seventy-one million miles from the Sun. Neptune is two billion, seven hundred and seventy-five million miles from the Sun," How great the God who made the world! And can He not make a wonderful home for His people where they may dwell eternally?

"And He carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations." The sacred writer then gives the measurement of the city, and then a description of the material. "The building of the wall of it," he said, "was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, crysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."

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02 -- HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF PERFECTION

"He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse -- perfect

government; "and His servants shall serve Him" -- perfect service; "and they shall see His face" -- perfect union; "and His name shall be in their foreheads" -- perfect possession; "and there shall be no night there" -- perfect day; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light" -- perfect glory; "and they shall reign for ever and ever" -- perfect blessedness; "they shall hunger no more" -- perfect supply; "the Lamb shall lead them" -- perfect guidance; "they shall go no more out" -- perfect safety. Hallelujah!

There is perfect emancipation in heaven. What a wonderful thing is deliverance! What did it mean to the four million colored folk when Abraham Lincoln declared their emancipation? It is recorded that in Richmond, Virginia, "they had secured three of the most eloquent speakers of their race. At the appointed time, one of them arose, and said: "Fathers and mothers, you have stood on the auction block for the last time." He could go no farther. They cried, laughed, and shouted. The second speaker arose and said: "Young men and young women, you have heard the crack of the slave driver's whip for the last time." He could say no more. The assembly came to their feet. They walked, wept, shouted, laughed, and danced for joy. Finally the third speaker arose, and said: "Boys and girls, and babies, you have been sold from your homes and torn from the fond embrace of your parents and taken to distant states to be nursed by a strange mammy for the last time." That was all he could say. The congregation wept, danced and shouted, till there was no time left for anything else.

You will recall, perhaps, in British history, how that the British Parliament announced that slavery in the West Indies would end at a certain time in a given year. Many, many of the old slaves wished to see that moment, but died without the sight. Nearing the long looked-for moment, great preparations were made for the celebration. A sentinel was to stand on the mountain top and watch for the first ray of light that would break in the East that morning; a little farther down the mountain-side stood another, and on down till the valley would be reached. There thousands were gathered waiting for that precious moment. Finally, the man on the mountain peak saw the [first] ray of light, and shouted, "Liberty"; the next below shouted it on; the next did the same, till presently the whole valley and mountain reverberated with joyful shouts of liberty.

The glorious emancipation that heaven will bring includes freedom from everything that would mar eternal happiness. There will be no weariness there, but perfect rest.

What a sweet word is the word, "Rest!" How much it means to the weary; that weary body; that weary mind; that weary soul! Rest, sweet rest! Heaven is the eternal Sabbath of rest. Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Here is rest from the burden of guilt. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, and ye shall find rest unto your soul." Here is rest obtained by learning of Him, going with Him.

"Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast;
Let us all in thee inherit;
Let us find the second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,

Set our hearts at liberty."

But this is not the end. It is rather a good beginning. That eternal Sabbath of rest awaits God's people.

Heaven -- its beautifully adorned hills, gold-paved streets, diamond walls, sublime rivers, immortal atmosphere; these are the accomplishment of the Almighty God. Heaven is forever fadeless. Decay never comes, beauty is never marred, flowers never fade, sorrow never enters, light never goes out, tears are gone forever. Wonderful! Ponder the thought with us; a place free from sorrow -- no tears, "God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes. When God wipes away the tears, they are gone for ever. No enemy there; no sin; no sickness; no thirst; no hunger; no temptation; no aching head; no troublesome cough; no weary sleepless nights; no children's diseases; no burning fever; no tuberculosis; no cancer (these dread diseases); no funerals in heaven;

"No graves on the hill-side of glory."

Rest from sorrow! A few days ago, I visited a home of mourning. There lay in a little white casket the precious form of a child of only five years, the only child of the home, a little darling girl, loved by all who saw and knew her. There she lay as if sleeping; no expression of sorrow on her sweet face. She lay as if she slept. Indeed, she did sleep. Asleep in the arms of Jesus.

While looking on that tender form, the form of the little darling, this thought came into my mind; "How cruel is death!" Immediately another thought followed; "Yes, it is cruel; for it has taken away from kind and loving parents a sweet and precious little girl. It has taken a little lamb from the fold. But after all, this cruel death is but a medium through which this darling child reaches the better world."

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?" "No more death!"

"There is no death.

An angel form walked o'er the earth,
And took our best loved one away,
And then we call her dead."

"There is no death.

The stars go down, to shine upon some fairer shore,
And bright in heaven's jeweled crown,
They shine for ever more."

It is said of Columbus that "the instinct of an unknown continent burned in him." This is true of the child of God with respect to heaven. There is a longing for home.

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03 -- HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF PERFECT INHABITANTS

As to their number, listen to this; "I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen; Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

There is in this record a stern rebuke to narrow sectarianism. What a multitude up there in the heavenly country! Thank God!

There is also in this record the fact of conscious personality there. "What are these?" The answer is that they are from the earth, and they came up out of great tribulation.

The character of the multitude is also stated. "White robes," which signify purity of character, fullness of joy. Bridal attire is white. "They washed their robes," the washing of regeneration; "and made them white," the cleansing of sanctification, "in the blood of the Lamb." Through the atonement of Jesus Christ they were enabled to appropriate its benefits to the extent of "the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

What a holy company! God will be there. Jesus Christ our Redeemer and Saviour will be there. Stephen in the hour of death, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." The Holy Spirit will be there. An innumerable multitude of angels will be there. All the saints of all the ages will be there. Why, there will be an army of Christian martyrs alone amounting to the millions. My precious father will be there. I shall see him again, for I am bound for that beautiful city. One of the first things I expect to tell him when I get there is how much I have appreciated him. He did not leave me riches, but he did leave me an inheritance in Christian character for which I shall always praise God. My dear mother is near the river. She will soon be there. What a great heritage is a good mother; a true, humble, hard working woman was mother; nothing was too hard for her to do for us; no suffering and hardship too great, if only she could help her children. She will soon be in that country and enjoy her eternal rest. God bless my mother! I have some brothers and sisters over there. Then, there will be those whom I have been enabled under God to help prepare for that place. I shall present them in that day. One recoils to even suggest this, but having been called by God to preach His gospel, I know there are those whom He has helped me to help. Thank God!

"When I enter that beautiful city
Far, far from earth's sorrows and care,
I want to hear somebody saying,
It was you that invited me there.

"When at home in that mansion eternal,
And the saved all around me appear,
I want to have somebody tell me,
It was you that invited me here."

"A little girl in a family of my acquaintance, a lovely and precious child, lost her mother at an age too early to fix the loving features in her remembrance. She was beautiful; and as the bud of her heart unfolded, it seemed, as if won by that mother's prayers, to turn instinctively heavenward. The sweet, conscientious, and prayer-loving mother's child was the idol of the bereaved family. But she faded away early. She would lie upon the lap of the friend who took a mother's kind care of her, and winding one wasted arm around her neck, would say, 'Now tell me about my mamma!' And when the oft-told tale had been repeated, she would ask softly, 'Take me into the parlor; I want to see my mamma.' The request was never refused; and the affectionate sick child would lie for hours, gazing on her mother's portrait. But

'Pale and wan she grew, and weakly
Bearing all her pain so meekly,
That to them she still grew dearer,
As the trial hour grew nearer.'

"That hour came at last, and the weeping neighbors assembled to see the child die. The dew of death was already on the flower, as its sun of life was going down. The little chest heaved faintly, spasmodically.

"'Do you know me, darling?' sobbed, close in her ear, the voice that was dearest; but it awoke no answer. All at once, a brightness as if from the upper world, burst over the child's colorless countenance. The eyelids opened, and the lips parted; the wan cuddling hands flew up, in the little one's impulsive effort, as she looked piercingly in the far above.

"'Mother!' she cried, with surprise and transport in her voice and passed with that breath to her mother's bosom.

"Said a distinguished divine, who stood by that bed of joyous death, 'If I had never believed in the ministration of departed ones before, I could not doubt it now'" (Quoted from "Man All Immortal," by Dr. Clark, pp. 209-212).

After looking at her husband's picture, then with a far-away look of mingled rapture and awe, Mrs. Fletcher exclaimed, "I see him! I see him! Hark! What is that? I thought it was the rustle of angel's wings.

There is, however, another side to this question. In the same Sacred Record, in the same chapter, where God describes the characters who will enter and enjoy that heavenly home, He enumerates and describes the character of those who will not enter, nor, in consequence, enjoy that glorious place.

Here it is: "The fearful, and the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." In the twenty-seventh verse, it says, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." In the next chapter, chapter twenty-two, and

verses fourteen and fifteen it reads, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

In view of this, may we suggest that you take up the question of the hymn writer:

"Is my name written there,
On the page bright and fair;
In the book of Thy kingdom,
Is my name written there?"

It is not so much, what church record it is in as whether it is in the Lamb's book of life.

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04 -- HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF ETERNAL GLORY

Let us turn again to the Sacred Record. Revelation the twenty-first chapter, and verses twenty-two to twenty-seven; "And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."

Note the expressions, "The glory of God did lighten it," "the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it," "they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."

The word "glory" is hard to define, yet the Bible says a lot about it. It is spoken of as adornment, "glory spoiled," "glory departed." It suggests the idea of honour, rarity, purity, weight, beauty, and such like. "The glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord." The glory of God means often the presence of God. We read about "the Son of Man coming in His glory," "the glory of His power," "the throne of His glory." God is the "Father of glory," and all revelations of Him in nature and grace are revelations of His glory; the glory of His wisdom, the glory of His power, the glory of His love, the glory of His grace. What glory in that home, that heavenly home, when the great redeeming effort by the Holy Trinity is finally accomplished, and all the holy out of every kindred, nation and tongue, gather home for ever. Glory be to God!

"For ever with the Lord.
Amen. So let it be.
Life from the dead is in that word;
'Tis immortality."

Heaven is beyond description. The most wonderful figures in Scripture are used to convey to us a little at least of what heaven is like, but figures fail. Human language is too poor to do justice to such a place as heaven!

To those who say, "There is no such place, or that it is just a dream," I would answer in the words of the good old Christian sister, who, when an infidel was trying to tell her that her belief of heaven was only a dream, said, "Hush, hush! If it is only a dream, please don't wake me.

Arthur F. Ingler in his hymn entitled, "The Pearly White City," beautifully describes heaven thus:

"There's a holy and beautiful city,
Whose Builder and Maker is God;
John saw it descending from heaven,
When Patmos in exile, he trod.
Its high, massive wall is of jasper,
The city itself is pure gold;
And when my frail tent here is folded,
Mine eyes shall its glories behold.

"No sin is allowed in that city.
And nothing defiling or mean;
No pain and no sickness can enter,
No crepe in that city is seen;
Earth's sorrows and cares are forgotten,
No tempter is there to annoy;
No parting words ever are spoken,
There's nothing to hurt and destroy.

"No heartaches are known in that city,
No tears ever moisten the eye;
There's no disappointment in heaven,
No envy or strife in the sky;
The saints are all sanctified, wholly,
They live in sweet harmony there;
My heart is now set on that city,
And some day its blessings I'll share.

"My loved ones are gathering yonder,
My friends are fast passing away;
And soon I may join that bright number,
And dwell in eternity's day;
They're safe now in glory with Jesus,
Their trials and battles are past;
They over-came sin and the Tempter.
They've reached that fair city at last."

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05 -- HEAVEN IS A PREPARED PLACE FOR A PREPARED PEOPLE

I think I hear some dear soul say, "I want to go to that heavenly home, but what should I do to get there?"

There is but one answer, and it is from the Word: "Prepare to meet thy God." "Be ye also ready." Prepare for heaven.

This world in which we live is a preparatory world. Every vocation worthy of the name calls for preparedness, and so it is true spiritually, both in life and in death. When we leave this world, the state of soul, the condition of character in which we are at the time, will determine our state and place in the spirit world. We shall go to our own place, that is, to the place determined by our character. This is true of both good and bad.

There are two passages of Scripture touching the question before us. The first contains the words of Jesus Christ, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The second passage is recorded in Hebrews 12:14, "Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord;" that is to enjoy Him here and eternally.

These two passages correspond beautifully with the statement of Scripture respecting glorified saints. "They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Note: they washed their robes and made them white down here. "Therefore are they before the throne." They had a lot of heaven in their souls here. The heavenly home is but the completion of what had already begun on earth.

The preparedness is through the blood; and here is the promise: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins; and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Here is my closing word with the city in view; the words of that expressive stanza; repeat it with me, will you?

"The cleansing stream I see, I see,
I trust, and Oh, it cleanseth me!"

"It cleanseth me now,
Hallelujah to God,
I'm out on the promise,
I'm under the blood."

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THE END