

HEAVEN

by

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"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" (Revelation 21:23).

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CHAPTER SIX

HEAVEN: ITS REWARDS

**"Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour" (I Corinthians 3:8).
"My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12).**

Not Here! Not Here!

Not here! not here! Not where the sparkling waters
Fade into mocking sands as we draw near;
Where, in the wilderness, each footstep falters!
"I shall be satisfied;" but oh, not here!

There is a land where every pulse is thrilling
With rapture earth's sojourners may not know,
Where heaven's repose the weary heart is stilling,
And peacefully life's storm-tossed currents flow.

"Satisfied! Satisfied!" The spirit's yearning
For sweet companionship with kindred minds.
The silent love that here meets no returning,
The inspiration which no language finds.

"I shall be satisfied." The soul's vague longings
The aching void which nothing earthly fills!
Oh! What desires upon my soul are thronging
As I look upward to the heavenly hills.

Thither my weak and weary steps are tending.

Saviour and Lord, with thy frail child abide;
Guide me toward Home, where, all my wanderings ended,
I then shall see Thee, and "**be satisfied.**"

- Anon.

If I understand things correctly, whenever you find men or women who are looking to be rewarded here for doing right, they are unqualified to work for GOD: because if they are looking for the applause of men, looking for reward in this life, it will disqualify them for the service of GOD, because they are all the while compromising truth.

They are afraid of hurting some one's feelings.

They are afraid that some one is going to say something against them, or there will be some newspaper articles written against them. Now, we must trample the world under our feet if we are going to get our reward hereafter. If we live for GOD we must suffer persecution. The kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light are at war, and have been, and will be as long as Satan is permitted to reign in this world. As long as the kingdom of darkness is permitted to exist, there will be a conflict, and if you want to be popular in the kingdom of GOD, if you want to be popular in Heaven, and get a reward that shall last forever, you will have to be unpopular here.

If you seek the applause of men, you can't have the Lord say "**Well done**" at the end of the journey. You can't have both. Why? Because this world is at war with GOD. This idea that the world is getting better all the while is false. The old natural heart is just as much at enmity with GOD as it was when Cain slew Abel.

Sin leaped into the world full grown in Cain. And from the time that Cain was born into the world to the present, man by nature has been at war with GOD. This world was not established in grace, and we have to fight "the world, the flesh, and the devil;" and if we fight the world, the world won't like us; and if we fight the flesh, the flesh won't like us. We have to mortify the flesh. We have to crucify the old man and put him under. Then, by and by, we will get our reward, and a glorious reward it will be.

We read in Luke 16:15:

"And He said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

We must go right against the current of this world.

If the world has nothing to say against us, we can be pretty sure that the Lord JESUS CHRIST has very little to say for us. There are those who do not like to go against the current of the world. They say they know this and that is wrong, but they do not say a word against it lest it might make them unpopular. If we expect to get the reward we must fight the good fight of faith,

For all such, as Paul has said, **"there is laid up... a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give [us] at that day."**

FEAR OF DEATH

How little do we realize the meaning of the word ETERNITY! The whole time between the creation of the world and the ending of it would not make a day in eternity. In time, it is like the infinity of space, whose center is everywhere and whose boundary is nowhere. We read in the Epistle to the Hebrews:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

There are a great many of GOD's professed children who live in continual bondage, in the constant fear of death. I believe that it is dishonoring GOD. I believe that it is not His will to have one of His children live in fear for one moment. If you know the truth as it is in CHRIST, there need be no fear, there need be no dread, because death will only hasten you on to glory; and your names are already there.

And then the next thought is for those who are dear to us. I believe that it is not only our privilege to have our names written in Heaven, but those of the children whom GOD has given us; and our hearts ought to go right out for them. The promise is not only to us, but to our children. Many a father's and many a mother's heart is burdened with anxiety for the salvation of their children. If your own name is there, let your next aim in life be to get the children whom GOD has given you there also.

A mother was dying in one of our Eastern cities a few years ago, and she had a large family of children. She died of consumption, and the children were brought in to her one by one as she was sinking. She gave the oldest one her last message and her dying blessing; and as the next one was brought in she put her hand upon its head and gave it her blessing; and then the next one was brought in, and the next, until at last they brought in the little infant. She took it to her bosom and pressed to her loving heart, and her friends saw that it was hastening her end; that she was excited, and as they went to take the little child from her, she said: "My husband, I charge you to bring all these children home with you." And so GOD charges us parents to bring our children home with us; not only to have our own names written in Heaven, but those of our children also.

An eminent Christian worker in New York told me a story that affected me very much.

A father had a son who had been sick some time, but he did not consider him dangerously ill; until one day he came home to dinner and found his wife weeping, and he asked, "What is the trouble?"

"There has been a great change in our boy since morning," the mother said, "and I am afraid he is dying; I wish you to go in and see him, and, if you think he is, I wish you to tell him so, for I cannot bear to."

The father went in and sat down by the bed-side, and he placed his hand upon his forehead, and he could feel the cold, damp sweat of death, and knew its cold, icy hand was feeling for the cords of life, and that his boy was going to be taken away, and he said to him:

"My son, do you know you are dying?" The little fellow looked up at him and said:

"No; am I? Is this death that I feel stealing over me, father?"

"Yes, my son, you are dying."

"Will I live the day out?"

"No; you may die at any moment."

He looked up to his father, and he said: "Well, I shall be with JESUS to-night, won't I, father?"

And the father answered: "Yes, my boy, you will spend to-night with the Saviour," and the father turned away to conceal the tears, that the little boy might not see him weep; but he saw the tears, and he said:

"Father, don't you weep for me; when I get to Heaven I will go straight to JESUS and tell Him that ever since I can remember you have tried to lead me to Him."

I have three children, and the greatest desire of my heart is that they may be saved; that I may know that their names are written in the Book of Life. I may be taken from them early; I may leave them in this changing world without a father's care; but I would rather have my children say that of me after I am dead and gone, or if they die before me, I would rather they should take that message to the Master - that ever since they can remember I have tried to lead them to the Master - than to have a monument over me reaching to the skies.

We ought not to look upon death as we do. Bishop Heber has written of a dead friend:

"Thou art gone to the grave! but we will not deplore thee.
Though sorrow and darkness encompass the tomb;
Thy Saviour has passed through its portals before thee,
And the lamp of His love is thy guide through the gloom.

Thou are gone to the grave! We no longer behold thee,
Nor tread the rough paths of the world by thy side;
But the wide arms of Mercy are spread to enfold thee,
And sinners may die, for the Sinless has died."

The roll is being called, and one after another summoned away, but if the names of our loved ones are there, if we know that they are saved, how sweet it is, after they have left us, to think that we shall meet them by and by; that we shall see them in the morn when the night has worn

away.

During the late war a young man lay on a cot, and they heard him say, "Here, here!" and some one went to his cot and wanted to know what he wanted, and he said, "Hark! Hush, don't you hear them?" "Hear whom?" he was asked. "They are calling the roll of Heaven," he said, and pretty soon he answered, "Here!" - and he was gone. If our names are in the Book of Life, by and by when the name is called, we can say with Samuel, "**Here am I!**" and fly away to meet Him. And if our children are called away early, O, it is so sweet to think that they died in CHRIST; that the great Shepherd gathers them in His arms and carries them in His bosom, and that we shall meet them by and by.

PAUL, THE CHRISTIAN HERO

The way to get to Heaven is to be saved through faith in JESUS CHRIST.

We get salvation as a gift, but we have to work it out, just as if we got a gold mine for a gift.

I do not get a crown by joining the church, or renting a pew.

There was Paul. He won his crown. He had many a hard fight; he met Satan on many a battle-field, and he overcame him and wore the crown. It would take about ten thousand of the average Christians of this day or any other to make one of Paul. When I read the life of that Apostle, I blush for the Christianity of the nineteenth century. It is a weak and sickly thing.

See what he went through. He five times was scourged. The old Roman custom of scourging was to take the prisoner and bind his wrists together and bend him over in a stooping posture, and the Roman soldier would bring the lash, braided with sharp pieces of steel down upon the bare back of the prisoner and cut him through the skin, so that men sometimes died in the act of being scourged. But Paul says he was scourged five different times. Now if we should get one stripe upon our backs what a whining there would be; there would be forty publishers after us before the sun went down, and they would want to publish our lives, that they could make capital out of them. But Paul says, "**Five times received I forty stripes, save one.**" That was nothing for him. Take your stand by his side.

"Paul, you have been beaten by these Jews four times, and they are going to give you thirty-nine stripes more; what are you going to do after you get out of the difficulty? What are you going to do about it all?"

"Do?" says he, "I will do this one thing; I will press toward the mark of the prize of my high calling; I am on my way to get my crown." He was not going to lose his crown. "Don't think that a few stripes will turn me away; these light afflictions are nothing."

And so they put on thirty-nine more stripes.

Paul had sprung into the race for CHRIST, as it were, and was leaping toward Heaven. If you will allow me the expression, the devil got his match when he met Paul. He never switched off to a side-track. He never sat down to write a letter to defend himself. All the strength that he had he

gave to CHRIST. He never gave a particle to the world nor to himself to defend himself. "**This one thing I do,**" he said, "I am not going to lose the crown." See that no man take your crown.

"Thrice beaten with rods." Take your stand again beside him.

"Now, Paul, they have beaten you twice, and they are going to beat you again. What are you going to do? Are you going to continue preaching? If you are, let me give you a little advice. Now, don't be quite so radical; be a little more conservative; just use a little finer language, and, so to speak, cover up the cross with beautiful words and flowery sentences, and tell men that they are pretty good after all; that they are not so bad, and try and pacify the Jews; make friends with them, and get in with the world, and the world will think more of you. Don't be so earnest; don't be so radical, Paul; now come, take our advice. What are you going to do?"

"Do?" he says, "**This one thing I do... I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling.**" So they put on the rods, and every blow lifts him nearer GOD.

Take your stand with him again. They begin to stone him. That is the way they killed those who did not preach to suit them.

It seems as if he was about to be paid back in his own coin, for when Stephen was stoned to death, Paul, then known as Saul, cheered on the crowd.

"Now, Paul, this is growing serious; hadn't you better take back some of the things you have said about JESUS? What are you going to do?"

"Do?" he says, "if they take my life I will only get my crown the sooner."

He would not budge an inch. He had something that the world could not give; he had something it could not take away; he had eternal life, and he had in store a crown of glory.

THESE LIGHT AFFLICTIONS

Three times was he shipwrecked; a day and a night in the deep. Look at that mighty apostle, a whole day and night in the deep. There he was - shipwrecked, and for what? Was it to make money? He was not after money. He was just going from city to city, and town to town, to preach the glorious gospel of JESUS CHRIST, and to lift up the cross wherever he had opportunity. He went down to Corinth and preached eighteen months, and he didn't have a lot of the leading ministers of Corinth to come on the platform and sit by his side when he preached.

There was not a man who stood by him.

When he reached Corinth he had none of the leading business men to stand by him and advise him; but the little tent-maker arrives in Corinth a perfect stranger, and the first thing he does is to find a place where he can make a tent; he does not go to a hotel; his means will not allow it; he goes where he can make his bread by the sweat of his brow. Think of that great apostle making a tent, and then getting on the corner of a street and preaching, and perhaps once in a while he would get into a synagogue, but the Jews would turn him out; they did not want to hear him

preach anything about JESUS the Crucified.

When I read of the life of such a man, how I blush to think how sickly and dwarfed Christianity is at the present time, and how many hundreds there are who never think of working for the Son of GOD and honoring CHRIST.

Yet when he wrote that letter back to Corinth, we find him taking an inventory of some things he had. He is rich, he says, "**In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.**" This last must have been the hardest of all. "**In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often; in hunger and thirst, in fastings often; in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.**" (II Corinthians 11:26-28).

These are only some of the things that he summed up. Do you know what made him so exceedingly happy? It was because he believed the Scripture; he believed the Sermon on the Mount. We profess to believe it; we pretend to believe it; but few of us more than half believe it. Listen to one sentence in that sermon: "**Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven,**" when you are persecuted. Now persecution was about all that Paul had.

That was his capital, and he had a good deal of it; he had laid by a good many persecutions, and he was to get a great reward.

CHRIST says: "**Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven.**" If JESUS CHRIST spoke of it as "**great**" it must be indeed wonderful. We call things great that may look very small to JESUS CHRIST; and things that look very small to us may look very large to Him.

When the great CHRIST, the Creator of Heaven and earth, He who formed the heavens and the earth by His mighty power, when He calls it a great reward, what must it be?

Perhaps some people said to the Apostle to the Gentiles: "Now, Paul, you are meeting with too much opposition; you are suffering too much."

Hear him reply: "**Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.**"

"**Our light affliction,**" he calls it. We would have called it pretty hard, pretty heavy, would we not?"

But he says: "These light afflictions are nothing; think of the glory before me, and think of the crowning time; think of the reward that is laid up for me. I am on my way; the Righteous Judge will give it to me when the time comes;" and that is what filled his soul with joy; it was the thought of reward that the Lord had in store for him.

Now, my friends, let us just for a minute think of what Paul accomplished. Think of going out, as it were, among the heathen; the first missionary to preach to these men, who were so full of

wickedness, so full at enmity and bitterness, the glorious gospel of JESUS CHRIST, and to tell them that the man who died outside the walls of the city of Jerusalem the death of a common prisoner, a common felon, in the sight of the world, was the promised CHRIST; to tell them that they had to believe in that crucified Man in order to enter the kingdom of GOD.

Think of the dark mountain that rose up before him; think of the opposition; think of the bitter persecution, and then think of the trifles in our way.

SONGS IN PRISON

But a great many worldly people think Paul's life was a failure. Probably his enemies, when they put him in prison, thought that would silence him; but do you know that I believe to-day Paul thanks GOD more for prisons, for stripes, for the persecution and opposition that he suffered, than for anything else that happened to him here?

The very things we do not like are sometimes the very best for us.

Christians probably might not have these glorious Epistles, if Paul had not been thrown into prison. There he took up his pen and wrote letters to the Christians in Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae, and to Philemon and Timothy.

Look at the two Epistles that he wrote to the Corinthians. How much has been done for the world by these Epistles. What a blessing they have been to the church of GOD; how great a light they have thrown on many a man's life. But we might not have had those Epistles if it had not been for persecution.

Perhaps John Bunyan blesses GOD more to-day for Bedford jail than anything that happened to him. Probably we would not have the Pilgrim's Progress if he had not been thrown into that prison. Satan thought he accomplished a great deal when he shut up Bunyan for twelve years and six months; but what a blessing it was to the world; and I believe Paul blesses GOD today for the Philippian jail, and for the imprisonment he suffered in Rome, because it gave him time to write those blessed letters.

Talk of Alexander making the world tremble with the tread of his armies, and of Caesar and Napoleon's power, but here is a little tent-maker, who, without an army, turned the world upside down.

Why?

Because GOD Almighty was with him.

Paul says in one place: "**None of these things move me.**" (Acts 20:24). They threw him in prison, but it was all the same; it did not move him. When he was at Corinth and Athens preaching, it made no difference. He just "**pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling.**"

If GOD wanted him to go through prisons to win the prize, it was all the same to him. They put

him in prison, but they put the Almighty in with him, and Paul was so linked to JESUS that they could not separate them. He would rather be in prison with CHRIST than out of prison without Him. He would a thousand times rather be cast into prison with the Son of GOD and suffer a little persecution for a few days here, than to be living at ease without Him.

He heard the cry, "**Come over into Macedonia, and help us.**" He went over and preached, and the first thing that happened to him was that he was put into the Philippian jail. Now, if he had been as fainthearted as most of us, he would have been disappointed and cast down. There would have been a great complaint. He would have said: "This is a strange Providence; whatever brought me here? I thought the Lord called me here; here I am in prison in a strange city; how did I ever get here? How will I ever get out of this place? I have no money; I have no friends; I have no attorney; I have no one to intercede for me, and here I am."

Paul and Silas were not only in prison, but their feet were made fast in the stocks. There they were, in the inner prison, a dark, cold, damp dungeon. But at midnight the other prisoners heard a strange sound. They had never heard anything like it before. They heard singing. I do not know what song those two imprisoned evangelists sang, but I know one thing, it was not "a doleful sound from the tombs". You know we have a hymn, "Hark, from the tombs a doleful sound." They did not sing that, but the Bible tells us they sang praises. That was a queer place to sing praises, was it not?

I suppose it was time for the evening prayers, and that they had just had their evening prayer and then sang their evening hymn. And GOD answered their prayers, and the old prison shook, and the chains dropped, and the prison doors were opened. Yes, yes; I have no doubt that in glory he thanks GOD that he went to jail and that the Philippian jailer became converted.

SWEPT INTO GLORY

But look at him at Rome. Nero has signed his death warrant. Take your stand and look at the little man. He is small; in the sight of the world he is contemptible (II Corinthians 12:10); the world frowns upon him. Go to the palace of the king and talk about that criminal - about Paul - and you will see a sneer on their countenances.

"Oh, he is a fanatic," they say; "he has gone mad."

I wish the world was filled with such fanatics. I tell you what we want to-day is a few fanatics like him; men who fear nothing but sin and love no one but GOD.

Rome never had such a conqueror within her walls.

Rome never had such a mighty man as Paul within her boundaries. Although the world looked down upon him, and perhaps he looked very small and contemptible, yet in the sight of Heaven he was the mightiest man who ever trod the streets of Rome. Probably there will never be another one like him traveling those streets. The Son of GOD walked with him, and the form of the Fourth was with him. But go into that prison; there he is; officials come to him and tell him that Nero has signed his death-warrant. He does not tremble; he is not afraid.

"Paul, are you not sorry you have been so zealous for CHRIST? It is going to cost you your life; if you had to live it over again, would you give it to JESUS of Nazareth?" What do you think the old warrior would reply?

See that eye light up as he says: "If I had ten thousand lives I should give every one of those lives to CHRIST, and the only regret I have is that I did not commence earlier and serve Him better; the only regret I have now is that I ever lifted my voice against JESUS of Nazareth."

"But they are going to behead you."

"Well, they may take my head, but the Lord has my heart. I care nothing about my head; the Lord has my heart and has had it for years. They cannot separate me from the Lord, and when my head is taken off, I shall depart to be with CHRIST, which is far better."

And they led him out. I do not know at what hour; perhaps it was early in the morning. There is a tradition that tells us that they led him two miles out of the city. Look at the little tent-maker as he goes through the streets of Rome with a firm tread. Look at that giant as he moves through the streets. He is on his way to execution. Take your stand by his side and hear him talk. He is talking of the glory beyond.

He says: "**Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.** I shall see the King in His beauty to-night. I have longed to be with Him; I have longed to see Him. This is the day of my crowning!"

The world scoffed at him. but he did not heed its scoffing. He had something the world had not; burning within him he had a love and zeal which the world knew nothing about. Ah, the love that Paul had for JESUS CHRIST! But, oh, the greater love the Lord JESUS had for Paul!

The hour has come. The way they used to behead them in those days was for the prisoner to bend his head, when a Roman soldier took a sword and cut it off. The hour had come, and I seem to see Paul, with a joyful countenance, bending his blessed head, as the soldier's sword comes down and sets his spirit free.

If our eyes could look as Elisha's looked, we might have seen him leap into a chariot of light like Elijah; we would have seen him go sweeping through limitless space.

Look at him now as he mounts higher and higher; look at him, see him move up; up-up-up-ever upward.

Look at him yonder!

See! He is entering now the Eternal City of the glorified saints, the blissful abode of the Saviour's redeemed. The prize he so long has sought is at hand. See the gates yonder; how they fly wide open. See the herald angels on the shining battlements of Heaven. Hear the glad shout that is passed along, "He is coming! He is coming!" And he goes sweeping through the pearly gates, along the shining way, to the very throne of GOD, and CHRIST stands there and says: "**Well done, thou good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.**"

Just think of hearing the Master say it. Will not that be enough for everything?

O friends, your turn and mine will come by-and-by, if we are but faithful. Let us see that we do not lose the crown. Let us awake and put on the whole armor of GOD; let us press into the conflict; it is a glorious privilege; and then to us too, as to the glorified of old, will come that blessed welcome from our glorified Lord:

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

~ END OF BOOK ~