

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 FOUR

HEAVEN: ITS CERTAINTY

"In My Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2)

I SHINE IN THE LIGHT OF GOD

I shine in the light of GOD;
His likeness stamps my brow;
Through the Valley of Death my feet have trod;
And I reign in glory now!

No breaking heart is here,
No keen and thrilling pain,
No wasted cheek where the frequent tear
Hath rolled and left its stain.

* * *

O friends of mortal years,
The trusted and the true,
Ye are watching still in the valley of tears
But I wait to welcome you.

Do I forget? O no!
For memory's golden chain
Shall bind my heart to the hearts below
Till they meet to touch again.

Each link is strong and bright,

And love's electric flame
Flows freely down, like a river of light,
To the world from whence I came.

Do you mourn when another star
Shines out from the glittering sky?
Do you weep when the raging voice of war
And the storms of conflict die?

Then why should your tears run down,
And your hearts be sorely riven,
For another gem in the Saviour's crown,
And another soul in Heaven?

- From an English Friend

There are some people who depend so much upon their reason that they reason away GOD. They say GOD is not a person we can ever see. They say GOD is a Spirit. So He is, but He is a person too; and became a man and walked the earth once. Scripture tells us very plainly that GOD has a dwelling-place. There is no doubt whatever about that. A dwelling-place indicates personality. GOD's dwelling-place is in Heaven. He has a dwelling-place, and we are going to be inmates of it. Therefore we shall see Him.

In I Kings, 8:30, we read:

"And hearken Thou to the supplication of Thy servant, and of Thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place; and hear Thou in Heaven Thy dwelling place; and when Thou hearest, forgive."

This idea that Heaven is everywhere and nowhere is not according to Scripture. Heaven is GOD's habitation, and when CHRIST came on earth He taught us to pray: **"Our Father, which art in Heaven."** This habitation is spoken of as "the city of eternal life."

Think of a city without a cemetery - they have no dying there. If there could be such a city as that found on this earth what a rush there would be to it! How men would try to reach that city! You cannot find one on the face of this earth. A city without tears - GOD wipes away all the tears up yonder. This is a time of weeping, but by-and-by there will be a time when GOD shall call us where there will be no tears.

A city without pain, a city without sorrow, without sickness, without death. There is no darkness there. **"The Lamb is the light thereof."** It needs no sun, it needs no moon. The paradise of Eden was as nothing compared with this one. The tempter came into Eden and triumphed, but in that city nothing that defileth shall ever enter. There will be no tempter there.

Think of a place where temptation cannot come:

- Think of a place where we shall be free from sin; where pollution cannot enter, and where the

righteous shall reign forever.

- Think of a city that is not built with hands, where the buildings do not grow old with time; a city whose inhabitants are numbered by no census, except the Book of Life, which is the heavenly directory.

Think of a city through whose streets runs no tide of business, where no hearses with their nodding plumes creep slowly with their sad burdens to the cemetery; a city without griefs or graves, without sins or sorrows, without marriages or mournings, without births or burials; a city which glories in having JESUS for its King, angels for its guards, and whose citizens are saints!

We believe this is just as much a place and just as much a city as is New York, London or Paris. We believe in it a good deal more, because earthly cities will pass away, but this city will remain forever.

It has foundations whose builder and maker is GOD.

- Some of the grandest cities the world has ever known have not had foundations strong enough to last.

TYRE AND SIDON

Take for instance Tyre and Sidon. They were rival cities something like New York and Philadelphia, or St. Louis and Chicago.

When the patriarch Jacob gave his sons his blessing, he spoke of Sidon. In the splitting up of Canaan among the tribes of Israel by Joshua, Tyre and Sidon seem to have fallen to the lot of Asher, though the old inhabitants were never fully driven out.

We read in Mark: "**Jesus withdrew Himself with His disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea and from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things He did, came unto Him.**" We find in Acts 27:3, that the Captain of the guards who was taking Paul prisoner to appear before Caesar at Rome, when the ship touched at Sidon let Paul go and visit some of his friends there to refresh himself. From this it has been inferred that at that time there must have been a Christian church there, although the people generally worshiped the Queen of Heaven, who was represented as crowned with the crescent moon.

There are some persons now, you know, who adore a Queen of Heaven, whom they picture with the moon beneath her feet. Even the Hebrews, when they saw "**the moon walking in brightness,**" along the clear skies of Palestine, impressed by its beauty, fell into the same idolatry.

Jeremiah says:

"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their

dough, to make cakes to the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods."

In answer to the prophet's reproof we find them saying, in the 44th chapter, beginning at the 16th verse:

"As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee, but we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done."

Is it any wonder that a little farther on we should find addressed to them this language:

"The Lord could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, and because of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day."

In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, and there will be no "Queen" in Heaven.

Tyre is mentioned by Joshua as "**the strong city**," and both Isaiah and Ezekiel speak of it. In fact, there is a great deal in Scripture about it. Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, and other kings have fought over it, and hosts of lives have been lost in taking what is now a ruin. Alexander once destroyed it, but it was afterward rebuilt. We find in the inspired Word of GOD descriptions of what this city once was, from which we can form some idea of its beauty. The whole of the 27th chapter of Ezekiel is taken up with Tyrus, as it was called then:

"O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea which art a merchant of the people for many isles, thus saith the Lord God; O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty. Thy borders are in the midst of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty. They have made all thy ship boards of fir trees of Senir; they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make masts for thee."

So it goes on:

"Fine linen with brodered work from Egypt was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail; blue and purple from the isles of Elishah was that which covered thee."

A little farther on it says:

"Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war, that are in thee, and in all thy company which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the midst of the seas in the day of thy ruin... Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness; I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee."

The terrible prophesies of its downfall have all been literally fulfilled. We find them in the 26th chapter, beginning with the third verse:

"Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God: and it shall become a spoil to the nations."

Travelers now describe the site of Tyre as "a heap of ruins, broken arches and vaults, tottering walls and towers, with a few starving wretches housed amid the rubbish." A large part of it is under water, a portion of the ruins a place to spread nets upon, and the rest has become indeed **"like the top of a rock."**

Thus passes away the glory of the world. This Book tells us of the glory of a city that we no longer see, but which has been.

It tells us also of the glory of a greater City that we have not seen, but shall see if we but follow in the way.

"O happy harbor of GOD's saints!
O sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrow can be found,
Nor grief, nor care, nor toil.
Thy gardens and thy goodly walks
Continually are green,
Where grow such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else are seen.
No candle needs, no moon to shine,
No glittering star to light,
For CHRIST, the King of Righteousness,
Forever shineth bright."

OUR NAMES RECORDED THERE

We are told that one time just before sunrise, two men got into a dispute about what part of the heavens the sun would first appear in. They became so excited over it that they began to fight, and beat each other over the head so badly that when the sun arose neither of them could see it. So there are persons who go on disputing about Heaven until they dispute themselves out of it, and more who dispute over hell until they dispute themselves into it.

The Hebrews in their writings tell us of three distinct heavens, The air - the atmosphere about the earth - is one Heaven; the firmament where the stars are is another, and above that is the Heaven of heavens, where GOD's throne is, and the mansions of the Lord are those mansions of light and peace which are the abode of the blessed, the homes of the Redeemer and the Redeemed.

This is the Heaven where CHRIST is. This is the place we read of in Deuteronomy:

"Behold, the Heaven and the Heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy GOD, the earth also, with all that therein is."

In II Corinthians, Paul, speaking of himself, says:

"I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third Heaven."

Some people have wondered what the third Heaven means. That is where GOD dwells, and where the storms do not come. There sits the incorruptible Judge. Paul, when he was caught up there, heard things that it was not lawful for him to utter, and he saw things that he could not speak of down here. The higher up we get in spiritual matters, the nearer we seem to Heaven. There our wishes are fulfilled at last.

We may cry out like the psalmist:

"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple."

We are assured by CHRIST Himself that our names will be written in Heaven if we are only His. In the 10th chapter of Luke and the 20th verse it reads: **"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in Heaven."** A little while before these words were uttered by the Saviour, calling together seventy of His disciples, He sent them forth in couples to preach the gospel in the cities of Galilee and Judea.

There are people nowadays who have no faith in revivals. Yet the greatest revival the world ever saw was during the five or six years that John the Baptist and JESUS were preaching, followed by the preaching of the apostles and disciples after CHRIST left the earth. For years the country was stirred from one end to the other. There were probably men then who stood out against the revival. They might have called it "spasmodic," and refused to believe in it. Perhaps they said, "It is a nine days' wonder and will pass away in a little while, and there will be nothing left of it."

No doubt men talked in those days just as they talk now. All the way down from the time of CHRIST and His apostles there have been men who have opposed the work of GOD, and some of them professing to be disciples of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, all because it has not been done in their way. When the Spirit of GOD comes, He works in His own way. We must learn the lesson that we are not to mark out any channels for Him to work in, for He will work in His own way when He comes.

These disciples came back after their work. The Spirit had worked with them, and the devils were subject to them, and they had power over disease, and they had power over the Enemy, and

they were filled with success. They were probably having a sort of jubilee meeting, and CHRIST came in and said: "**Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in Heaven.**"

This brings us face to face with the doctrine of

ASSURANCE

I find a great many people up and down Christendom who do not accept this doctrine. They believe it is impossible for us to know in this life whether we are saved or not. If this be true, how are we going to get over what CHRIST has said as we find it here recorded? If my name is written in Heaven, how can I rejoice over it unless I know it? These men were to rejoice that their names were already there, and the name of each one who is a child of GOD his name is there, sent on for registry before.

A party of Americans a few years ago, on their way from London to Liverpool, decided that they would stop at the Northwestern Hotel, but when they arrived they found the place had been full for several days. Greatly disappointed, they took up their baggage and were about starting off, when they noticed a lady of the party preparing to remain.

"Are you not going, too?" they asked.

"Oh no," she said, "I have good rooms all ready."

"Why, how does that happen?"

"Oh," she said, "I telegraphed on ahead, a few days ago."

Now that is what the children of GOD are doing; they are sending their names on ahead; they are securing places in the mansions of CHRIST in time. If we are truly children of GOD our names have gone on before, and there will be places awaiting us at the end of the journey. You know we are only travelers down here. We are away from home.

When the war was going on, the soldiers on the battle-field, the Southern soldiers and the Northern soldiers, wanted nothing better to live in than tents. They longed for that war to close that they might go home. They cared nothing to have palaces and mansions on the battle-field. Well, there is a terrible battle going on now, and by-and-by, when the war is over, GOD will call us home. The tents are good enough for us while journeying through this world. It is only a night, and then the eternal day will dawn.

THE BOOK OF LIFE

Two ladies met on a train not long ago, one of them going to Cairo and the other to New Orleans. Before they reached Cairo they had formed a strong attachment for each other, and the Cairo lady said to the lady who was going to New Orleans:

"I wish you would stay for a few days in Cairo; I would like to entertain you." " Well," said the

other, "I would like to very much, but I have packed up all my things and sent them ahead, and I haven't anything except what I have on, but they are good enough to travel in."

I learned a lesson there. I said, "Almost anything is good enough to travel in, and it is a great deal better to have our joys and comforts ready for us in Heaven, waiting until we get there, than to wear them out in our toilsome, trying, earthly journey."

Heaven is the place of victory and triumph.

- This is the battle-field; there is the triumphal procession.
- This is the land of the sword and the spear; that is the land of the wreath and the crown.

Oh, what a thrill of joy will shoot through the hearts of all the blessed when their conquests will be made complete in Heaven; when death itself, the last of foes, shall be slain, and Satan dragged as captive at the chariot wheels of CHRIST! Men may oppose as much as they will this doctrine of Assurance, nevertheless it is clearly taught in Scripture.

THE OPENING OF THE BOOKS

A great many laugh at the idea of there being books in Heaven; but in the 12th chapter of the prophecy of Daniel, and the 1st verse, we find:

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time; and at that time the people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

There is a terrible time coming upon the earth; darker days than we have ever seen, and they whose names are written in the Book of Life shall be delivered. Then again, in Philippians 4:3, we read:

"And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlaborers, whose names are in the Book of Life."

Paul, writing to the Christians at Philippi, where he had so much opposition, and where he was cast into jail, says in effect:

Just take my regards to the good brethren and sisters who worked with me, and whose names are written in the Book of Life. This shows that they taught the doctrine of Assurance in the very earliest days of Christianity. Why should we not teach it and believe it now?

I am told by travelers in China, that the Chinese have in their courts two great books. When a man is tried and found innocent, they write his name down in the book of life. If he is found guilty, they write his name down in the book of death. I believe firmly that every man or woman has his or her name in the Book of Death or the Book of Life. Your name cannot be in both books at the same time. You cannot be in death and in life at the same time, and it is your own

privilege to know which it is.

In Revelation 13:8, we read:

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him [that is, the Anti-Christ] whose names are not written in the Book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

And again, chapter 20:12:

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

Again, chapter 21:27:

"And there shall in no wise enter into it (the Holy City] anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life."

There can be no true peace, there can be no true hope, there can be no true comfort, where there is uncertainty. I am not fit for GOD's service, I cannot go out and work for GOD, if I am in doubt about my own salvation.

NO ROOM FOR DOUBT

A mother has a sick child. The child is just hanging between life and death. There is no rest for that mother. You have some friend on a train that is wrecked, and the news comes that twenty have been killed and wounded, and their names are not given; you are in terrible uncertainty, and there is no rest or peace until you know the facts.

The reason why there are so many in the churches who will not go out and help others, is that they are not sure they have been saved themselves. If I thought I was dying myself, I would be in a poor condition to save anyone else. Before I can pull anyone else out of the water, I must have a firm footing on shore myself. We can have this complete Assurance if we will. It does not do to feel we are all right, but we must know it. We must read our titles clear to mansions in the skies; the Apostle John says: **"Beloved, now are we the sons of God."**

He does not say we are going to be - but that we are now!

People, when asked if they are Christians, give some of the strangest answers you ever heard. Some will say, if you ask them: "Well-well-well, I-I hope I am."

Suppose a man should ask me if I am an American. Would I say, "Well I-well I-I hope I am?" I know that I was born in this country, and I know I was born in the Spirit of GOD more than twenty years ago. All the infidels in the world could not convince me that I have not a different spirit than I had before I became a Christian."

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and a man can soon tell whether he is born of the Spirit by the change in his life.

The Spirit of CHRIST is a spirit of love, joy, peace, humility and meekness, and we can soon find out whether we have been born of that Spirit or not; we are not to be left in uncertainty. Job lived back there in the dark ages, but he knew. The dark billows came rolling and surging up against him, but in the midst of the storm you can hear his voice saying: **"I know that my Redeemer liveth."** He had something better than a hope!

A man may have his name written in the highest chronicles down here, but the record may be lost; he may have it carved in marble, and still it may perish; some charitable institution may bear his name, and yet he may be soon forgotten; but his name will never be erased from the scrolls that are kept above. Seeking to perpetuate one's name on earth is like writing on the sand by the sea-shore; to be perpetual it must be written on the eternal monuments.

It has been said that the way to see our names as they stand written in the Book of Life, is by reading the work of sanctification in our own hearts. It needs no miraculous voice from Heaven, no extraordinary signs, no unusual feeling. We need only find our hearts desiring CHRIST and hating sin; our minds obedient to the divine commands.

We may be sure that belonging to some church is not going to save us, although every saved man ought to be connected with one. When Daniel died in Babylon, no one had to hunt up any old church record to find out if he was all right. When Paul was beheaded by Nero, no one had to look over the register. On the other hand, no one thinks Pontius Pilate was a saint because his name is in a church creed.

They lived so that the world knew what they were.

Paul says: **"[I] am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."**

There is Assurance. **"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"** he says; **"neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come."** He just challenges them all, but they could not separate him from the love that was in CHRIST.

It is dishonoring to GOD to go on hoping and only hoping that we "are going" to be saved.

FALSE PROFESSORS

Yet there are some who ought not to have assurance.

It would be an unfortunate thing for any unconverted church member to have assurance. There are some who profess great assurance who ought not to have it - those whose lives do not correspond.

This class is represented by the man at the wedding feast who did not have on a wedding garment.

They are like some lilies - fair to see but foul of smell. They are dry shells with no kernel inside. The crusaders of old used to wear a painted cross upon their shoulders. So there are a good many nowadays who take up crosses that sit just as lightly - mere things of ornament - passports to respectability, cheap make-believes, for a struggle that has never been made, and a crown that has never been striven for.

You may very often see dead fish floating with the stream, but you never saw a dead fish swimming against it. Well, that is your false believer; that is the hypocrite. Profession is just floating down the stream, but confession is swimming against it, no matter how strong the tide.

The sanctified man and the unsanctified one look at Heaven very differently. The unsanctified man simply chooses Heaven in preference to hell. He thinks that if he must go to either one he would rather try Heaven. It is like a man with a farm who has a place offered him in another country, where there is said to be a gold mine. He hates to give up all he has and take any risk. But if he is going to be banished, and must leave, and has his choice of living in a wilderness or digging in a coal pit, or else take the gold mine, then there is no hesitation. The unregenerate man likes Heaven better than hell, but he likes this world the best of all. When death stares him in the face, then he thinks he would like to get to Heaven. The true believer prizes Heaven above everything else, and is always willing to give up the world. Everybody wants to enjoy Heaven after they die, but they don't want to be heavenly-minded while they live.

To the Christian it is a sure promise, with no room for doubt, and there is no reason for hesitation.

The heir to some great estate, while a child, thinks more of a dollar in his pocket than all his inheritance. So even some professing Christians sometimes are more elated by a passing pleasure than they are by their title to eternal glory. In a little while we will be there. How glorious is the thought! Everything is prepared. That is what CHRIST went up to Heaven for. In a little while we will be gone.

We are-

"Only waiting till the shadows
Are a little longer grown,
Only waiting till the glimmer
Of the day's last beam has flown,
Then from out the gathered darkness,
Holy, deathless stars shall rise,
By whose light our souls shall gladly
Tread their pathway to the skies."

~ end of chapter 4 ~
