

GOD'S ANSWER TO MAN'S SIN

by

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CHAPTER NINE

I KNOW THERE IS A HEAVEN

"After 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. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Revelation 7: 9-17).

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:1-4).

"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 any 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 which 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. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Revelation 21: 22-27).

HEAVEN is a prepared place for a prepared people. It is one of the mightiest, if not the very mightiest, rewards God Almighty holds out to those who accept His Son as Saviour and by persistent well-doing show forth their title to eternal fellowship with the hosts of glory.

It is a joyous, noble, inspiring, cheering doctrine. It has encouraged the martyr at the stake and sustained the bed-ridden Christian tormented by the burden, the weight, the ailments of the flesh. Its message has charmed our childhood, heartened our maturity, inspired our old age. It has given us the brave fortitude to bear the trials and temptations of life with unbowed head and unfaltering step.

There is not a soul among us, no matter how seemingly indifferent or unconcerned, who is not at times—and these times come oftener and oftener with the advance of the years—brought face to face with the problems of the reality, of the very existence of heaven.

It is my purpose, God aiding, to bring to your minds, to your hearts, to your souls some of the glorious, victorious truths about heaven, its citizens, its perfections, its conditions, and, perhaps most of all, to point out to you what you must do to get there; then to plead with you in all the passions of my soul that you put your feet by faith in the way of the cross that leads to God and to heaven. My outline is simple, brief, and, I hope, to the point. I know there is a heaven. I know what kind of place it is. I know I am going there. I beseech you to come with me.

I. I KNOW THERE IS A HEAVEN

Fairness says so. Decency, justice, righteous, honor, honesty, common sense, demand it. Where would be the justice, the boasted equity of God, were there no heaven? Christians do not always have the best of it in this life. Many of them are poor. Many of them are sick. Many of them are oppressed, afflicted, tormented. There is very little reward for them in this life. The gods of this world press upon them and beset them on every hand. Throughout the generations, they have had to pay the price, sometimes with their lives, for the testimony of their love and loyalty to the Son of God and to His church and cause.

Where is there a continent, a clime, a country where Christians have not known the frowns and the persecutions of the children of the world? Imprisoned, whipped, outlawed, ostracized, crucified, staked, beheaded, torn asunder, thrown to the wild beasts, made sport of by the cruel bloodthirstiness of the maddened maniac mobs, where in this life, where in this world, have the servants of the Lord been rewarded for their zeal, for their constancy, for their sacrifices? Pray, tell me, what honors came in this life to beheaded Paul, to crucified Peter, to flayed Bartholomew, to slain James? Show me, if you can, the gold and valuable raiment, the houses and lands, the plaudits and pleasures that fell to the lot of John Bunyan either before or after the twelve bitter years in Bedford jail.

Then look about you. See how loyal, loving Christians have to and do deny themselves the pleasures, sometimes even the very necessities of this life, to make themselves more effective, more serviceable in the work of their Master. Then look elsewhere in the milling throngs. Is it not a fact that the children of darkness, the disobedient unbelievers, living in the paths of sin, seem only too often to have the better part of it on earth? Tell me, can it be possible that this is the way it should be and always will be? Tell me, can you believe that the sacrificial saint and the selfish sinner will meet God and enjoy the same conditions in the life beyond? No! Fairness requires that there be a difference. Heaven is the difference. Fairness says so.

Feeling says so. There is something in my heart as there is surely in your hearts, some emotion, some drawing, pulling, echoing something that tells us again and again that there is a life beyond the skies, a life with God, a life of joy, of tenderness, purity, holiness, peace, where these troublesome, trying, tempestuous burdens that afflict us will be sloughed off and we shall stand free and upright in the sight of God and of His Christ.

Look into the very depths of your souls. Tell me, is it not so? Is there not in your hearts a longing for the fellowship of God, for the communion of Christ, for the freedom of the Holy Spirit, for the presence of the angels? That feeling was placed there by God. It has grown with the passing of the years. Surely God would not have endowed you with that yearning, kept it alive all these years, unless He meant to satisfy it in His own good time, in His own good will.

This life cannot be the all in all. Our feelings prohibit such a thought. This earth cannot be the entire course of our existence, with the cold grave as the end of it. The God-implanted, the Christ-authenticated, the Holy Spirit-evoked feelings of our souls cannot so deliberately, so desperately beguile us. No! There must be a heaven. There is a heaven. Feeling says so.

Faith says so. Faith is confidence in the Word of God. The Book unmistakably, definitely, shoutingly, pressingly, imperatively teaches that there is a heaven. Doubt it, and the whole Christian system is exploded, the Bible is questioned, hope is blackened, faith is blinded, and of all God's creatures, we are the most miserable.

But who doubts it? Some misguided, so-called intelligent, half-baked pseudo-scientist, who in the superlative "infinity" of his newly received book information and laboratory technique, thinking himself some Columbus-like discoverer of an America of scientific exploration, refuses to credit anything that he cannot squeeze into his geometric theorem or physical test tube. But we know better, thank God! Those of us who are willing to be enlightened by the Spirit of God, even though the enlightenment and the information may go directly against the grain of preconceived notions and opinions, have the singing, shouting, satisfactory assurance that Jesus spoke the fact of God when He said, "**In my Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you.**"

Faith says so. Backed up by, founded on the inerrant, unchangeable, unmistakable, eternal Word of God, regardless of gainsaying scientist or philosopher or unbeliever. Faith clarions to the world that Christians are seeking a city whose founder and builder is God, a city of peace, of rest, of bliss, of reward. There is a heaven. Faith says so.

II. I KNOW WHAT KIND OF A PLACE HEAVEN IS

My heart tells me. My soul whispers it to me. My mind loves to dwell upon it. But, best of all, most assuring of all, safest of all, most satisfactory of all, the Bible definitely describes it. It is good exercise, inspiring practice, uplifting meditation, to run the references in the old Book on Heaven.

It is a prepared place. It is not an accidental, fortuitous conglomeration of a jerry-built something. It is a prepared place. God is its architect. Christ is its superintendent. The Holy Spirit is its foreman of construction. The holy angels are its builders. It is a work of art, a labor of love.

There is nothing accidental or incidental in it. Every inch of its mighty, magnificent construction is dictated by the compassionate heart and altogether wise head of the Father. With definite, minute consideration for the welfare of the saints, for their tastes and distastes, for their likes and dislikes, the angels are leaving nothing out that will add to our peace, to our happiness, to our singing joy.

It is in every detail a thing of beauty, a joy forever.

- Its climate is salubrious.
- Its grasses, trees, flowers, are of breath-taking beauty.
- Its streets are paved with gold.
- Its buildings are of the costliest, everlasting marble.
- Its government is in the hands of the Prince of peace.

The Holy Spirit is its superintendent of education. The angels make up its teaching staffs. There are no jailhouses, no prisons, no reformatories, no hospitals, no orphanages, no old folks' homes, no drugstores, no doctors, no dentists, no lawyers, no courts, no blind, no deaf, no dumb, no cripples, no weak, no aged, no feeble. Sin and Satan are banished forever. Nothing that is unclean or defileth in any way will be permitted to enter through its wide gates. There is nothing on earth to which we can compare it. The human mind cannot comprehend nor can the human tongue describe the glories of that eternal, prepared place.

It is a populated place. John says he saw a great multitude which no man could number of every nation, kindred, and tribe, out of all the earth. Thank God for that. From every continent, clime, country, color, creed over all the earth, Jew and Gentile, black and white, Catholic, Protestant, Baptist, young and old, rich and poor, weak and strong, educated, ignorant, they have all been bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and myriads have accepted the invitation. What a crowd that will be! What a place of meeting, of greeting, of rejoicing that will be! Many of you have fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, sons, daughters, that have crossed chilly Jordan before you. Thanks be unto God, you will all clasp hands and rejoice in the presence of God nevermore to endure the pangs, the bitter pangs of parting. All of us have friends that were as dear to us as our own flesh and blood whom God has called up higher. They, too, are waiting for us, waiting to welcome us into that fellowship of eternal bliss. Yes, heaven is a peopled place, filled with those who have washed their garments and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

It is a perfect place. The wisdom, the grace, the power of God assure and insure its perfections. There can be no flaws there, no mistakes, no something to have been left out or something to have been put in.

There are no disappointments in heaven, no discouragements, no disheartenings. There is no sorrow in glory, no suffering, no pain. There are no tears in the presence of God, and the sable-hued angel of death walks not its golden streets. None of the toil, none of the trial, none of the tribulation of earth find a resting-place there. The waters of the river of life flow abundantly to be freely quaffed by all unto the renewal of youth, vigor, vitality. We never grow old up there, but in the very prime of virile manhood and clean womanhood serve the Lord forever. Its joys flow on eternally. Its bliss knows no end. Its sweets never cloy, so varied are they and attractive.

It is small wonder that those who have seen the vision of it by faith are longingly homesick for that land of endless day. Men have dreamed of Utopias, have envisioned the perfections of an earthly state, only to fall back in defeated dismay because flesh and blood could not achieve the banishment of the displeasing, the disturbing, the disheartening, the disappointing. It is only in the glory land that these beauties, that these joys, that these lofty dreams will find fruition. There and there only will the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man come to an endless realization.

III. I KNOW I AM GOING THERE

I have the assurance of that fact. It shouts in my heart, sings in my soul, sounds in my mind. I know beyond peradventure, beyond question, beyond doubt, beyond any sort of uncertainty that I am bound for the Promised Land;

- That one day I shall tread its golden streets,
- That one day I shall hear the angels sing,
- That one day I shall meet all of my precious friends who have gone on before me,
- That one day I shall see my blessed Saviour face to face.

I know I am going there because I am saved.

My entrance into the glory land is not postulated upon the facts that I am a circumcised Jew, a regenerated Christian, a Baptist, a preacher of the gospel, an evangelist, that, to the glory of God, the Holy Spirit has used my prayers, my tears, my testimony to win souls for Christ. No, I am going there because I am saved, because I have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, because I have confessed Him before men, because my sins are forgiven, because my name is written in the Lamb's Book of life.

I am basing my hope, nay, my assurance of salvation on the unchangeable, unshakeable, unmistakable Word of God. God has told me: "**For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.**"

Jesus said, **“Whosoever confesseth me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven.”**

“I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and he that liveth and believeth on me shall never die.”

Paul said, **“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”**

I have done all that. I have put my utter faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I have believed on Him. I have confessed Him before men. By His own unalterable, Holy Word, I know I am saved. I am going to heaven.

I know I am going there because I am sealed, sealed in the eternal love, in the eternal purpose, in the eternal power, by the eternal Spirit of God.

The matchless promises of God’s Word tell me so. Hear the glorious truths of the Book of Ephesians:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that . . . having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ . . . wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved . . . that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ . . . in whom also we have obtained an inheritance . . . who first trusted in Christ . . . in whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of his purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

Need I add anything to that marvelous doxology? Surely not. Surely the Word of God needs no commendation, needs no bolstering up from any poor earthling such as I am. I know I am going to heaven because when I accepted Christ Jesus as my Saviour my eternal destiny was sealed in the covenant of God’s grace, signed and sealed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I know I am going to heaven because I am sustained.

All along the journey from earth to heaven, since the day I first accepted Christ as my Redeemer, God has made ample, abundant, satisfactory provision for my welfare. There is nothing I need, material, mental, physical, spiritual that is not abundantly available to me according to the riches of God’s grace by and in Christ Jesus.

- I have the gift of the Holy Spirit to encourage and empower me.
- I have the promises of the blessed Word to cash on the bank of heaven for all my needs.
- I have proved again and again that Matthew 6: 33, **“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.”**

Such is the absolute word of the most honorable Gentleman in time and eternity. I know from personal, definite, dependable experience that He **“is able to keep me from falling and to present me faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.”**

I can shout with all the fervor of my soul, the words of Peter, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you [for us], who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last day.”**

Yes, I know I am going to heaven because I am kept by the power of God, sustained by the grace of God, supported by the Spirit of God, as I journey from earth to heaven.

IV. I BESEECH YOU TO COME WITH ME

Now permit me a last word. As God gave me utterance, I have told you why I know there is a heaven; what kind of a place it is; why I know I am going there.

May I passionately, earnestly, urgently, beseech you to go with me to heaven. You may if you will. It is altogether dependent upon your willingness. There is but one thing in your way: not your sins; Christ can and will wash those away; not your weaknesses, the Holy Spirit can conquer those in you. There is nothing in your way but your own, **“I will.”** This hour, if you are ready to say to God, **“Lord have mercy on me, a sinner,”** God stands ready to enroll you in the citizenship of heaven.

God wants you to be saved. He says so. **“As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no joy in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked might turn from his wicked way. Turn ye! Turn ye! For why will ye die?”**

Paul says so. **“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God and our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”**

Peter says so. **“God is not slack concerning his promises as men count slackness, but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”**

Yes, God Almighty wants you to Himself, with Himself, for Himself, in heaven. He says so.

Christ died to pave a way for you into heaven. He suffered, bled, died under the burden and weight of your sins that sinless, spotless, stainless, you may tread the courts of glory.

- **“He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”**

- **“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.”**

- **“But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself . . . and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”**

- **“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”**

he blood of the cross will make you fit, favorable, acceptable at the throne of grace. John, in describing the multitudes in heaven that no man could number, said of them, **“These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”**

This blood cleansing is for all the saints, for all the faithful, for all the believing, for you.

The Holy Spirit invites you to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Even before the coming of Christ, the invitation was issued to all of the children of men: **“Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”**

In the Parable of the Marriage Supper of the King’s Son, to which many were invited, the Lord Jesus definitely teaches the broadness, the wideness, the inclusiveness of the invitation to salvation and heaven.

The very Bible itself closes in Revelation 22:17 with the mighty, worldwide invitation of the Spirit and the church to enter the mansions of rest, **“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.”**

There can be no misunderstanding of an appeal like that.

Tonight, brother, sister, the gates of glory swing wide open for your entrance. God is bending down from the throne. Jesus is reaching out His pierced hands to you. The Holy Spirit is softly whispering the gentle welcome of the invitation. Will you accept it? Some years ago, one of the engineers of the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad, a superb Christian man, built his home by the side of the right of way. He had a six-year-old daughter. Every day the engineer, in passing his home, pulled the cord of the engine’s whistle to greet his loved ones. The little daughter got into the habit of climbing on the fence to wave at her daddy as he passed. One day she overbalanced herself and tumbled into the ravine at the foot of the tracks. Her father came home that night to find her in bed with a bruised, scratched body.

“Darling,” he said to her, “you must not climb that fence anymore. The next time you might hurt yourself pretty badly.”

“But, Daddy,” replied the child, “I want to see you and wave at you when you go past. How will I do it if I cannot climb up on the fence?”

“I’ll tell you what I’ll do,” answered the father; “tomorrow before I leave I’ll take a board out of the fence. This evening and every other evening when I go past, you can stick your head and shoulders through that hole and see me and wave at me.”

The man did just as he said. From then on, daily, when the train sped past, the whistle blowing, the child pressed herself into the fence and waved hand and handkerchief to the much loved father. The days sped past. The winter came. The little girl contracted a severe cold that rapidly developed into double pneumonia. The man took time out of his job and sat night and day by the bed of his darling. The doctors did the best they could, but God wanted that flower in His own garden. The girl grew steadily worse until one day the family physician came out to call the father into the sickroom with the dreadful news that the child was dying. The father and mother stood at the foot of the bed watching their precious baby. Pale of face, eyes closed, she lay there on her back in her little bed. Minutes went past. After a time, she opened her eyes. Noticing the tears of her parents, she whispered in a faint little voice, “Daddy, Mamma, why are you crying?”

The father and mother, choked with their emotions, were unable to answer. They looked at the good doctor. The doctor turned to the child and, taking her small hand in his, gently told her that her father and mother were weeping because she was leaving them to be with Jesus. Again the child looked up into the face of her father. “Daddy,” she said, “you mean I am going to die?” The father dropped to his knees by the side of the bed and pressed his face against the face of his loved child. “Yes, darling,” he whispered, “you are leaving Daddy and Mamma to go to be with Jesus.”

The girl whimpered a little in soft crying. Then she bethought herself of something and began to comfort the mourning ones. “Daddy,” she said, “Mamma, don’t cry. When I get to heaven, the first thing I am going to do is tell Jesus about you. I am going to tell Him what a good Daddy and Mamma you were and how you always talked to me about Him. Then I am going to ask Jesus to take a board out of the wall around heaven. Every day I shall go to that opening and watch for you. When I see you coming, I shall wave at you to show you where I am that you may come to me.”

Brethren and sisters, that is just what Jesus is doing for us and to us right now. Bending over the battlements of glory, His pierced hands stretched out to us, He is beckoning us to come to Him. He is longingly, yearningly, pleadingly, anxiously waiting for you. Will you this very moment accept His invitation? Will you, in humble, penitent, childlike, yet bold, trusting faith, come to the blessed Saviour right now, that you, together with the great multitude of us, may start on the journey to the Promised Land, never to finish until you stand complete in the Lord Jesus Christ before the throne of God in the glorious heavens? God, give you the grace to come. For Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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