

"HEAVEN IS NO MYTH"

I Cor. 2:9-10

That is what is meant by the Scriptures which say - that no mere man, has ever seen, heard, or even imagined what wonderful things, God has ready for those who love the Lord. But we know about these things because God has sent his Spirit to tell us. And his Spirit searches out and shows us all of God's deepest secrets.

*Secrets all want to know - a Millionaire lay dying - Had lived sinful life - Wealth Minister came "if I leave a \$100,000 to the church, will that help me get into heaven?"*

*Minister answers cautiously - "I wouldn't like to be positive, But it's well worth trying."*

He goes on to say that no one really knows, except the person himself. God's

own Spirit. Actually what God has prepared for his own.

*"I want to get to heaven; my long sought Rest" - hymn -*

*(Gurber, Rev. E. John) "Pop. Lynn in 1820 - factories were changing - what our Min. was 1970's -"*

Last week we talked about Hell is no myth. Tonight, we bring an opposite sermon - in declaring unto you that Heaven is no myth. But to give you a vision of the home prepared.

In the Upper Room where the Master and his Disciples are keeping a feast at the Passover, the last time that they shall ever keep it together on earth. It is a scene that is very dramatic and intense. The hour of parting is drawing near. Their hearts are filled with sorrow. Because he has told them that he is going away.

Wonderful and mysterious are the words that he speaks. I go away, and ye shall seek me. But whether I go, ye cannot come. Whether I go, ye know and the way ye know. Yet, a little while in the world seeth me no more. But you see

me because I live - ye shall live also.

While they were saddened, they pondered on what it all meant. He unfolded for them the divine reason for his going. And then he speaks to their troubled hearts with unspeakable comfort. Listen, "It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you. Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's House are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself. That where I am, that there ye may be also."

It is the announcement of a going away, and a coming again. But the latter shall be greater than the former. It is the beginning of a departure that shall end in a more blessed reunion. It is the passing away of the old ties, and associations of the earth - but only in order to make way for the new and sacred fellowship of his Kingdom, that it may come in and take place. And from the beginning to the end - every step of it, shall be for their good. And for their constant increasing joy. This is what he is trying to impress upon them. I tell you the truth - it is expedient that I go away. The old covenant has finished its work - it is being fulfilled now. And a new covenant is going to take its place.

In John 14:2 - In my Father's House are many mansions. How often do we hear these words quoted. And with what a variety of meaning they come to us. Look around you in the Christian world today. You will find many, many different interpretations that people offer. A little reflection on them shows you that people fall into all sorts of groups. People apply them to Heaven. And then

there are people who apply them to the world. And there are other people who apply these words to the church.

In my Father's House are many mansions - that must mean, so they say, that Heaven is large enough for everyone. Yes, for all the unnumbered hosts for those who have lived, and died since the world began. For every race and tribe, and clan that shall be born, as long as the world exists. Not only that, but it shall have a place and a welcome for all those who have named the name of Jesus. Our Father's house is going to be a boundless place in his mercy and love. Heaven is going to be a home for his children.

There are others who say that his house must be confined to some distant future. But that it might be here in this beautiful world which God made, for us to live in. The world is large enough then.

And yet there is another group of people who say, that my Father's house must refer to the church - his kingdom. That there should be room in it for all varieties of people to worship and to be sincere in their beliefs.

But I think there is fallacies in the interpretation of these words.

The real meaning - let us look at the real meaning of life. And turn aside from these partial man-made concepts. And let us remember that reason and justice alike protest against taking a Scripture text of this kind out of its context. Where the inspired author places it. We let us become like little children. Because if you take these phrases away from the time, the place, and

the circumstances, then you can make almost anything you please. But let us be fair with the Bible. This sacred book - of what then is the Master speaking.

Remember this is the last meeting with them before his death. And so the time and occasion required that he should then and there expound the real meaning of life. He leaves this greatest of all subjects until the last. Life - what is it.

It is a way, he says. It is a journey. We are not limited in our vision - from the cradle to the grave. From the birth, from time on into eternity.

What is this Father's house - the whole revelation of God commands that Christ the son is over his own house. And whose house are we, saith the Spirit.

And what are these many mansions of which he speaks. The revised version calls them (dwelling places) which is far better. But the original word was applied to the ends and the (resting places) at the different stations along the great Roman roads. Every great event in the Christian's life is a resting place in the Heavenly way. A place of refreshment. A place of life-given strength for the journey.

How it transfigures death, as we see it in this higher life. No longer the end of the journey, but death becomes then, just a little resting place. We are cheered on and refreshed for the Heavenly way. Now this was joy and consolation for these believers.

Another thing he said is, you are going on a pilgrimage to an abiding city. The Master shows them that life is really away. A pilgrimage from a tent life on earth to an abiding city which has foundation, whose builder and maker is God. Now he stamped this as true. He did not teach the immortality and the progress of the human soul. He brought life and immortality to light. Out of the midst and out of the darkness.

He said, if it were not so, that is - if life was not a constant progress in this world and in the world beyond, we would not have allowed the human race to go on longer. He said, I would have told you so.

Now this lifts our vision then from a local type of thing, that brings us to a place of forever - where satisfaction will be. Mark the words very carefully. I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you. And that blessed place where you shall be forever, unto the land of perfect delight. Now that is why Heaven is going to be personal fellowship. I will receive you unto myself. That is where I am. There ye may be also. Heaven shall be ours if we are faithful. That blessed place where sin, and sorrow, and sickness, pain and death shall be no more. We shall see the gates of pearl and the streets of gold. And we shall walk by the side of the river of life, and eat of the tree that grows by the river. And the joy of it all shall surpass our fondest desires. For eye has not seen, nor ear heard - neither has entered into the heart of man the things of God that he prepared for those who love him.

The way to Heaven then is through Christ. We are not to put our trust in man. Who is it that goes and prepares this place for us forever, who will be the secret

of a restful, happy life. We leave that in his hands. We shall not worry about our eternal home for we know that it shall be ready for us. His undying love for every soul that has been redeemed. We place in those in whom we trust on earth, certain things for them to do.

Now we know Christ, we believe his promise, and we are willing to place in his hand, all of this which he needs. We see it in a higher form, than we entrust our precious lives to him.

My knowledge of that life is small. The eye of faith is dim. But it is enough that Christ knows all. And I shall be with him. As expressed in the hymn.

Now this may be mysterious to some who are listening to me. But let us be of good courage. Paul would say, "for the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us." Why should I refuse to believe in Heaven. Just because some of the present mysteries, I cannot understand. Now if I take all things in this attitude - I would not take another step. I would not utter another word. I would not sleep another night. For these are ordinary things but they are mysteries.

Think for example, a little girl, here she is with her golden hair and cherry red cheeks. She stands pouring water from a glass, upon a house plant. After watering the plant, she said, now I will put it in the sun. What a chain of mysteries. Think about that. A little child - here is a glass of water. Here

is a pot of dirt. And here is a blooming plant. And here is a shining sun and a radiant child.

Now suppose I would talk to this child about the chemistry of nature. And I should say to her, I think that I have the answer. But she would say to me, but I am going to put this pretty flower in the sun.

Now suppose I would repeat to her the scientific statement. About the elements of water. And still I think she would reply to me - I am going to put this flower in the sun.

And if you ask me, how can these Heavenly things be - I would reply, see how a little water, a few spoon fulls of dirt, and a wonderful sun - all working together upon a seed bring forth a beautiful flower. That is a wonderful analogy, of what is going to take place in Heaven. "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions." If it were not so, I would have told you.

Knoll's had a song of our old house and the new. This body is my house - it is not I.

Herein I sojourn til in some far sky

I least a fair dwelling built to last

Til all the carpentry of time is past

Then from my high place, viewing this lone star

What shall I care where these poor timbers are.

What though the crumbling walls turn dust and lome

I shall have left them for a larger home

What though the rafters break, the stanchions rot

When earth has dwindled to a glimmering spot

When thou clay pottage falleth, I'll immerse

My long cramped spirit in the universe

Through uncomputed silences of space

I shall yearn upward to the leaning face

The ancient Heavens will roll aside for me

As Moses monarched the dividing sea

This body is my house, it is not I

Triumphant in this death, I live and die.

What an incentive that calls us to Heaven. Dr. Samuel Camel said, I used to be



afraid of a thunderstorm. And I had certain feelings indeed, because in our neighborhood he said - we had a cyclone to pass through one day. And it destroyed the orchards, it unroofed the houses, and in general - it brought chaos. So he says, sometimes at school on a summer afternoon when a dark cloud would come, we would all be besieged with a kind of nervous terror. And then the tempest would burst and the wind would roar, and the rain would pour. And the hail would rattle against the window panes. And we would hear the thunder shaking the ground. Sometimes, the teacher had problems keeping us from crying out in terror. This was because we remembered that terrible thunderstorm. But he said that we had had in school were of brief duration and by the time school was out, they had cleared away. We used to shout as we rushed out of the door, where is the thunderstorm. Where is the thunderstorm. And just opposite the schoolhouse was a great hill. And we could hear our echo and it would call back to us - where is the thunderstorm. To that call he says, we always got an answer. For here was the grass that carpeted the pasture ground. Looking up to us - as to say, part of it is in me. And then he says, here was the lilac that grew by our old-fashioned home. And shook off the rain drops and the fragrance and it said, part of it is in me. And then he said, there were the pools of water along by the roadside. And we splashed with our barefeet. And the pool of water would say - part of it is in me. But he said, grandest of all, there would be the brilliant rainbow. Setting its feet at the brink of the river, arching along the hillside. And up beyond to a retreating cloud. There was the transfiguration of glory. And the rainbow would say, part of that black and terrible thunderstorm is in me.

What becomes of all of these terrors, these sorrows, these heartaches, that we have down here on earth? It seems to me that here is a rainbow, in our sky, and it is going to join us one day from this earth to Heaven. And this is an incentive to look forward to Heaven. It is like the old sculptur who had some pieces of work in his shop. One was a beautiful cathedral - but it was covered with dust.

It had been there for years and no body admired it. And yet it was an exact model of a fine cathedral. One day, an attendant of his, placed a little light inside the model. And it gleamed and it shone through the stained glass windows. Then all the people stopped to admire the beauty. The change that was wrought was brought about by the light within that marvelous work of art. And many of the things were obscure until then.

Did you know, many of the things that are obscure today, when the Lord comes and the light within will blaze out, and will shine forth in all of its beauty, it is going to be marvelous.

You know, I picture Heaven as a very happy place. I remember reading about Samuel Johnson who was a very pessimistic type of fellow. You know, you asked him - was he happy and he would say "no". If you ask most Christians if they are happy and they would say, oh, I have a toothache or a headache. (But I am happy in the Lord.) Why not. We rejoice evermore because we are happy in the Lord. But old Johnson had the idea that no one in the world could be happy because he wasn't happy in himself. He said, it just can't be so. So man said he was happy one day. And he said, why, that dog knows that he is miserable all the time.

One day a friend in the presence of Johnson said, he had a sister-in-law who was really a happy woman. And the lady, herself, being present. He asked her if she was happy. She declared with great emphasis that she was happy all the time. Then Samuel Johnson, that savage creature that he could be sometimes, replied - if your sister-in-law is really the continued being she professes herself sir, her life gives a lie to every research of humanity. For she is happy without

health. Without beauty. Without money. And without understanding. Then he went away growling and he said to his friend, I tell you - the woman is ugly, sickly, foolish, and poor. And would it not make a man hang himself to hear such a creature say she was happy.

Did Dr. Samuel Johnson think that happiness must depend upon health, wealth, beauty, and knowledge. Would he assert that a sick man, a poor man, or an ignorant man, or an ugly man could never be happy. Now the poor, sick, and humble saints know better than that. They know how to rejoice in the Lord. In human mishaps and miseries as well.

A preacher once was in the room with a daughter of a Christian family when she was dying. For weeks she had lingered and her sickness had tortured her. They stood there, and he said as I stood by her bedside when she passed away. Her sight had failed her. Her hearing had failed her. Her speech had failed her. And when suddenly, as if an angel's wing had swept over her - her whole face changed. He said, I stepped into the adjoining room and called some friends. I said, come quickly. And they saw it. That expression of perfect peace which was upon her face as she passed away. It was the last expression - he said. And it remained there, he said, until they closed the casket and carried her to her rest. Yes, I believe that Heaven is going to be a happy place.

There is hope for every one to be sustained by this vision that Jesus gave. A place of many mansions. I read the story of a bed-ridden saint who lives five stories up, in a dingy city. And a lady who often visited her - always sounded very cheerful. One day, she took a friend of hers, who was looking on the dark side of things. And was not too happy with life. Although she was a professing

Christian, she thought it would do her good to take this lady to see this bed ridden saint. So she took her down to the house - five stories up. They started up the first story. And this lady said - how dark, how filthy it is. Her friend said to her, it gets better higher up. They got to the next story and she drew her dress up. And she complained again. And her friend replied - it is better higher up. And the third floor, things seemed worse, and the lady kept complaining. And she said again - it is better higher up. And at last, they got to the fifth story and when they walked into the sick room, there was nice clean carpet on the floor. There were flowering plants in the window. And there was a little bird singing. And there they found - the bed-ridden saint. One of those saints whom God is polishing for his own temple. She was just beaming with joy.

The lady who had come as a guest said to her - it must be very hard for you to lie here in this bed. And she smiled and said, it is better higher up.

Yes, and if things go against us my friends, today you are having your struggles, if you are a Christian - I want you to remember, it is better higher up. And waiting for your inheritance is what God has called upon you to do.

Now there are many people who have fears about Heaven. And there are many changes that have taken place. Dr. Coyle, a professor at Cambridge some years ago said, among all the changes which have come over religious and theological teachings within his living memory, none have been so momentous as to secularize the Christian hope. He says, it has always practically disappeared from our sermons and from our writings.

In my lifetime, in my own observations, I would say that the present literature of Christianity and some of the religious magazines and papers, and even sermons delivered from the pulpits - are often very empty when it comes to talking about the next world. The emphasis is on the here and now. Today we talk about economics, the wars, but we fail to see that we can talk about this in this world. But there is a world to come. And there is a Heaven. And Heaven is no myth.

You just have to search the Scriptures a little bit and you can use the Word of God and the teaching about the future life. No where in the Scripture is it dealt with as a theory. There is no speculation when Jesus began to talk about this. It is a solemn, inescapable force. To warn men about sinful living, of the inevitable harvest, and inspired men who faced difficulties that they would be rewarded for their victories.

He said, if you give a cup of cold water - to minister to the needs of the hungry and the thirsty, become feet for the lame, become eyes for the blind. A friend to the friendless. Visit the fatherless. And the widows. And keep yourself unspotted from the world. And by and by the king will say to you -  
"come ye blessed of my Father."

On the other hand, he is going to say to some, depart ye cursed. That will be the sentence of those who have been selfish, cold-hearted, heedless, impure. The future life has an appeal. And it ought to produce some holiness here.

The scholar, Dr. Alexander McClarin, asked a question once. Shall we stop

growing in Heaven. Aw, he says, there is a platform. We shall not sit there and be drowsie. In the truest sense, he said, we are going on from possible good and goodness, as we possess hope. He says, our fair vision of what we shall be and become has an attraction. Reaching forth unto those things that are before. He says that I believe that I will live through the eternities. Growing wiser, nobler, stronger, greater, and plunging deeper into God. More and more he says, I will be filled with him.

It is interesting when people talk about what Heaven will mean to them.

And it is also interesting when we begin to talk to people about getting ready for Heaven. Suppose Jesus should come tomorrow. Harriett Beecher Stowe had a little book. He is coming tomorrow. She tells about a worldly man of wealth. He hears about the tidings of Jesus' coming. And he says, I don't know wife, how you feel - but I don't like this news. I don't understand it. It puts a stop to everything that I know anything about.

Oh John, said the woman, turning toward him. A pale face and clasping his hand, how can you say that.

Well Mary, it is the truth. I don't care if I say it. I don't want to meet. Well, I wish he would put it off. What does he want of me. I'd be willing to make over say 3 million dollars. And found a hospital if that would satisfy him and let me go on. He said I'd give 3 million if I could buy off from tomorrow.

Is he not our best friend, the wife says. Best friend - said the man.

With a look of half fright and half anger. You don't know what you are talking about. Why, I always hated those things. I cannot see any use in them. In fact, I hate them.

She cast him a look full of pity. Cannot I make you see, she said, no indeed you can't.

Why look here - he says pointing to the (papers). Here is what stands for millions. (Tonight it is mine.) (Tomorrow it will be so much waste paper.) And then what have I left. Do you think I can rejoice. I'd give half - yes, I'd give the whole not to have him come these hundred years.

She stretched out her thin hand towards him--but he pushed it back.

Do you see, said the angel, to me solemnly - between him and her there is a great gulf fixed. They have lived in one house with that gulf between them for years. He cannot go to Him and he cannot come to her. However, she will rise to Christ as a dew drop to the sun. And if he will call to the mountains and the rocks to fall upon him, not because Christ hates him - but because he hates Christ.

What a tragedy.

Think about the widow who stands in that little attic with a low light. By one small lamp, a broken chair, and a little table. And a bed in the corner.

With some little children to keep warm. And they believe in their mother. And they say when Mother comes, she will feed us. Mother has promised to make a fire. And how sad it is - that as she comes with no help from the outside, there is joy in those Christians when she opens the door and comes in. Christ is coming. He will be here tomorrow. And I think every voice will acknowledge him. He shall gather his lambs in his arms. And carry them in his bosom.

Sometimes, people ask - will there be recognition in Heaven. And though some of the forms of our earthly life may not be repeated there - I think there will be some remembrances, some friendships, and some love. And there will be some reunions of scattered families. The resumption of suspended friendships that we have had broken circles. Thus I believe, thus I affirm, that I am certain that from this life I will pass to a better. And that there will be a place as David said - he was sure he could not go - that if the dead child could not return to him. He could go to it. Now had he not believed that - he would not have believed in the streets of paradise. He believed that he would recognize that child there.

Whittier in his poem said -

Yet love will dream and faith will trust  
Since he who knows our need is just  
But somehow, somewhere, meet we must  
Alas for him who never sees  
The stars shine through the cyprus tree  
Who hopeless lays his head away  
And looks to see the break of day  
Across his mournful marbles play



Who hath not learned in hours of faith  
The truth to flesh and sense unknown  
That life is ever Lord of death  
And love can never lose its own.

I am sure there is a call that comes to your heart from the departed dead. For you have stood by the dying - many of you. And you have heard such and such a one bidding you farewell. Whispering that it was not forever. Have you heard such a one telling you to live, and death might only remove you to a place where there is no dying. Have you felt the pressure of that cool hand and saw that earnest spirit - you have promised that God helping you, you would.

Death sealed those lips. And that heart turned back to clay. And there was something in glory. Calling that one away.

Somehow, as you went to that grave of that loved one - you heard a whisper come up. And sometimes you visit that place. And sometimes, you still hear that request and memory just never leaves.

I remember reading about a boy who sat upon his father's knee and told him stories about his homeland, across the sea. He talked about brave men and fair women. And he talked about the literature and the wonderful opportunities of that land. And as he grew to manhood, he decided to take a trip. One day his opportunity came and he traveled across the sea. One night, there came a great wind, and the wind was strong. He was a poor sailor. For three nights and three days the seas were rough. And he thought sure that the father's land would be in

counted for no more than if they were so many rats in the ship. There is a totally different perspective for life from that which we usually have. Which is the fundamentally right view of the life we are living and of the mysteries which are all about us? This crash of the Titanic against the iceberg threw wide open the door between the seen and the unseen and laid bare to the eyes of everyone of us who has the sense to look at the solemn truth, the fact that the every day living of most of us takes no account of the most vital, the most fundamental and omnipresent facts surrounding every one of us.—The Fitchburg Sentinel.

When the Mists Have Rolled Away (561).

When a boy, my father used to take me on his knee and tell me stories of a land of brave men and fair women. When I grew older I read for myself in the pages of the greatest romances of all literature stories of fair women and brave men—in my father's land. I had a great desire to see my father's land. One day in after years the opportunity came. I traveled over the sea, but one night there came a great wind. The sea was tempestuous and I am a poor sailor. For three nights and three days we strove with the seas toward the shore of my father's land. The morning of the fourth day we were in the Irish Sea, and at last it was still. Toward evening I crept on deck and said to the captain, "Are we almost there?" And he replied, encouragingly: "We will get in in the morning." Early in the morning I asked again if we were "almost there." And the captain replied: "In sound of shore, but not in sight." And actually I could hear sounds off the shore I could not see. After what seemed a long, long time, I said again: "Captain, are we almost in?" "Why, man," he said, "we are in, as you will see when the mists lift," and sure enough a wind swept down the Firth and drove the mists far out to sea, and there we were in the Firth of the Clyde, while far away on every side stretched the green shores of Auld Scotia, my father's land—the land I had traveled so far to see.

Some day—I know not when—I shall be on another sea. Another captain shall be my friend. And if, weary at the last, I go to him, he shall say in answer to the question: "Am I almost there?" "When the morning cometh." And, if again, I cry for the shore he will say: "When the mists have rolled away," and then some day the mists shall all be rolled away, and around shall stretch on every side from eternity's shores the evergreen hills o' the Land o' the Leal—my Father's land, your Father's land, our Father's land.—Rev. R. S. Inglis, D.D.

*Conclusion*

view--and then the fourth day, he said we were in the Irish sea. And at last, it was still. Toward evening he said, I crept on deck. And I said to the captain, "are we almost there." And he replied, encouragingly, we will get in in the morning. In the morning he said, I asked the captain again, "aren't we almost there." And the captain replied, we are in the sound of the shore. But not in sight. Actually he said, "I could hear the sounds of the shore. But not see. And after what seemed like a long long time, I came again. Are we almost in. Why man, he said, we are in - when you will see when the mist lifts." Sure enough, when the wind swept down and drove the mist far out to sea, that they were in the harbor. And stretching on every side the green shores of Scotland, my father's land. The land I had traveled so far to see.

Some day I know not when  
I shall be on another sea  
Another captain shall be my friend  
And if weary at the last, I go to him  
He shall say in answer to the question  
Am I almost there.

When the morning cometh  
And if again, I cry for the shore  
He will say when the mist has rolled away  
And then someday the mist shall all be rolled away  
And around shall stretch on every side  
From eternities shores  
The evergreen hills of a land that is fairer than day  
My father's land, your father's land, our father's land.

X  
How marvelous, that eye has not seen nor ear heard - neither has entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared to those that love him. Do you love him. Are you in his will. A little girl from the mission field of Nigeria, she was from Alabama was desperately ill, of a tropical disease. Her hair had fallen out. Her teeth had become loose. A preacher said to her, you did not go home. Why are you staying here in this mission clinic. Weren't you afraid out here in Ogbomosho with this limited hospital. And she said, I would have been in more danger back in Birmingham where they have all of the medical researchers. The preacher said, how could that be. She answered, back home, I would have been out of the will of God! Here in Africa, I am in the center of the will of God. This is the safest place in the world for me.

Dear friend tonight, the only safe place for you is in the center of the will of God. And outside of that is danger. And I want to point out to you that God has prepared something for those that love him. Will you not get into his will. Get a vision of that home already prepared.