

## How Beautiful Heaven Must Be! (2)

by Walton Weaver

Reuel Lemmons, in his book, **Abundant Living**, pp. 129-130, draws a beautiful picture of heaven as "home" by taking us back to his old home place which he visited many years after the days of his youth. He brings out the sharp contrast in the following way:

"A little while ago I stood on one of the foothills of the Ozarks and looked through the tops of the persimmon bushes at the old clapboard roof of a little log hut. Then I went down across the hillside and crossed the rocky branch and up the slope on the other side of what used to be my home. The paling fence around the yard was almost gone, and the gate was hanging from the post by a single hinge. The cedar tree that used to be in the corner of the yard had been blasted by a storm and only the stump remained. The spring that once flowed, clear as crystal at the foot of the hill, was turned into a muddy seep, and the flowers that bloomed by the pathway had long since been choked out by the weeds. The corner of the porch had fallen away, and I had to pull myself up into the doorway. Inside, the dust was heavy upon the floor, and spider webs hung from the walls. The paper sagged in great folds from the ceiling. As I stood in the middle of that big, bare, empty room---still as a tomb---and looked at the circle of black places burned out in the puncheon floor by the live cells that had rolled out from the old stone fireplace, I could not help but think of the happy circles that had gathered there in years gone by. In the deathlike stillness and silence of that room I could not help but think of the happiness that had transpired there. But many of the voices that once there rang with laughter have been stilled forever. Members of those families have scattered, to the north, south, east and west, and some of them are dead. As I left that clearing in the woods that day I knew that a part of me would always be buried there, because that place was home to me when I was a child. Since that time a fire has destroyed the old homestead, and a pile of bleached chimney stones stands like a tombstone upon a barren hill.

"The old home was earthly. It had to go back to dust. But as I think of it, I cannot help but think of another home that I have . . . one built on a higher hill. Its streets are paved with gold instead of strewn with stones. Its walls are of jasper, instead of oaken boards, and its gate is a single pearl. In the place of that wasted cedar, there shall be the tree of life, and instead of the muddy spring the eternal, pure river of life. In the place of that old log house there shall be mansion bright and fair, and around the throne of God there shall gather all the family of God. From every age and every nation, and all the kindred tribes and tongues, shall gather a circle in a family reunion that shall never be dismissed. There, for the first time in history, they shall be past the possibility of apostasy. They shall never scatter, and they shall never die. When I think of that Home over there, I want to go there, don't you?"

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## **The Beauty of Fellowship**

We have already read that in heaven "the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them" (Rev. 21:3). Just to be in this close association and fellowship with God throughout eternity! Can you imagine it? This close fellowship is emphasized in Revelation 22:4, "And they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads." What an honor to be permitted to see God face to face, something no man has been permitted to do before. What a reward for faithful service rendered in this life! We are reminded of John's wonderful statement, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see him just as He is."

To be in the very presence of God and His Son Jesus Christ will most certainly be one of the great joys of going to heaven. But in addition to this, can you imagine what it will mean to be able to enjoy the company of great men like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jeremiah, Paul, Luke, John, and Timothy, and great women like Sarah, Deborah, Ruth, Mary, Elizabeth, Dorcas, Eunice and Lois? Of Old Testament worthies Jesus says, "And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 8:11). To be in the fellowship of such great saints of old, as well as those we have known, is joy that defies description.

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## **The Beauty of Worship and Service**

If you find no joy or happiness in worshipping God and in serving Him now, you would be miserable in heaven because you would have to do for eternity what you did not like to do in this world. "For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them" (Rev. 7:15); "And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bondservants shall serve Him" (Rev. 22:3). We may not understand how we shall serve God in heaven, but serve Him we shall. How exciting it will be to worship and serve the King of kings throughout eternity!

The beauty of labor, but no tiring; service, but no heat; toil, but no thirst or hunger. Though we will serve Him day and night (Rev. 7:15), we shall "hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb in the center of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them to springs of the water of life; and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Rev. 7:16-17).

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## **The Beauty of Rest from Labors**

"And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, 'Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them'" (Rev. 14:13). The "labors" first mentioned in this passage are troubles which have arisen from one's steadfastness in the faith. They consist of the "wearisome toil in doing good, in promoting religion, in saving souls, in defending the truth. From such toils the redeemed in heaven will be released; for although there will be employment there, it will be without the sense of fatigue or weariness" (Barnes). The "deeds" in the next part of the verse are said to follow us. These are those things we have done in Christ which will not be forgotten by others, nor will they be forgotten by the Lord in judgment. It is for this reason that Paul admonishes us to "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). The writer of Hebrews encourages us when he says, "For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Heb. 6:10-12).

At the end of the way as Paul looked back over the course of his life, he saw that his assurance rested on just such toil, and he saw that in the future there was laid up for him "the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge" would award to him "on that day" (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Can you think of anything more joyous and more beautiful than to hear the Lord say, "Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master" (Matt. 25:21, 23), or, "Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34).

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