

UP FROM SIN

The Fall and Rise of a Prodigal
Colportage Library #100

by

Len G. Broughton, M. D.

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CHAPTER TEN

THE BLESSED END

“In my Father’s house are many mansions” (John 14:12).

We come now to consider The Blessed End. How many hopes center around it! Without it life is without a charm. Blot it out, and you have destroyed all hope. The strongest minds that have ever lived have been believers in its existence, and have in one way or another entertained a hope of its final realization. Christ when on earth spake much of heaven. He used it as a means of comforting the sad and despondent.

One of the most pathetic incidents related in the Gospels is found in the 14th chapter of John, where Christ just before His departure looking into the faces of His despondent and well-nigh hopeless followers, said:

“Let not your hearts 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. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

How these words, preserved by the Spirit of God, have cheered and comforted many a sad heart since then. Well do I remember my last visit to my mother. When seated by her bedside I read, at her request, these verses. It was a few days before she died. Oh, how they cheered her, as there upon her sick-bed she lay waiting for their full realization. And so thousands upon thousands have been comforted and strengthened.

The skeptic tries to convince us that we are foolish in entertaining such a superstition; but it will never be possible, with the history of the past and our experience of the present, to blot out this hope.

Like the little boy who was sailing his kite. It had gone beyond sight, and some one came along and asked him how he knew there was a kite at the other end.

“Why,” said he, “I know it from the way it feels.”

So there is something about our hope in heaven, if the whole Word of God should be blotted out and we were left as we are now, there is something within, which we cannot explain, that tells us of such a place. I am sorry for the man or woman, especially the heads of families, without any well-founded hope in the beyond.

WHAT IS HEAVEN?

But some one may ask, "What is heaven?"

To this question we may at least be permitted to answer what Christ Himself said about it. He said, in the 14th chapter of John:

"I go to prepare a place for you."

Heaven, therefore, must be a *place*. I don't know where, but somewhere Christ is preparing a place to receive His people. To me it would be enough to know that it was anywhere out of hell, for while we rejoice in the hope of heaven, it will also pay us to remember the possibility of hell.

I never have seen an ungodly man die that I have not thought more of heaven. Once I remember holding the hand of a friend. He had been a friend, indeed. He was dying, and when told of it he looked me in the face with a look of despair, and said:

"Oh, doctor, do not let me die. I cannot afford it now. Hold me fast for one more day; give me another chance. Oh, God, I cannot, I cannot, I cannot!"

I never shall forget as I sat there holding his hand, while his life went out like a candle and his soul went down, how I thought that day of heaven. What a pity he had not prepared for it.

A PREPARED PLACE

But not only is heaven a place, it is also a prepared place. Christ said:

"In my Father's house are many mansions, I go to *prepare* a place for you."

Thus we have heaven presented to us as a great city with mansions in which we are to dwell. I don't know how they are built, or what they are built out of. I only know that they are there for a purpose, and that it is my privilege as a humble follower of our Lord to have a place in this great sanctified city of our God.

I sometimes like to unfetter my imagination, and see myself dwelling in one of those mansions. It is a new experience to me. I have never had one on earth. Only a few times in my life have I been privileged to dwell even for a short time in a real mansion. But I soon find myself at home up there, and one of the first plans that comes to me is a reception to my loved ones and friends. I love to be hospitable.

If I had it in my power, I would spend and be spent in making other people happy; but up there I will have time, and my Father will furnish the means, and so I fancy this great reception. I send out my invitations.

I think I shall send first for the blessed Christ. I shall want Him to preside over the feast. Then, very naturally, I shall want to see my loved ones, those who with me have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. I shall want them to help me serve and receive.

And then, I shall want some of the old patriarchs to grace the occasion, and so I shall send for Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. And somehow I feel as if I shall want David to come with his harp. And then we will invite the early disciples who assisted our Lord when upon the earth.

And then we will begin to look out for those who have helped me most in life. There is the old preacher who preached the sermon that touched our hearts when we were sinners, and there is the young woman, whose name we have forgotten, who came and led us to the altar. We shall want to see them. Yea, and a host of others we can't begin to enumerate.

But somehow I fancy I shall rejoice most in inviting those whom we have helped. Those who have been brought to Christ by our feeble efforts, and those whose hearts we have comforted and whose lives we have blessed, even in a small degree, we shall want to see them there. God grant that this may be a large company if it is His will to let us labor on. This will be our reception in our mansion. What a glad day it will be!

WHO WILL BE THERE?

Some one may ask also, "Who will be in heaven?"

John, in Revelation, 7th chapter, is perhaps our best authority upon this point. He says, as he looks out through time and by the aid of the Holy Spirit is enabled to see something of the beyond, he saw a great crowd there. It was "**so great that no man could number it.**" What a happy thought to some of us. We like a crowd, it always inspires us to see a great crowd of people. So heaven will be composed of a great crowd that "**no man could number.**"

John also says it will be a cosmopolitan crowd, in that it is made up of "**all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.**" Yes, a general mixture.

I do not know how some of us will get along with such a gathering, for there is a vast deal of narrow-mindedness and prejudice along racial lines. I remember something of my own experience along this line. It was in Baltimore, during a meeting of the National Baptist Young People's Convention of America. I was very much opposed to allowing the colored brethren a seat under the tent, but without entering into any discussion of the matter now, it is enough to say that they took their seats.

The closing night arrived. We were all to join hands, and sing our closing song, "Blest Be the Tie that Binds." Ten thousand people, it is said, stood with hands joined.

So far as I know there was but one break in the crowd, and that occurred between myself and a colored brother who sat just opposite me. I just made up my mind I would not take his hand. We had not gone far in the song, however, before I began to feel very bad, and if I had not made so much ado about the colored brother's presence, I would have gladly taken his hand. Finally, however, my heart got the better of my prejudice and I said to myself:

"I will not be a fool; that man loves the Lord."

I could tell it from the way he sang. So I reached forth my hand, and he covered it up with his great hand, and gave it a gentle squeeze that came right from his heart and went direct to mine, and, oh, how bad it made me feel, and yet I thank God for it! I don't believe in mixing races, but I do believe, since we are children of one common Father, that there are times when the souls of all should "mingle together in sweet delight."

The crowd described by John was also a clean crowd. He says, "**They had white robes on.**" White is always a sign of purity, and they were pure and clean. If they are to be white in heaven, they must be white before we leave the earth, washed white in the blood of the Lamb. This is a solemn thought, for "**as the tree falleth, so it must lie.**"

They also had "**palms in their hands.**" A palm in the Scriptures is a sign of victory. They had been victorious over sin. Not that the sin nature had been burnt out of them on earth, but they had been enabled to keep the sin nature under subjection. I have wondered also when they got their palms, for surely the chariot of the judgment does not stop at palm forests. If we have palms of victory in heaven, they must be obtained before we die.

Oh, friends, this should be our purpose, to overcome sin by the power of God's Holy Spirit. Let us not be deceived. Entrance into heaven must be preceded by a thorough preparation.

WHAT WE SHALL DO

It is interesting, also, to note how in this same connection John shows us something of what we shall be doing in heaven. He says, "**We will praise God with shouts and song and prayer.**"

I don't know what will become of some fastidious folk who are so afraid of shouting, for when we get to heaven most assuredly there is going to be many a "Praise God" and "Glory Hallelujah."

It is interesting to note, too, the kind of prayer that we will make in heaven. John says it begins with Amen and ends with Amen, and there is not a single request in it. It is all praise to God. The reason for that clearly is, there is nothing to ask for. We have got everything when we get to heaven.

Also in heaven they rejoice over our tribulation, for "**They shall hunger no more, nor 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.**"

Oh, what a glorious home this is to which we are going.

- A home free from tribulation.
- A home where sorrow does not enter.
- A home of no pain, and no sickness, and no death.
- A home of no suffering and no hungering.
- A home where the lonesome widow and the helpless, defenseless orphan will have a shelter and a Shepherd.
- A home of no tears and no heartaches.
- A home of reunited loved ones and friends, where long absent companions will come one more together.
- A home where infant children shall find the long absent mother.

How happy we should be in the contemplation of such a home!

When I get to thinking about it, there comes to my mind the experience of an old miner, who had spent his life in a mine. He had never seen the sun. Finally he was persuaded to accompany some friends out from the valley on to a tall mountain peak, away above the smoke and the fog, that he might see the sun. After waiting all night with eager eyes, he saw the sun as he began to dispel the darkness, and seemed to life himself from his bed of night and stand erect his glory to declare. It was a strange experience. It made him speechless for a time. All during the day he looked and wondered, and finally watched the sun with equally as much interest as he nestled himself in the cradle of night. Then he looked in the direction from which he had come, and there was a large rough canvas – a cloud gathered, and on it was a rainbow. He was told that it was being painted by the hand of the retiring king of day. Then he saw the starry heavens lit up above and around him. It was more than he could stand, and he began to shout and declare that it was too glorious to behold.

So, my friends, some of these days, God will send down His angel messengers, and call us out of this mine of mortality. They will sit down on the mountain peak of time perhaps. In God's own time, we shall see the King, the bright and morning Star, the Light of the World, the Son of God, lift Himself in all His resplendent glory, and spread His rays of light all over the world. And then we shall be taken up with Him, and with all the redeemed of earth we shall reign and rejoice forevermore.

God help us to be ready, with all our household, when He comes.

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