

**OLD-TIME RELIGION**  
12 Fervent, Soul-Winning Sermons

By

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**CHAPTER TWELVE**

**HEAVEN - THE HOME OF THE SAVED**

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**"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, there ye may be also. And whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:1-6).**

**"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" (Revelation 7:9-12).**

You know, when I read a thing like that in the Bible I wonder how people who are afraid to say, "Amen," regardless of what kind of sermon is being preached or what kind of service is being held, are going to act in Heaven. We have gotten so sedate and so stylish, even we Baptists, that you can hardly get a holy grunt out of a Baptist crowd any more, much less a good 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 to 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 7:13-17).

**"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"** (Revelation 21:1).

## **A New Heaven**

GOD is going to make a new Heaven some day. We read, also, in the fifth verse of this same twenty-first chapter of Revelation, that He is going to make all things new. The word that is translated **new** literally means *renewed* or *renovated*. Why is it necessary for GOD to make a new Heaven and a new earth? GOD is a holy GOD, and GOD does not propose to live with sin. He cannot; and GOD has sworn by Himself that He is going to purge this universe of sin, and everything that sin has touched. When GOD gets through there will not be a mark, a stain, a blot of sin left; not a scar nor a trace. Every pollution of sin will be thoroughly purged.

"What!" you say, "Has sin ever touched Heaven? Has sin polluted Heaven?" Yes!

GOD tells us in His Word that once there was war in Heaven; that Satan and his angels rebelled against GOD. Sin, in other words, has lifted its ugly head and made its slimy trail right up to the very throne of GOD; and GOD is going to make a new Heaven. When GOD starts in to purge sin out of His universe, every person that ever lived on this earth who holds on to his sin and has not been washed of that sin in the Blood of JESUS CHRIST, will be purged out with it. Oh, my friend, hear me! If sin is so loathsome to GOD that He would make a new Heaven because sin had touched Heaven, then dismiss from your mind the thought that anybody ever will live with GOD who has not been purged from his sins in the Blood of JESUS CHRIST. No, GOD is not only going to be rid of sin but He is also going to be rid of everything sin has ever touched. **"Behold, I make all things new"** says GOD.

**"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"** (Revelation 21:2, 3).

**Tabernacle** means "*dwelling place*." That means that this new Jerusalem will be the capital city, and Heaven will be moved down here upon the earth. Then will be fulfilled the promise of the Scripture that the righteous shall inherit the earth.

Brother, listen! I know lots of people who sell their souls for a little bit of this world. And they can keep it for only a very short time, a very few years. I will take mine after awhile. And when I come into my own and when GOD's people inherit the earth, inherit all things (that is what He says in this same chapter from which I am reading) - it will be ours for eternity. Oh, **"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal"** and where you have to lie down and die and leave them! I have something in Heaven with GOD, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

Give me that, and you can have the world.

Back in Arkansas we used to sing a song, "*Take the world but give me JESUS.*" That is my sentiment tonight. Take the whole world, but give me JESUS! I tell you, it is great to be a Christian!

Now let us read on:

**" . . . 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.** [Oh, brother, that is Heaven He is talking about - the home of GOD's redeemed, the place of many mansions which JESUS spoke about.] **And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.** [And to me that is the most glorious thing about it. By that He means we can absolutely count on its being just exactly as He told us it would be.] **And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son"** (Revelation 21:3-7).

We read again in Revelation, chapter 22: **"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."**

Isaiah says that the inhabitants of that land will never say one to the other, 'I am sick.' Oh, praise GOD for what He has for His children! We will never sit by the side of a sickbed or weep by the side of another deathbed. There will never be another death scene. We will never have to watch as the breath grows short and the eyes grow dim as our loved ones are slipping away. There will be no death there. What would you take for a hope like that?

**"And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever"** (Revelation 22:1-5).

Heaven! the home of GOD's redeemed!

### **Where Is Heaven?**

But where is Heaven? Does the Bible locate it for us more than just to say it is up? Yes.

In the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah, verses 12 to 14, we read about the casting of Satan out of Heaven: **"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut**

**down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.**" I am going to usurp the throne of GOD. I will sit were GOD sits on the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north! That is where Heaven is.

Again you will find it in Psalm 48:2: **"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."**

When GOD gave to Moses instructions as to what to do with the blood of the sacrifice, He said to pour it out on the north side of the altar toward the Lord.

Heaven, my friend, is in the North. When I found that, I said, "How wonderful is GOD's Word!"

When the Bible says Heaven is up, it is exactly right, because from any point on the face of the earth the only direction that is always up is north. It is no accident that wherever you find men - I do not care who they are nor where they live - from here to the south pole they always say, "Up north," and, "Down south."

It is no accident that that is in the speech of men. And then it is no accident that scientists call the north pole the top of the world. Why couldn't they just as easily have designated the south pole as the top of the world? It hangs right out in the middle of space. I will tell you why the north pole is called the top of the world: It points toward the north star. Yonder on the sides of the north sits the One who made the universe. It is no accident either that the whole universe revolves around the north star.

If you could focus a camera on the north star that would take in all the heavens around and let that focus stand long enough you would find that every star, every planet, ever constellation, every solar system would make a complete circle around the north star. The Scripture says, **"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist,"** or hold together (Colossians 1:16, 17).

### **The Three Heavens**

Well, what about the first, second, and third heaven? In the first chapter of Genesis we read, **"And God said, Let the waters, bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven"** (Genesis 1:20). That is the first heaven. The Bible uses the exact language that we use. We speak of the birds of the heavens. We speak of the heavens being overcast with clouds. We say that the heavens are filled with airplanes. And GOD says that the birds fly in the open firmament of heaven.

In Psalm 19:1, 2 we read: **"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge."** Then the fourth verse says, **"Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the**

**end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.**" You and I speak every day about the stars of the heavens. That is the second heaven mentioned in the Bible.

But the third Heaven mentioned in the Scriptures is the place where GOD dwells.

Paul said, **"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. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter"** (II Corinthians 12:2-4).

Here Paul tells us that the third Heaven and Paradise are one and the same place. Well, now where is Paradise? JESUS said to the thief on the cross, **"Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."** And when He breathed out His last, He said, **"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."** In other words, He said, 'I am coming to you.' So Paradise is where the Father is.

Revelation 22~1f tells us that the tree of life is in the midst of the Paradise of GOD.

Revelation 22~1;2 tells us that the river of life flows out of the throne of GOD and the Lamb, and the tree of life is on either side of the river. So Paradise is Heaven, where GOD is now. And the third Heaven is the same place.

### **Do the Saved Go to Heaven Immediately Upon Death?**

Then the next question we answer is this: Do the saved go to Heaven immediately at death? Yes.

"How do you know, preacher?" GOD said so. Hear the Word of the Lord, not mine. **"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"** (II Corinthians 5:1). And further we read, **"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord"** (II Corinthians 5:6-8).

- does that sound like purgatory?
- does that sound like soul-sleeping?
- does that sound like any kind of an intermediate state?

**"Absent from the body, and . . . present with the Lord"!**

That is why Paul said: **"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart; and to be with Christ; which is far better"** (Philippians 1:23).

Where is CHRIST? Hear it! **"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, ye rather, that is risen again, who is, even at the right hand of God"** (Romans 8:34). Paul said, **"Depart, and be with Christ;"** and again, **"Absent from the body, . . . present with the Lord."**

Just before Stephen was stoned he looked into Heaven, and said, "**Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God**" (Acts 7:56). And then when he sank down in death, he said, "**Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.**"

Yes, my friend, if the Bible is clear on anything, it is clear on the fact that when a child of GOD closes his eyes in death, he opens them on the face of CHRIST that very instant. The fact of the matter is that GOD has permitted many of His saints to see the Lord before they crossed over, just about the time of the crossing; and they have left their testimony behind.

My mother said that her father, just before he passed away, called the children around to tell them good-bye. They began to cry, as they naturally would; and Grandpa said, "Don't cry. Why would you cry? Here is JESUS, and here is Mother with Him. And they are not crying; they are happy. They have come for me to take me Home."

Many a child of GOD has left that testimony as he crossed over. Oh, my friend, isn't it wonderful to be a Christian? The hour of death that, to the lost world, is the greatest enemy of all mankind, has no sting for the child of GOD. For the child of GOD can say, "**O death; where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; [That is the only thing that makes men afraid of death - sin] and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ**" (I Corinthians 15:55-57). Triumphant in the hour of death!

Dwight L. Moody, when the time of his crossing had come, asked his daughter who stood by, "Is this death?"

She said, "Yes, Father."

He said, "No, this is my coronation day!"

**"Absent from the body; present with the Lord!"**

A woman said to me, "If you go to Heaven immediately when you die, what is the use of a judgment?"

Well, she would never have asked that question if she had understood the Bible teaching on the judgments. GOD does not teach anywhere that any judgment is to determine where I am going to spend eternity. Brother, there is but one time when that is decided, and there is but one person on earth who decides it. You decide that while you live right here in this life, and it is decided on one basis, and one only, and that is what you do with JESUS.

Judgment has nothing to do with determining where you will spend eternity. You decide that for yourself. Nobody else can do it. If you go to Hell, it will be because you made the wrong choice yourself. "**For God so loved the world [you included]; that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**" The invitation is, "**Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest**" (Matthew 11:28). And the assurance is, "**Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out**" (John 6:37).

## **Will We Know Our Loved Ones There?**

The next question is: Will we know our loved ones in Heaven? Yes. Will my mother be mother to me in Heaven? Yes. Love never dies. It is eternal. It is from GOD. Besides that, the Bible assures me that I will know my loved ones there.

In II Samuel 12:18-23, you remember we are told that David's baby had died. He had prayed for that baby seven days and seven nights; fasted, and wept, and prayed; but the baby died. His servants said, **'We can't tell him. If he has grieved over that baby as he has while he was sick, refused food, and fasted, and prayed, and wept all these seven days, what will happen when he hears that the baby is dead?'**

David saw them whispering to each other, and David knew that the baby had died; so he asked them the point-blank question, **"Is the child dead?"**

They said, **"He is dead."** Instead of going all to pieces, as they thought, he got up from the ground, wiped away his tears, went into the house, changed his clothes, asked for food, ate what was set before him, and then went into the house of GOD and worshipped.

They said, **'How could he do this?'**

David said, **"But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."** And GOD put that in the blessed holy Book. Why? Because GOD knew that David would not be the last parent that had to follow a loved one or a little baby out yonder to the City of the Dead, and GOD wanted that mother or that father to know that you can go to that one again, that you can have that dear one again. Oh, you know, to me one of the most blessed things about Heaven is the reunion that is going to be ours with our loved ones!

JESUS said, **"Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven"** (Matthew 8:11).

Yes, the same Abraham who walked the hills of Judea; the same Isaac whom he took up yonder on Mount Moriah that day; the same Jacob who made his pillow out of those stones and saw the ladder reaching to Heaven and saw the angels ascending and descending. JESUS said to the Sadducees, **"And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err"** (Mark 12:26, 27).

On the Mount of Transfiguration when Moses and Elijah stood beside JESUS, the disciples present recognized them. Nobody had to tell Peter, James and John who they were; they recognized them immediately. They were still the same Moses and Elijah who had lived here upon the earth. It was the same Moses who had led the children out of Egypt, across the Red Sea and through the forty years in the wilderness. It was the same Elijah who was taken up to Heaven in the chariot of GOD that day. The same Moses who walked up Nebo with GOD that day, and GOD buried him there; recognized by men who had never seen him, and had never seen a photograph of him.

In the fourth chapter of I Thessalonians Paul is writing to the members of that church. They had evidently thought, from what Paul said, that nobody would die, no Christian would die until JESUS came back. But as time went on and some of them died, they wondered if they would see them any more. They wondered if there was any hope. They had died before JESUS came - now what about it? Paul wrote:

**"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. [Now don't think because they are gone, don't think that because they have fallen asleep you will never have them any more, that there is no hope; don't sorrow as those sorrow who do not have any hope.] For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. [He is coming back again and He will bring them with Him.] For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, [There will be no going before anybody! Brother, we will go together! That is what he says. We will go together! Those of our loved ones who are sleeping in the grave will be raised from the dead, and together we will go to meet the Lord. Oh, what a reunion that is going to be!] to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).**

You who are sorrowing over the death of your loved ones, get comfort from this. You will have a homecoming, a reunion one day. You will have them again. How much clearer could GOD make it?

One of these days I expect to walk down the golden streets of the new Jerusalem with my precious mother. Heaven used to seem to me a place a long way off, but since Mother has gone there it seems so much more real to me now, and a lot closer. Why, bless your heart, sometimes it seems to me that Heaven is so close that I could almost reach up and touch it, since Mother is there. Praise GOD, one day we will be reunited, never to be separated again!

### **What Will We Do in Heaven?**

The Scripture says, **"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple"** (Revelation 7:15).

Friend, the greatest joy that I have ever found on this earth is serving the Lord. I had never known real joy until I cut loose from everything and gave my life to the Lord to serve Him. You know, I feel sorry for Christian people who just dabble around the edge, live with one foot in the world and one foot in the church. They have never known what it is to really live. They have never known real joy. If you want to be happy; if you want real joy in your life, cut loose from the world and launch out into the deep with GOD, and be lost in the fullness of His wonderful love and fellowship.

**"They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint"** (Isaiah 40:31).

Brother, I want to tell you, it is great to serve the Lord! Oh, if you want to be happy - the Devil can't make you happy. When will GOD's people learn that the world does not have anything for a Christian? When will they learn that it is feeding on ashes, as Isaiah said? When will they learn that it is going to a fountain, a broken cistern that does not have any water? Oh, drink deep at the fountain of His grace! Cut loose from the shore line and serve the Lord with gladness and singleness of heart. One of the greatest joys to me about Heaven is that I will be able to serve Him to my heart's content.

In Heaven there will be music, there will be singing; and I expect to join in that. When the saints of GOD start singing, brother, the angels are going to take a back seat! John says, **"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters,** [There will not be a discord. Musicians tell us that the only perfect musical note ever made is the sound of running water.] **and as the voice of mighty thunderings"** (Revelation 19:6).

That mighty crescendo of praise rises and swells until the whole heavens resound with that chorus of the people of GOD singing. And what are they singing? **"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood"** (Revelation 1:5).

Brother, if you could get to Heaven without being saved, you could not sing that song, because the Scripture said, **"No man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth"** (Revelation 14:3).

Oh, brother, it is going to be great when the singing starts! And you know, somehow I think David is going to be the choir director. I do! Because he is the greatest singer GOD ever had on this earth, and the greatest choir director that GOD ever had. I am going to sit down and watch him. I love music with a passion. I never had a chance to learn to play anything, but I have it in my soul. Nobody ever appreciated music more or loved it more than I do.

When I hear an organist sit down and play those wonderful handfuls of notes at a time and in perfect harmony, I can hardly help but be envious. I want to do it so much! When I hear a violinist pick up a violin, a master, and pull that bow across the strings, it is just next to Heaven to me, and I want to do it so much that I just hurt inside. I did not have a chance to learn. But do you know what I am going to do when I get to Heaven? I am going to ask GOD to let me play on everything He has up there. And brother, He will do it! He will do it! Of course He will! John said, **"I heard the voice of harpers harping with the harps"** (Revelation 14:2). You know, when I read about that, I just want to jump up and say, "Glory to GOD! Isn't it good to be a Christian!"

Brother, that is the way I feel in my soul when I think about what GOD has for His children. Talk about shouting! I have been so happy here in this world that my soul has overflowed. And I am not ashamed of it. I am glad I love the Lord enough, and that He is real enough to me, and that He sends the joy of His Holy Spirit into my heart until it just runs over sometimes. I am glad that it is so. I tell you, it is great to be a Christian.

## Who Will Be in Heaven?

Then, who will be there? Listen: **"What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?"**

Now if we would ask you that question, some of you would say, "Why, that's the crowd that lived the best they could and treated everybody right, paid their honest debts and were good citizens and behaved themselves. That's the crowd that is going to Heaven. That is the way I'm going." No, brother, that isn't the answer John got. And if you would ask somebody else who that crowd is, they would say, "Why, that's the crowd that belonged to our church, because we are the only crowd that is going to Heaven. If you don't come this way, why, you'll never get there." But that is not the answer John got. And somebody else would say, "Why, that's the crowd that was baptized a certain way and held out faithful to the end." But that is not the answer John got. **"Who are these?"** **"These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"** (Revelation 7:14).

Everyone of them was arrayed in a white robe, and every robe was washed in the Blood of JESUS.

JESUS told the parable of the wedding feast. He said, **"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth"** (Matthew 22:11-13). Brother, you cannot get in without the wedding garment, and it is washed in the Blood of JESUS. Settle that forever, my friend. If the Word of GOD is clear on anything, it is clear on that.

In the twenty-first chapter of Revelation He said, **"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."** How can GOD make it any clearer?

In that wonderful fourteenth chapter of John, when He was describing the home of many mansions, JESUS said, **"No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."** Did you hear what He said? **"No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."**

In the tenth chapter of John, when He is talking about the sheepfold, He said, **"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."** He also said, **"He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."**

Listen, friend, suppose you could get there some other way; why would you want to? Isn't JESUS good enough? JESUS, the Son of GOD, who loved you enough to die for you, made His soul an offering for sin for you, shed the last drop of His Blood for you. I repeat, suppose you could get there some other way; why would you want to? If I knew there were one hundred ways, I wouldn't exchange JESUS for any of them.

## What Kind of a Place Is Heaven?

The last question is: What kind of a place is Heaven?

Well, I think it is just exactly the kind of place GOD tells us it is.

Look in the twenty-first chapter of Revelation and read it.

- I believe that its streets are paved with pure gold.
- I believe that one day I will look upon those jasper-studded walls.
- I believe that I will see those gates of one solid pearl.
- I believe that it is a place of real mansions.

Somebody may say, "Why, preacher, don't you think that language is figurative and that JESUS is just trying to tell us of the beauty of the place by using those beautiful things in describing it?"

Well, then, why did JESUS say, "**If it were not so, I would have told you**"? In other words, He said, 'If it were not exactly this way, I would have told you so.' And then why did GOD stop John twice when he was writing the description of that place to interpose these words, "**Write: for these words are true and faithful**"?

The Holy Spirit knew, and JESUS knew, that there would be a lot of smart alecks who would know more about it than JESUS did, and He wanted the people of GOD to be absolutely certain that He was telling them the literal truth. It is a real place, with real people, and a real Saviour, and a real GOD. Praise the Lord!

But to me, the most wonderful thing about Heaven is that it is home.

Home! Do you know, when I am away in a meeting and it comes time to go home, I can hardly wait. I have had the nervous jitters all day today. Why? Because at one-thirty in the morning I am going to get on a plane and I am going home. If I had to go to bed tonight, I could not sleep a wink. There is no use for me to go to bed tonight. There is no use for me to try to sleep on that plane. I couldn't go to sleep on that plane; I am going home!

John Howard Payne, who wrote, "*Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home*," touched the deepest chord in the human heart. Were you ever a long way from home and homesick enough to die? I know just exactly how those boys over yonder in the Philippines feel. I know why they have been making those protests. It is not because they are not loyal Americans! They just don't want to be away from home. After World War I, I was over there until July, 1919. I was homesick enough to die. On the fifteenth day of July, in Paris, I got a telegram which read: "Report in Brest on the morning of the seventeenth to sail for home on ship so and so," an American ship. Well, do you think I reported at Brest on the morning of the seventeenth? No, I was down there about daylight on the morning of the sixteenth! Brother, that was one time I didn't mean to miss the boat!

I was going home. I didn't think it would sail on the sixteenth, but I thought I might get to see it. And just to see it would be like a tonic. All day long I paced up and down that long shed at Brest, looking for that boat. It didn't come in, and I did not sleep any the night of the sixteenth of July, 1919 - not a wink. The next morning, the seventeenth, I was out there by daylight, pacing up and down that long boardwalk, back and forth, looking out over the harbor. I would see a ship coming

in. I would look at it and look at it. After a while I would see a French flag, and I would start walking again. Another would come in, and I would see a British flag, and I would start again. That was the longest day I ever spent in my life.

About four o'clock that afternoon I saw a ship coming up over the horizon. I put my hand up over my eyes and looked and strained every nerve to see and watch that ship until it got close enough for me to see Old Glory. Brother, I had thought all my life that we had the prettiest flag on earth, and I still think so. But I tell you, it never was as pretty to me in my life as it was that afternoon; for that was the ship that was coming to take me home.

When they pulled her in and let down the gangplank, do you suppose anybody had to beg me to get on? Why, bless your life, I was halfway up by the time the gangplank hit! I was going home! No, they didn't have to beg me to get on.

And, you know, the strangest thing to me in this world is that people would have to be begged to take CHRIST and go to Heaven. That is a thing I will never be able to understand:

Why you have to plead and pray and weep and persuade and beg to get people to be saved, when salvation is offered in CHRIST as a free gift to everybody who will take it, and guarantees a passage to Heaven and home and eternal fellowship with GOD and loved ones and the saints in glory!

That ship was a slow one. It took fourteen days to cross the ocean. On the morning of the fifteenth day I was awakened by a band playing, "*Home, Sweet Home*." The music was floating in at the porthole of that ship. Out of the bunk I went and into my uniform and up on the deck. It was just getting daylight. I looked out there and I could see the shore of the homeland. The band had come out in a little boat to meet us. When they finished playing "*Home, Sweet Home*," over on the other side of the ship another band started playing, "*My Country, 'Tis of Thee*."

I saw those sun-tanned soldiers standing there reach up and take off their caps and weep for joy like a bunch of little children.

We had come home! We landed at Philadelphia. I got on the train, the Pennsylvanian; and that is the slowest train I ever rode in my life! People can talk about the slow train through Arkansas all they want to, brother; but it is like greased lightning by the side of that Pennsylvanian. It stopped more times, and they were the longest stops I ever witnessed! Finally it crawled into St. Louis. I got on the Missouri Pacific and started down to Arkansas. I got down to Little Rock.

When that Missouri Pacific pulled out of Little Rock, I knew it was just forty-two miles to home. I could not keep my seat any longer. I walked up and down that coach, back and forth, looking out the window at every tree and every house and everything else to see if I could not see something familiar. When we got on down to Pine Bluff, a porter stuck his head in the door and yelled, "Pine Bluff!"

Brother, that was the sweetest music I ever heard!

When the train pulled on down to the station, I said to the conductor - I had known him from boyhood - "Won't you pull up that platform and let me out on the steps? I know it is against the rule, but my mother and dad and my wife and my sister and my brother are down there at the station to meet me."

He said, "Go ahead and help yourself." I got hold of the rod, got out on that step, swung myself out and looked down the track. Soon I saw them. When we pulled in and got even with them, I just swung loose and took the whole bunch in my arms. I was home! Home!

Listen, unsaved friend! The old ship of Zion is alongside tonight. She's sailing for home. Home! We are inviting you to come aboard. JESUS is the Captain of that ship. She has weathered every storm of the ages. She has never lost a passenger. Come aboard. She is going Home!

~ end of book ~

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