

# HEAVEN

by

D. L. Moody

**"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Revelation 21:23).**

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## CHAPTER THREE

### HEAVEN: ITS HAPPINESS

**"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (Isaiah 64:4; I Corinthians 2:9).**

#### "WHAT! ALMOST HOME?"

"What! almost home?" "Yes, almost home," she said.  
And light seemed gleaming on her aged head.  
"JESUS is very precious!" Those who near  
Her bedside stood were thrilled those words to hear.

"Toward His blest home I turn my willing feet;  
Hinder me not; I go my Lord to meet."  
Silence ensued. She seemed to pass away,  
Serene and quiet as that summer day.

"Speak," cried through tears her daughter, bending low,  
"One word, beloved mother, ere you go."  
She spoke that word; the last she spoke on earth,  
In whispering tones - that word of wondrous worth:

"JESUS!" The sorrowing listeners caught the sound,  
But angels heard it with a joy profound.  
Back, at its mighty power, the gates unfold -  
The gates of pearl that guard the streets of gold.

The harpers with their harps took up the strain,  
And sang the triumph of the Lord again,  
As through the open portals entered in

Another soul redeemed from death and sin.

And as from earth the spirit passed away,  
To dwell forever in the realms of day,  
Those who were left to mourn could almost hear  
The strains of heavenly music strike the ear.

And to their longing eyes by grace was given,  
In such a scene, as 'twere, a glimpse of Heaven.

- Unknown

If there is one word above another that will swing open the eternal gates, it is the name of JESUS. There are a great many pass-words and by-words down here; but that will be the countersign up above. JESUS CHRIST is the "Open Sesame" to Heaven. Anyone who tries to climb up some other way, is a thief and a robber. But when we get in, what a joy above every other joy we can think of, will it be to see JESUS Himself all the time, and to be with Him continually.

Isaiah has given this promise of GOD to every one who is saved through faith: "**Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off!**" Some of us may not be able to go around the world. We may not be able to see any of the foreign countries; but every Christian by and by is going to see a land that is very far off! This is our Promised Land.

John Milton says of the saints who have gone already:

"They walk with GOD  
High in salvation, and the climes of bliss."

It is a blissful climate up there. People down here look around a great deal to find a good climate where they will not be troubled by any of their pains or aches, but the climate of Heaven is so fine that no pains or aches can hold out against it.

There will be no room to find fault. We shall leave all our pains and aches behind us, and find an everlasting health, such as earth can never know.

But you know the glory of CHRIST as reigning King of Heaven would be something too much for mortal eyes to endure. In First Timothy, 6, we read of CHRIST as:

**"The blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see."**

As mortals, we cannot see that light. Our feeble faculties would be dazzled before such a blaze of

glory.

In Ezekiel 1:28, we read of that prophet having a quaint glimpse of it:

**"As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face."**

We are amazed at ordinary perfections now. None of us can look the sun squarely in the face. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, as Paul says, the power of the soul will be stronger. We shall be able to see CHRIST in His glory then. Though the moon be confounded and the sun ashamed, yet we shall see Him as He is. This is what will make Heaven so happy. We all know that great happiness cannot be found on earth. Reason, revelation, and the experience of six thousand years, all tell us that.

No human creature has the power to give it. Even doing good fails to give it fully, for, owing to sin in the world, even the best have not perfect happiness here. They have to wait for heaven; although they may be so near it sometimes that they can see heralds of its joy and beauty, as Columbus saw the strange and beautiful birds hovering around his ships long before he caught sight of America.

All the joys we are to know in Heaven will come from the presence of GOD. This is the leading thought in all that the Scripture has to say on the subject. What life on this earth is without health, life in Heaven would be without the presence of GOD. GOD's presence will be the very light and life of the place. It is said that one translation of the words describing the presence of GOD is "a happy making sight." It will be a sight like the return of a long-lost boy to his mother, or the first glimpse of your home after you have been a long time away.

Some of you know how a little sunshine on a dark day, or the face of a kind friend in trouble, often cheers us up. Well, it will be something like that, only a thousand times better. Our perceptions of GOD will be clearer then, and that will make us love Him all the more.

The more we know GOD, the more we love Him. A great many of us would love GOD more if we only became better acquainted with Him. While on earth it gives Christians great pleasure to think of the perfection of JESUS CHRIST, but how will it be when we see Him as He is?

## **WE SHALL BE LIKE CHRIST**

Some one once asked a Christian what he expected to do when he got to Heaven? He said he expected to spend the first thousand years looking at JESUS CHRIST, and after that he would look for Peter, and then for James, and for John, and all the time he could conceive of would be joyfully filled with looking upon these great persons. But it seems to me that one look at JESUS CHRIST will more than reward us for all we have ever done for Him down here; for all the sacrifices we can possibly make for Him, just to see Him; only to see Him. But we shall become like Him when we once have seen Him, because we shall have His Spirit. JESUS, the Saviour of the world, will be there, and we shall see Him face to face.

It will not be the pearly gates; nor the jasper walls, or the streets paved with transparent gold, that will make it Heaven to us. These would not satisfy us. If these were all, we would not want to stay there forever.

I heard of a child whose mother was very sick; and while she lay very low, one of the neighbors took the child away to stay with her until the mother should be well again. But instead of getting better, the mother died; and they thought they would not take the child home until the funeral was all over; and would never tell her about her mother being dead. So a while afterward they brought the little girl home.

First she, went into the sitting-room to find her mother; then she went into the parlor, to find her mother there; and she went from one end of the house to the other, and could not find her. At last she said, " Where is my mamma?" And when they told her that her mamma was gone, the little thing wanted to go back to the neighbor's house again.

Home had lost its attraction to her since her mother was not there any longer.

No; it will not be the jasper walls and the pearly gates that will make Heaven attractive. It is our being with GOD. We shall be in the presence of the Redeemer; we shall be forever with the Lord.

There was a time when I used to think more of JESUS CHRIST than I did of the Father; CHRIST seemed to be so much nearer to me because He had become the Daysman between me and GOD. In my imagination I put GOD away on the throne as a stern judge, but CHRIST had come in as the mediator, and it seemed as if CHRIST was much nearer to me than GOD, the Father.

I got over that years ago, when GOD gave me a son, and for ten years I had an only son, and as I looked at the child as he grew up, the thought came to me that it took more love for GOD to give up His Son than it did for His Son to die. Think of the love that GOD had for this world when He gave CHRIST up!

If you will turn to Acts 7:55, you will find that when Stephen was being stoned he lifted up his eyes, and it seemed as if GOD rolled back the curtain of time and allowed him to look into the eternal city, and see CHRIST standing at the right hand of GOD. When JESUS CHRIST went on high He led captivity captive, and took His seat, for His work was done; but when Stephen saw Him He was standing up, and I can imagine He saw that martyr fighting, as it were, single-handed and alone, the first martyr, though many were to come after him. You can hear the tramp of the millions coming after him, to lay down their lives for the Son of GOD. But Stephen led the van; he was the first martyr, and as he was dying for the Lord JESUS CHRIST he looked up; Christ was standing to give him a welcome, and the HOLY GHOST came down to bear witness that CHRIST was there. How then can we doubt it?

A beggar does not enjoy looking at a palace. The grandeur of its architecture is lost upon him. Looking upon a royal banquet does not satisfy the hunger of a starving man. But seeing Heaven is also having a share in it. There would be no joy there if we did not feel that some of it was ours.

GOD unites the soul to Himself. We read in II Peter that we are made partakers of the divine nature. Now if you put a piece of iron in the fire, it very soon loses its dark color, and becomes red and hot like the fire, but it does not lose its iron nature. So the soul becomes bright with GOD's brightness, beautiful with GOD's beauty, pure with GOD's purity, and warm with the glow of His perfect love, and yet remains a human soul. We shall be like Him, but remain ourselves.

There is a fable that a kind-hearted king was once hunting in a forest, and found a blind orphan boy, who was living almost like a beast. The king was touched with pity, and adopted the boy as his own, and had him taught all that can be learned by one who is blind. When he reached his twenty-first year, the king, who was also a great physician, restored the youth his sight, and took him to his palace, where, surrounded by his nobles and all the majesty and magnificence of his court, he proclaimed him one of his sons, and commanded all to give him their honor and love. The once friendless orphan thus became a prince and a sharer in the royal dignity, and of all the happiness and glory to be found in the palace of a king.

Who can tell the joy that overwhelmed the soul of that young man when he first saw the king, of whose beauty and goodness and power he had heard so much? Who can tell the happiness he must have felt when he saw his own princely attire, and found himself adopted into the royal family - honored and beloved by all?

Now CHRIST is the great and mighty King who finds our souls in the wilderness of this sinful world. He finds us, as we read in the 3rd chapter of Revelation, "**wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.**" We read in the 1st chapter of the same book, He "**washed us from our sins in His own blood;**" and again, in the 61st chapter of Isaiah, He has clothed us with a spotless robe of innocence, "**with the garments of salvation;**" He has covered us "**with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels.**"

The mission of the Gospel to sinners, as we find it in the 26th chapter of Acts, was, "**to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me.**" This is what Christ has done for every Christian.

He has adorned you with the gift of grace, and adopted you as His child, and as it says in the 3rd chapter of I Corinthians:

**"Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."**

He has given you His own Word to educate you for Heaven; He has opened your eyes so that now you see. By His grace and your own co-operation your soul is being gradually developed into a more perfect resemblance to Him.

Finally, your Heavenly Father calls you home, where you will see the angels and saints clothed with the beauty of CHRIST Himself, standing around His throne, and hearing the word that will

admit you into their society, "**Well done, thou good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.**"

In the 16th chapter of John, CHRIST Himself says: "**All things that the Father hath are Mine; therefore, said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.**" All will be yours. Ah, how poor and mean do earthly pleasures seem by comparison. How true those lines of a Scotch poet:

"The world can never give  
The bliss for which we sigh;  
'Tis not the whole of life to live,  
Nor all of death to die.

Beyond this vale of tears  
There is a life above,  
Unmeasured by the flight of years,  
And all that life is love."

### **OVER THE RIVER**

There is joy in Heaven, we are told, over the conversions that take place on earth. In Luke 15:7, we read: "**I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.**"

When there is going to be an election for President of the United States, there is tremendous excitement - a great commotion. There is probably not a paper from Maine to California that would not have something on nearly every page about the candidate; the whole country is excited; but I doubt if it would be noticed in Heaven.

If Queen Victoria should leave her throne, there would be great excitement throughout the nations of the earth; the whole world would be interested in the event; it would be telegraphed around the world; but it would probably be overlooked altogether in Heaven.

Yet if one little boy or girl, one man or one woman, should repent of their sins, this day and hour that would be noticed in Heaven. They look at things differently up there; things that look very large to us, look very small in Heaven; and things that seem very small to us down here, may be very great up yonder. Think of it!

By an act of our own, we may cause joy in Heaven. The thought seems almost too wonderful to understand. To think that the poorest sinner of earth, by an act of his own, can send a thrill of joy through the hosts of heaven!

**The Bible says: "There is joy in the presence of the angels," not that the angels rejoice, but it is "in the presence" of the angels.**

I have studied over that a great deal, and often wondered what it meant. "**Joy in the presence of the angels**"? Now, it is speculation; I admit it may be true, or it may not; but perhaps the friends who have left the shores of time - they who have gone within the fold - may be looking down upon us; and when they see one they prayed for while on earth repenting and turning to GOD, it sends a thrill of joy to their very hearts.

Even now, some mother who has gone up yonder may be looking down upon a son or daughter, and if that child should say: "I will meet that mother of mine; I will repent; yes, I am going to join you, mother," the news, with the speed of a sunbeam, reaches Heaven, and that mother may then rejoice, as we read, "**In the presence of the angels.**"

In Dublin, after one of the meetings, a man walked into the inquiry room with his daughter, his only one, whose mother had died some time before, and he prayed: "O God, let this truth go deep into my daughter's heart, and grant that the prayers of her mother may be answered to-day - that she may be saved." As they rose up she put her arms about his neck and kissed him, and said: "I want to meet my mother; I want to be a Christian." That day she accepted CHRIST. That man is now a minister in Texas. The daughter died out there a little while ago, and is now with her mother in Heaven. What a blessed and joyful meeting it must have been!

It may be a sister, it may be a brother. who is beckoning you over -

"Over the river they beckon to me,  
Loved ones who've crossed to the farther side;  
The gleam of their snowy robes I see,  
But their voices are drowned in the rushing tide.

There's one with ringlets of sunny gold,  
And eyes, the reflection of Heaven's own blue;  
He crossed in the twilight gray and cold,  
And the pale mist hid him from mortal view.

We saw not the angels who met him there,  
The gates of the city we could not see;  
Over the river, over the river,  
My brother stands waiting to welcome me."

Whoever you are, do not delay.

The story is told of a father who had his little daughter out late in the evening. The night was dark, and they had passed through a thick wood to the brink of a river. Far away on the opposite shore a light twinkled here and there in the few scattered houses, and still farther off blazed the bright lights of the great city to which they were going. The little child was weary and sleepy, and the father held her in his arms while he waited for the ferryman, who was at the other side. At length they saw a little light; nearer and nearer came the sound of the oars, and soon they were safe in the boat.

"Father," said the little girl. "Well, my child?"

"It's very dark, and I can't see the shore, where are we going?"

"The ferryman knows the way, little one; we will soon be over."

"O, I wish we were there, father."

Soon in her home loving arms welcomed her, and her fears and her tremor were gone. Some months pass by, and this same little child stands on the brink of a river that is darker and deeper, more terrible still. It is the River of Death. The same loving father stands near her, distressed that his child must cross this river and he not be able to go with her.

For days and for nights he and her mother have been watching over her, leaving her bedside only long enough for their meals, and to pray for the life of their precious one. For hours she has been slumbering, and it seems as if her spirit must pass away without her waking again, but just before the morning watch she suddenly awakes with the eye bright, the reason unclouded, and every faculty alive. A sweet smile is playing upon her face.

"Father," she says, "I have come again to the riverside, and am again waiting for the ferryman to come and take me across."

"Does it seem as dark and cold as when you went over the other river, my child?"

"O no! There is no darkness here. The river is covered with floating silver. The boat coming toward me seems made of solid light, and I am not afraid of the ferryman."

"Can you see over the river, my darling?"

"O yes, there is a great and beautiful city there. It is all filled with light; and I hear music such as the angels make!"

"Do you see anyone on the other side?"

"Why yes, yes, I see the most beautiful form; and He beckons me now to come. Oh, ferryman, make haste! I know who it is! It is JESUS; my own blessed JESUS. I shall be caught in His arms. I shall rest on His bosom - I come - I come."

And thus she crossed over the River of Death, made like a silver stream by the presence of the blessed Redeemer.

### **SOMETHING MORE**

There is hardly an unconverted man anywhere, no matter how high up or how rich he may be, but will tell you, if you get his confidence, that he is not happy. There is something he wants that he cannot get, or there is something he has that he wants to get rid of.

It is very doubtful if the Czar of all the Russians is a happy man, and yet he has about all he can get. Although Queen Victoria has palaces, and millions at her command, and has besides what most sovereigns lack, the love of her subjects, it is a question whether she gets much pleasure out of her position.

If kings and queens love the JESUS Christ and are good, then they may be happy. If they know they will reach Heaven like the humblest of their subjects, then they may rest secure. Paul, the humble tent-maker, will have a higher seat in Heaven than the best and greatest sovereign that ever ruled the earth. If the Czar should meet John Bunyan, the poor tinker, up in Heaven, he no doubt would find him the greater man.

The Christian life is the only happy one. Without it something is always wanting. When we are young we have grand enterprises, but we soon spoil them by being too rash. We want experience. When we get old we have the experience, but then all the power to carry out our schemes is gone. **"Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord."**

The only way to be happy is to be good. The man who steals from necessity sins because he is afraid of being unhappy, but for the moment he forgets all about how unhappy the sin is going to make him. Bad as he is, man is the best and noblest thing on earth, and it is easy to understand how he fails to find true happiness in anything lower than himself.

The only object better than ourselves is GOD, and He is all we can ever be satisfied with. Gold, that is mere dross dug up out of the earth, does not satisfy man. Neither do the honor and praise of other men. The human soul wants something more than that. Heaven is the only place to get it. No wonder that the angels who see GOD all the time are so happy.

The publicans went to hunt up John the Baptist in the wilderness, to know what they should do. Some of the highest men in the land went to consult the hermit to know how to get happiness. **"Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he."** It is because there is no real happiness down here, that earth is not worth living for. It is because it is all above, that Heaven is worth dying for.

In Heaven there is all life and no death. In hell there is all death and no life. Here on earth there is both living and dying, which is between the two. If we are dead to sin here we will live in Heaven, and if we live in sin here we must expect eternal death to follow.

Do you know that every Christian dies twice? He first becomes spiritually dead to sin - that is the renewed soul. He then begins to feel the joy of Heaven. The joys of Heaven reach down to earth as many and as sure as the rays of the sun. Then comes physical death, which makes way for the physical Heaven. Of course the old sinful body has to be changed. We cannot take that into Heaven. It will be a glorified body that we will get at the resurrection, not a sinful body. Our bodies will be transfigured like CHRIST's.

There will be no temptation in Heaven. If there were no temptation in the world now, GOD could not prove us. He wants to see if we are loyal. That is why He put the forbidden tree in Paradise; that accounts for the presence of the Canaanite in the land of Israel. When we plant a seed, after a time it disappears and brings forth a seed that looks much the same, but still it is a

different seed. So our bodies and the bodies of those we know and love will be raised up, looking much the same - but still not all the same.

CHRIST took the same body into Heaven that was crucified on the cross, unless He was transformed in the cloud after the disciples lost sight of Him. There must have been some change in the appearance of CHRIST after His resurrection, for Mary Magdalene who was the first one who saw Him did not know Him neither did the disciples, who walked and talked with Him about Himself, and did not recognize Him until He began to ask a blessing at supper.

Even Peter did not know Him when He appeared on the sea-shore. Thomas would not believe it was CHRIST until he saw the prints of the nails and the wound in His side. But we shall all know Him in Heaven.

There are two things that the Bible makes as clear and certain as eternity. One is that we are going to see CHRIST, and the other that we are going to be like Him. GOD will never hide His face from us there, and Satan will never show his.

There is not such a great difference between grace and glory after all. Grace is the bud, and glory the blossom. Grace is glory begun, and glory is grace perfected. It will not come hard to people who are serving GOD down here to do it when they go up yonder. They will change places, but they will not change employments.

### **HIGHER UP**

The moment a person becomes heavenly-minded and gets his heart and affections set on things above, their life becomes beautiful, the light of Heaven shines across his pathway, and he does not have to be all the time lashing and upbraiding himself because he is not more like CHRIST.

Some one asked a Scotchman if he was on the way to Heaven, and he said: "Why man, I live there; I am not on the way." That is just it. We want to live in Heaven; while we are walking in this world it is our privilege to have our hearts and affections there.

I once heard Mr. Morehouse tell a story about a lady in London who found one of those poor, bed-ridden saints, and then she found a wealthy woman who was all the time complaining and murmuring at her lot. Sometimes I think people whom GOD does the most for in worldly things think the less of Him and care less about Him, and are the most unproductive in His service. But this lady went around as a missionary visiting the poor, and she used to go and visit this poor, bed-ridden saint, and she said if she wanted to get cheered up and her heart made happy she would go and visit her. [There is a place in Chicago, and has been for years, where a great many Christians have always gone when they want to get their faith strengthened; they go there and visit one of these saints. And a friend told me that she thought that the Lord kept one of those saints in most of the cities to entertain angels as they passed over the cities on errands of mercy, for it seems that these saints are often visited by the heavenly host.]

Well, this lady missionary had wanted to get this wealthy woman in contact with this saint, and she invited her to go a number of times; and finally the lady consented to go, and when she got to the place, she went up the first flight of stairs, and it was not very clean, and was dark.

"What a horrible place," the lady said; "why did you bring me here?"

The lady smiled and said: "It is better higher up."

And then they went up another flight, and it didn't grow any lighter, and she complained again, and the lady said, "It is better higher up."

And then they went up another flight, and it was no lighter; still the missionary kept saying, "It is better higher up." And when they got to the fifth story they opened the door, and entered a beautiful room, a room that was carpeted, with plants in the window, and a little bird was in a cage singing, and there was that saint just smiling, and the first thing the complaining woman had to say to her was:

"It must be very hard for you to be here and suffer."

"Oh, that is a very small thing; it is not very hard," she said, "it is better higher up."

And so if things do not go just right, if they do not go to suit us here, we can say, "It is better higher up, it is better further on," and we can lift up our hearts and rejoice as we journey on toward HOME.

You know those beautiful lines -

"Beyond the smiling and the weeping,  
I shall be soon;  
Beyond the waking and the sleeping,  
Beyond the sowing and the reaping,  
I shall be soon.  
Love, rest, and home!  
Sweet Home!  
Lord, tarry not, but come."

"Beyond the rising and the setting,  
I shall be soon;  
Beyond the calming and the fretting,  
Beyond remembering and forgetting,  
I shall be soon.  
Love, rest, and home!  
Sweet Hope!  
Lord, tarry not, but come."

by Anna Shipton

**SPIRIT VOICES**

Nearer and nearer, day by day, the distant voices come;  
Soft through the pearly gate they swell, and seem to call me home  
The lamp of life burns faint and low; ay, let it fainter burn;  
For who would weep the failing lamp when birds announce the morn!

I saw the faces of my loved gleam through the twilight dim,  
And softly on the morning air arose the heaven-born hymn;  
With looks of love they gazed on me, as none gaze on me now;  
The glory of the Infinite surrounded every brow.

Fair lilies, star-like in their bloom, and waving palms they bore,  
And oh, the smiles of peace and joy those heavenly faces wore!  
Thou who hast fathomed death's dark tide, save me from death's alarms;  
Beneath my trembling soul, oh, stretch Thine everlasting arms.

No second cross, no thorny crown can bruise Thy sacred brow;  
Thou who the wine-press trod alone, o'er the dark waves bear me now.  
A parting hour, a pang of pain, and then shall pass away  
The veil that shrouds Thee where Thou reign'st in everlasting day.

No sin, no sigh, no withering fear, can wring the bosom there;  
But basking in Thy smile I shall Thy sinless service share.  
How long, O Lord, how long before Thou'lt take me by the hand,  
And I, Thy weakest child, at last among Thy children stand?

Beyond the stars that steadfast shine my spirit pines to soar,  
To dwell within my Father's house, and leave that home no more;  
O Lord, Thou hast with angel food my fainting spirit fed;  
If 'tis Thy will I linger here, bless Thou the path I tread;  
And though my soul doth pant to pass within the pearly gate,  
Yet teach me for Thy summons, Lord, in patience still to wait.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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