



THE HEAVENLY HOPE

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If we look in the Book of Hebrews 11:13-16 you will see that we have been reminded that the believer is actually a stranger and a pilgrim here on earth. This is not our permanent abode, we are merely sojourners (travelers) passing through. Verse 16 tells us, "But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them."

As you read this column you might be feeling very disillusioned when you look with your carnal eyes at what is happening around you. Maybe you have been retrenched from work, maybe you are terminally ill in hospital, maybe you have family problems, maybe you are going through a horrific divorce and you feel that there is no hope for you. I really want to encourage you to lift up your heads, open up your spiritual eyes and see that this life here on earth is very short and very temporal. The Bible tells us that life on earth is a mere shadow, a vapour, like a flower here today and gone tomorrow. Yet, eternity goes on forever and ever, and to be with Jesus Christ will be sheer bliss.

For me as a simple farmer Heaven and hell truly exist, because Jesus spoke about them both. To me Heaven is to be in the presence of Jesus Christ forever and hell is to be without Him forever.

I heard a beautiful story many years ago of an old missionary who had finished his work somewhere in the jungles of central Africa and was on a ship sailing back to the United States of America. The huge ship passed by the Statue of Liberty and entered into the huge harbour of New York city. There was also a football team on board and they had been away for a mere couple of weeks whereas the old missionary had spent most of his life preaching the gospel to unreached peoples in the darkest reaches of Africa.

As the ship came sailing into the harbour the football team was standing on the deck looking out and there was one huge crowd. Thousands of people had turned up with streamers flying and brass bands playing to welcome their winning team back home, but there was not one single

person waiting to welcome the missionary back home. He stood right at the back of the ship all by himself. He was so sad and so forlorn. He cried out to God and said "Lord there is no one to welcome me back home." Then a voice came from Heaven and said "My son, you haven't reached your home yet."

Many of us are spending too much time with temporal things and not enough time with eternal things. The way some of us are settling in here on earth you would think we were going to be here forever and then of course when it comes to sending material things to our eternal home in Heaven we send nothing. What can we send home ahead? Well, probably the most important thing is prayer. We really need to cultivate our prayer life with Jesus Christ. Seeing that we are going to be with Him forever we need to read The Word; to familiarise ourselves so that we are not surprised when we get home and see the beautiful mansions that the Lord has prepared for you and I.

So, do not be discouraged, things might not be going so well here on earth, but I can assure you that God is preparing a special place for those who love Him in Heaven. As we contemplate Heaven, I think of that beautiful scripture in Hebrews 12:1-2 (NKJV), "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Let us continue to run the race for we have a beautiful Heavenly home, which the Lord is preparing for us at this very time. ✚

God bless
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