

# The King's Highway

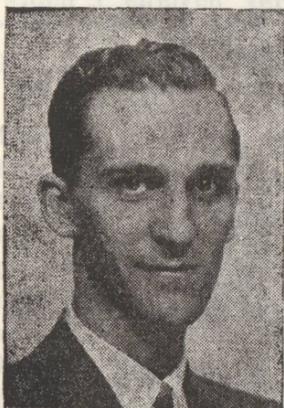
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### — Our Pastors Speak —



#### ON KNOWING OUR FRIENDS IN HEAVEN

by Rev. Stillman Cameron\*

How little we really know about Heaven. For most of us, we do not know enough to satisfy our curious minds. But apart from that, the Bible does say enough to satisfy a reasonable faith. We are therein assured that Heaven is a holy place where no sin can penetrate. No sickness, pain, sorrow or grief will be known to its inhabitants. On the contrary, our capacities will be empowered and broadened to fit our glorified condition. We will not be hampered by limitations of time and space over there. When we "shake off this mortal coil", and "this corruptible shall have put on incorruption", the weakness of Adam's flesh will be left behind, and we shall have all things new.

Heaven will be wonderful beyond our fondest dreams. No doubt of that. But frequently we find ourselves musing on the question, "Will we recognize our loved ones and friends in Heaven?" This is a meaningful question to each of us, no doubt. But while we may ask a meaningful question, we find it quite another thing to return a meaningful answer. "We must not expect simple answers to far-reaching questions," said Dr. Whitehead. "However far our gaze penetrates, there are always heights beyond which block our vision." So I am not proposing anything that would resemble a dogmatic answer — not at all. I simply want to set down a few homely thoughts that might be helpful.

First, there is the thought of our personal identity. Will it be lost in Heaven? Shall we remain the same persons we were on earth, or shall we, by some strange change become different beings in Heaven? I believe, beyond any shadow of doubt, we shall retain our identity in Heaven. Will not St. Paul in Heaven be that same St. Paul who prayed and preached on earth? Will not Abraham in Heaven be the same Abraham who left Ur of the Chaldees to look for a city that had foundations? I cannot think otherwise.

Just prior to His passion, Jesus said to His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also." According to this promise of our Lord, the occupants of Heaven will be none other than those who once lived on this sinful earth. Nothing in all of the Bible would lead us to believe that the trip through space

will change our personal identity. I expect, upon arrival, we shall discover ourselves to be the same individuals so recently embarked from earth.

Now then, a second observation rises out of this. If in Heaven we are the same persons we were on earth, may we not conclude that recognition of one another will be as natural as it was on earth? Reason assures us that the characteristics which make us different from everybody else on earth will also distinguish us in Heaven. It would seem passing strange if it were otherwise.

Perhaps someone will say, "Yes, but since it is our 'spirit-personality', or 'soul-life' that remains unchanged, how can there be any possibility of recognition? Can you recognize a spirit?" We must not forget that in God's great scheme, He has provided a total redemption for the body as well as the spirit. That is where the teaching of the resurrection comes in. "Marvel not at this," said Jesus, "for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice and shall come forth." There is something that will come forth out of the grave, and that something can be nothing other than the body that was buried in it. Paul tells us it will be a "spiritual body"; a body "like unto His own glorious body." The glorified body of Jesus was recognizable by His disciples after His resurrection, and I verily believe, since He is the first-fruits of the resurrection, the same will be true of ours. Glorified, and radiant with holy brilliance, but recognizable. The tombstone of Benjamin Franklin bears this epitaph: "The body of B. Franklin, Printer, (Like the Cover of an old book, its contents torn out and stript of its lettering and gilding,) Lies here, food for worms, but the Work shall not be lost: for it will (as he believes) appear once more in a new and more elegant Edition, revised and corrected by its Author." Thank God for the assurance of a "new edition, revised and corrected by its Author!" And in that new edition we shall renew our acquaintances with the spirits of just men made perfect.

Know one another in Heaven? Of course! Our loved

(Continued on Page 3)

#### A MEDITATION

by Marguerite Estaver

I heard a bird singing; I could not see it, but I did not doubt my ears. I saw a sunset; I could not touch it, but I did not doubt my eyes. I smelled lilacs in the dark; I could not see, but I did not doubt my sense of smell. I felt His Holy Spirit in my heart; it was dark, I could not see and yet I could not doubt, for all was Light, lovelier than birds' singing, more beautiful than any sunset, sweeter than lilacs in darkness, their fragrance heightened by the dew. I cannot doubt my heart.

My ears did not need my eyes, my eyes did not need my touch, my smelling did not need to be convinced. And so, my heart does not need to see or touch to know: for it has sense far, far beyond physical sensation, perceptions that reach out beyond the boundaries of time and space, and glory answers all the yearning of my heart for Truth and Loveliness.